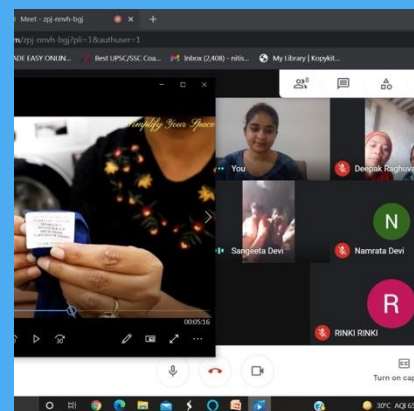




# Improving Recognition of Prior Learning in India



**Learnings from Field Study**

**Ashutosh Pratap & Saurabh Mishra**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Learning is a continuous process that happens anywhere and at any time in our lives. For lot of it us, it primarily happens outside the formal education system. This non-formal learning is not recognized and valued. Recognizing it with certificates provides labour market benefits, improves lives financially and adds to the self-esteem of the learner. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) essentially act as skill experience certificates and form the foundation of a knowledge society that India aspires to be.

RPL in India is of critical importance because the low educational status of the workers. CEMCA collaborated with four Sector Skill Councils for pilot implementation of RPL for 1000 workers. Capital Goods Skill Council, Automotive Sector Development Council, Furniture and Fittings Sector Skill Council and Domestic workers Sector Skill Council participated in the exercise. Research survey conducted and the process show that different implementation capabilities and challenges for the partners. Few of them provided a more seamless experience for workers than others. The study indicates that most candidates see RPL as an opportunity to get a certificate rather than anything else. Most employers primarily see it as a mechanism to provide an opportunity to their employees. They are open and see merit in RPL. Employers pay too, paid educational leave for RPL can be a good example, if employers start adopting it.

In the new world, resources are abundant but the willingness to learn is not. This added with time, physical resources and financing RPL makes the difference. Demand side financing, as experienced in other countries can provide market centric mechanism for RPL scale up. Further, RPL also needs to have better awareness, a distinct brand identity than it currently has (subpart of a larger skills programme) may work. RPL is the easy pie in the skill development scale up and can improve employee morale in Covid times.

Assessment is the heart of RPL and it should be possible for workers to provide portfolios of past work as evidence of skills in the assessments. RPL candidates can also be taught with self-paced content few months before assessments. Finally, RPL is a technical term, it can be simplified for the end user, it essentially is an 'Skills Experience Certificate' and should be renamed. The above are some steps to realize people potential by RPL in India.

## INTRODUCTION

Learning is a continuous process that happens anywhere and at any time in our lives. However, most learning outside the formal education system is not valued, such learning without credentials needs recognition. The recognition of all types of learning – an individual's knowledge, skills and experience – can provide labour market benefits, improve lives financially and provide self-esteem. These certificates also encourage people to value learning and build skills. In sum, it forms the foundation for a knowledge society that India aspires to be.

Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) is therefore important to measure informal human capital. For workers, it holds promise for improved wages and career growth by formalizing informal skills by acquiring credentials. For governments, it provides a mechanism to improve skills base and productivity of workers and industry and for employers, it helps filter and enhance talent of workers.



The RPL program has a number of potential advantages. First, it encourages lifelong learning and provides dignity for the skills acquired. Second, it allows workers to participate in learning without much friction as it eliminates need to be out of job. Third, with proper incentive and planning it can be a model for upward career mobility and growth for the highly skilled workers.

RPL in India is of critical importance because of the educational status of the workers. demographic dividend is characterized by low level of education in the workforce. Estimates suggest that 49% of workforce has primary education or less (27% of which are illiterate), 16% are middle school educated (up to class 8), 19% are secondary schooled (i.e., up to class 10) and only 8% are graduates and above. Further, since the Indian economy is highly informal, RPL offers a feasible way to correct the status quo and make long lasting impact on the living standards of the people. The process of measuring what workers already know is straightforward and

providing a publicly usable win-win evidence for all parties.

RPL however, has not become mainstream as it can be. RPL can be the adult education initiative that everyone wants to participate in.



In view of the above, a field assessment of the strength and weaknesses of the RPL framework in India was carried out by Commonwealth Education and Media Centre Asia (CEMCA) to provide way forward for workers, implementers and policy makers.

In this report, we study and analyze the effectiveness of RPL in India with a global view and look at its possibilities for skill development of employed workers. This is intended to provide more convergence between policy and implementation and provide a research-oriented approach to future RPL skills work in the country.

## FIELD EXERCISE

### BACKGROUND

CEMCA collaborated with four Sector Skill Councils for pilot implementation of the RPL field exercise. The following four Sector Skill Councils participated in the exercise. These SSCs were selected from about 38 SSCs in the country and cover both formal and informal sector. The SSCs were picked up with no bias.

Sector Skill Council	No of workers for RPL
Capital Goods Skill Council (CGSC)	250

Automotive Sector Development Council	250
Furniture and Fittings Sector Skill Council	250
Domestic workers Sector Skill Council	500

### APPROACH

The focus was to learn from the ground implementation and provide suggestions for better system design, use of international experience, use of new technologies and media to ensure responsibility and accountability for RPL scale up.

### METHODOLOGY

The review of international literature and seeing it in context of India was of paramount importance further survey and consultation with trainees, employers and industry voices was undertaken to provide a holistic understanding of the issues.

## A PRIMER ON RPL

### KEY CONCEPTS

Conceptually RPL has the following highlights:

- a. RPL is for unqualified competent people
- b. RPL is a process during which learning outcomes are assessed
- c. Assessment is at the heart of RPL
- d. RPL is about making competencies visible
- e. RPL offers route to qualifications. It is about equity and inclusivity to achieving a qualification
- f. RPL offers a double currency: both in the education and (formal) training system and in the labour market. Therefore, RPL is useful for applicants, enterprises and society as a whole, as RPL addresses unemployment, poverty reduction, occupational promotion and decent jobs, etc.
- g. RPL is relevant in all education and training sectors: technical and vocational education and training (TVET), as well

as secondary and tertiary education. It is more relevant for adults than for young people, because applicants need to prove their competencies (acquired through experience).

h. There is no universal RPL system, rather different systems that best fit the needs of specific countries. RPL systems differ in their design and scope.



## RPL OBJECTIVES

The heterogeneity and complexity of approaches in RPL is immense since there are multiple motives that underpin it. However, at the core, across sectors and geographies there are similar criteria for implementing validation systems which are

- To promote lifelong learning
- To foster individual employability and meet labour market demands
- To strengthen countries' competitiveness
- To improve social inclusion and social justice (mainly by improving labour market inclusion)
- To better link labour markets and education and training system





## STEPS OF RPL PROCESS

### 1. Awareness and information

- Potential applicants are aware of RPL as an opportunity
- General information about the RPL system is in place, related requirements, steps to take, assistance available and where to obtain it is readily accessible
- The steps of an RPL process are clear and transparent to all stakeholders, as is information for potential applicants

### 2. Counselling and facilitation

- Counselling is available to provide potential applicants with more detailed information about the RPL process
- Potential applicants can obtain guidance on the specific RPL steps and their requirements
- Counsellors/facilitators perform pre-screening of applicants and support them in preparing their portfolios (evidence)
- Counsellors/facilitators offer guidance on skills gap training, if needed

### 3. Assessment and certification

- Assessor reviews the evidence/portfolio submitted
- Assessment, test or demonstration against existing standards to receive the certification/units/credits
- Final assessment
- Decision, information on shortcomings, if applicable (and potential re-skilling, mentoring etc. for another assessment)
- Appeal, by applicant against decision,
- Award of qualification/certificate/credits/units/exemptions



## EVOLUTION OF RPL

The idea of recognizing prior experiential learning is not new. However, different terms are used for RPL in different countries and international organizations

The first practices of RPL occurred between 1950s and 1970s in the USA and Quebec (Canada). They shared a humanistic conception of education based on social and personal development, and their central motive was social justice. In both countries, RPL was developed to broaden access to higher education. With the end of the Second World War, US soldiers faced a labour market deeply changed by the entry of women into the labour force. The pursuit of studies was encouraged by the authorities to overcome the difficulties of employment. However, war veterans refused to restart their studies at the point where they had interrupted them. They pressured government authorities and higher education institutions to recognize the knowledge acquired in the war and allow them access to higher education. A similar situation took place in Quebec, but was led by feminist movements. Feminists demanded the recognition of prior learning acquired through domestic activities to access higher education. The

fact that these practices aimed at specific groups of the population hindered social visibility and dissemination. The ideas never scaled.

However, in the 1990s and within the framework of the discourse on lifelong learning RPL gained political and social importance. It moved from a focus on social justice to a focus on economic development and employability.

The 1995 White Paper on Education and Training is a good example. In this document, RPL plays a central role to solve the problem of young people without academic and professional qualifications and to promote workforce mobility within EU countries. After the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000 and the publication of the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, RPL became a key instrument for achieving goals of knowledge-based society.

In subsequent years, many guidelines were published e.g., the Common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, etc. These documents provide importance to RPL in the framework of European lifelong learning policy and the

attempt to harmonize procedures within the European space. Over the last decades, RPL became one of the main topics of adult education policies in EU countries and worldwide. The current discourse however is moving towards at shaping citizens who want to learn and who take responsibility for their own learning in order to become employable.

RPL has different names in different places. In the USA, the term in use is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA); in Canada, it is Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). In the UK, three different terms are used, each referring to different settings and aims: Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) focuses on obtaining a higher education qualification; Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) concerns the assessment of competences and skills acquired through the work life; Accreditation of Prior Certificate Learning (APCL) consists of the assessment and certification of learning for academic purposes. The OECD uses the term Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (RNFIL); inside the EU, the recognition of prior learning is referred to as Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)



## WHO NEEDS RPL AND WHY?

Who?	Why?
A craftsperson, such as a plumber, mason, cook, electrician, hairdresser etc. (in formal and/or informal economy) ...	...who acquired competencies informally in the first place, or furthered skills on the job, but does not hold any qualification, or holds one that is not recognized by employers, or holds a formal qualification for a lower skill level than the one attained on the job
Any worker in the informal economy...	...who wants to move to the formal economy
An unemployed person...	...who realizes that formal certification is required to find a job
An economically inactive person...	...who used to work in an occupation without certification, exited the labour market and now wants to go back and find formal employment
A caretaker or a person employed in an occupation mainly conducted at home without a qualification (mostly by women, often unpaid) ...	...who wants to move into a job outside the home and into the labour market
An employed person in any job where qualification requirements have changed over the years or where qualification requirements differ across countries (such as caring for the elderly, kindergarten worker, physiotherapist etc.) ...	...and who wants to remain competitive on the labour market
A student, a researcher etc....	...who acquired relevant knowledge and skills on a job and seeks recognition of their competencies, for instance to earn credits

	towards a degree
A worker who wishes to continue working after retirement age...	...who realizes that they need a qualification in order to continue working, even as self-employed
A migrant worker or a returning migrant worker...	...who needs to obtain a formal recognition of competencies in the recipient country, including competencies acquired through non-formal and informal channels

### RPL as means to help disadvantaged groups

RPL systems have the potential to significantly support disadvantaged groups e.g., women. They often take on vital tasks outside the formal and paid economy, e.g., as home carers, taking care of children, the elderly and the sick, whereby they acquire and apply important competencies of care work. RPL can provide an opportunity for such women to move more readily into the labour market after the situation at home has changed, or compensate for time lost in education and training. Unfortunately, RPL is more common in male-dominated trades,

notably in the construction sector, again disadvantaging women. Countries should look to expand recognition processes to cover a wider range of competencies.

Older workers might not have acquired or needed a qualification earlier in their life but worked in the same job for a long time. They may be confronted with the need for qualification to continue working or find another job. Counsellors and facilitators can make older workers aware of RPL processes and guide them through the system.

Given the magnitude of international migration, migrant

workers are frequently victims of competencies underutilization or competencies waste, both in terms of lower employment rates and overqualification for the jobs they do. Even when migrant workers are employed, they are much more likely to be in occupations in which skills requirements are lower than their educational attainment and/or

professional qualifications, compared with their national counterparts.

Returning migrant workers have, in many instances, acquired additional competencies while abroad, which are not recognized in a corresponding qualification and thus impede their ability

## BENEFITS OF RPL

Potential benefits at the economic and educational level	
Increased employability of population for a healthier labour market	<p>Improved ability of employers to identify new hires and fill their vacancies</p> <p>Potentially reduced unemployment and inactivity</p> <p>Reduced pressure on the labour market as alternative pathways to employment become available</p> <p>Reduced skills mismatch issues</p> <p>Reduced qualification shortages (if applied specifically in sectors where qualified workers – workers with documented competencies – are in high demand)</p> <p>Eased transition from the informal to the formal economy Increased ability of the labour market to offer decent jobs</p>
Increased labour mobility	<p>Facilitated movement of individuals to a better job</p> <p>Increased ability of employed people to change career and employer</p> <p>Expanded opportunities for movements of workers from rural to urban areas and across borders</p>

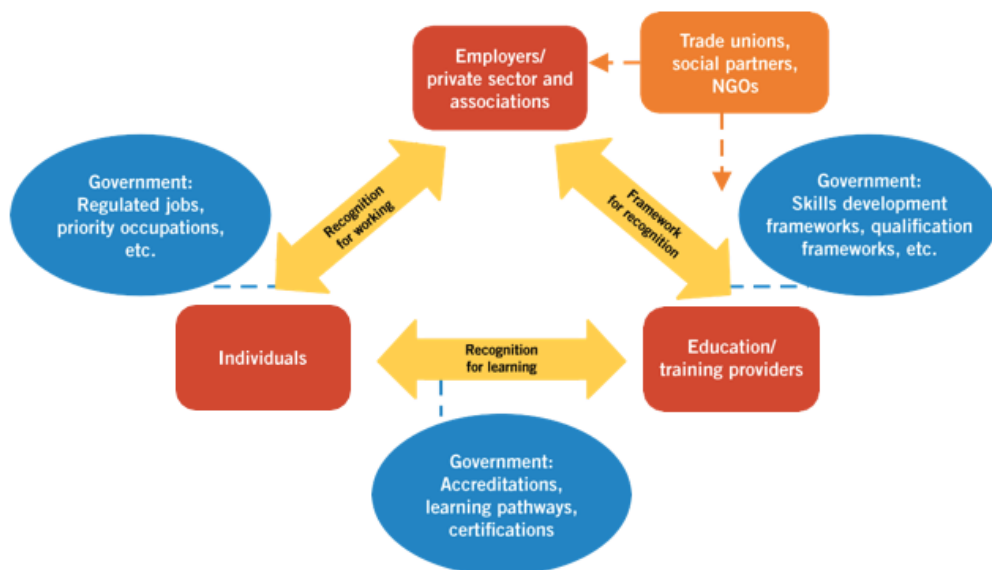
## IMPROVING RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING IN INDIA

Improved access to formal education and training	<p>Reduced time and financial resources needed to obtain a qualification, making it more affordable and accessible for applicants to further their educational attainment</p> <p>Expanded access to lifelong learning</p>
Strengthened qualifications system	<p>Reinforced qualifications system providing a bridge between the informal and formal economy</p> <p>Strengthened lifelong learning framework as RPL creates new opportunities for achieving a qualification</p>
<b>Potential benefits at the societal level</b>	
Social inclusion and recognition	<p>Empower disadvantaged groups and Improved visibility and use of existing human capital</p> <p>Recognized value of services, such as voluntary and unpaid work</p>
More motivated labour force	<p>Empowered labour force, as opportunities for learning open up to more individuals, including disadvantaged groups</p> <p>Increased earnings of the employed</p>
More interest in lifelong learning	<p>Expanded opportunities for individuals to embrace lifelong learning and benefit from its labour market outcomes</p>
<b>Potential benefits at the personal level</b>	
Psychological benefits	<p>Strengthened self-esteem, confidence and motivation to work and learn, including among those formerly discouraged</p>
Higher individual returns to work experience	<p>Improved opportunities to access jobs that match individuals' competencies</p> <p>Reduced costs of education, including in terms of time investment required to attain a qualification</p> <p>Increased opportunities to move from the informal to the formal economy</p>



## STAKEHOLDERS

In order to make RPL work, a number of stakeholders are actively involved. Their cooperation and interplay is crucial in making RPL effective. The key stakeholders in RPL along with the interaction between them is depicted here.



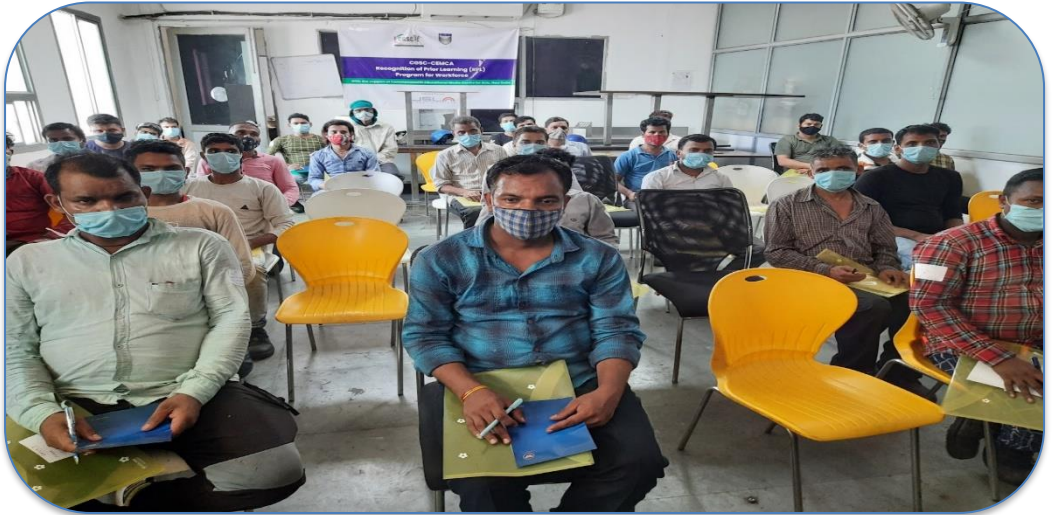
Source: Adapted from Braňka (2016b).

Stakeholder		Role and responsibilities
Government	Ministries, Departments (Labour, Education, TVET)	Through its departments or ministries, Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides the main framework for RPL at different levels</li> <li>drives the political agenda and determines how RPL is integrated into the education and training systems</li> <li>ensures that (the right to) RPL is integrated into the policy and legal framework, linking to education and labour market policies at macro and meso level, qualification</li> </ul>



		<p>frameworks etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determines (in cooperation with other stakeholders) learning pathways and creates favorable conditions for lifelong learning (Yang, 2015: 39)</li> <li>• regulates assessment of applicants and accreditation of institutions</li> <li>• has a role in identifying key sectors for RPL, considering available human capital (competencies and experience) and the labour market</li> <li>• determines whether the RPL system implementation is centralized (through national level institutions) or decentralized (through local institutions)</li> <li>• secures funding for RPL and establishes a sustainable funding model. In a shared funding model all stakeholders, e.g., enterprises, Government and applicants, contribute.</li> </ul>
Education and training providers	Public and/ or private	<p>Education and training providers may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer services such as information and RPL guidance, facilitation</li> <li>• carry out assessment (validation), which can only be done by accredited providers, in relation to the qualification framework and standards in place</li> <li>• provide facilitators and/or assessors, depending on the assessment methods chosen and applied</li> <li>• support and implement lifelong learning measures and often also provide guidance on, or implement training for, meeting the standards.</li> </ul>
Employers/ private sector and associations	Employers providing training and qualifications, associations overseeing qualifications	<p>Employers may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be involved in designing ad hoc standards, when no other standards exist</li> <li>• set or adjust competence frameworks within their own industry as well as internal frameworks related to RPL,</li> </ul>

- implement assessments for RPL, including within their industry/ company
- oversee assessment processes, act as an assessment and validation entity (mainly for TVET, often for associations, chambers). This applies predominately in industry-based recognition models.



### ENABLERS FOR RPL



RPL framework has quality assessment assurance at the centre supported by

regulatory framework, institutional framework, financing and stakeholder ownership

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Based on a needs analysis, the RPL system coverage is defined (for instance, general education and/or TVET or specific sectors)
- occupations/ trades only, secondary and/or higher education)
- Frame RPL in the national employment policy, and make it a priority in education and training policy
- Integrate RPL into existing qualifications frameworks, as well as in policies and strategies for recognition of skills and qualifications (such as credit systems)
- Explore what sectoral approaches would be relevant
- Integrate RPL into relevant sectoral, economic and development policy, including migration policy
- Match occupational and qualification standards
- Synchronize national regulation with regional and local regulation if needed

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

- Define the institutions that are responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of RPL, including awareness, counselling and assessment
- Assess the capacity of existing institutions to perform the task
- Strengthen capacity if needed, or create new institutions
- Build capacity of RPL professionals and ensure that they will be regularly retrained

## STAKEHOLDER OWNERSHIP

- Identify all stakeholders and make sure they are aware of the benefits of RPL and their role in the RPL system
- Supporting social dialogue to ensure that RPL's potential benefits to employers and workers are fully exploited
- Support tripartite cooperation and collaborative approaches for RPL

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Design assessment methodologies around profiles

of applicants that are likely to use the system, including disadvantaged groups

- Establish standardized RPL processes and methods at the sectoral level, including standards and quality codes
- Ensure that information about RPL is available where applicants can easily access it, and that guidance and counselling methods suit applicants' needs
- Clarify and ensure oversight for the quality of assessment.

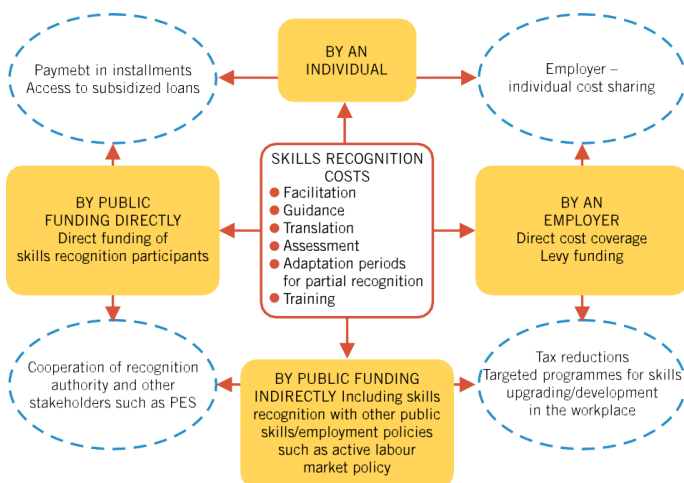
- Establish an M&E system to regularly revise RPL processes and methods

**FINANCING**

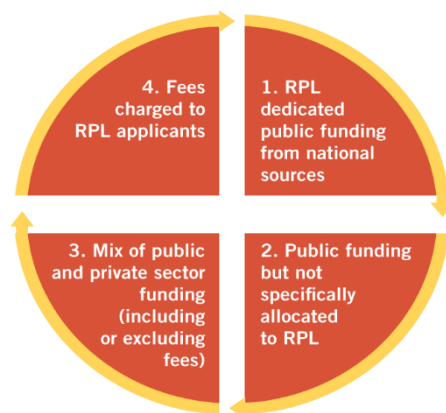
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis to define the scope of the RPL system
- Determine and implement equitable cost-sharing arrangements
- Ensure that funding is sustainable
- Offer incentives for employers to support RPL

**FUNDING MODELS FOR RPL**

RPL can only happen, if four kinds of resources are available 1. Mental resources – the willingness to learn, 2.the time for learning, 3. Physical resources, 4. Money. Financing RPL can be undertaken by public systems, private driven systems or, mixed systems, where both the Government and private institutions (and the applicant) bear the costs.



There is no universal financing system in place and different countries chose different pathways. The interactions between them is shown here:



Source: Braňka (2016b: 54).

An additional source of finance might be provided by external funding, such as dedicated project funding, donor funding in developing countries or funding from a regional block, e.g., CEMCA.

The cost of RPL depends on the methodology adopted, the level and type of qualification and the extent of the support needed by applicants. It also depends on the availability of pre-existing competency standards and assessment tools within the country, and which institutions are responsible for RPL.

Overall, obtaining qualifications through RPL is economical, compared to the costs of formal education and training. However, it is more expensive than the straightforward process of assessment and certification of formal training, as RPL requires intensive, personalized counselling and assessment. In some countries, for e.g Mauritius and Tanzania, a panel of assessors examines an applicant and may also conduct a site visit to observe the applicant at work (this occurs in the Seychelles). Such requirements increase the cost of assessment.

Costs to potential applicants can impede participation, on the other hand, that fees can increase applicants' trust in the process – and also increase their personal motivation. Guidelines for RPL in Malawi describe an apparent consensus among stakeholders that RPL should not be free for the applicant in order to create motivation and prevent abuse of the system. In effect, the government should enable a market for learning and training where learners are “customers “. The state can be involved in the demand-side of financing by vouchers. The voucher system focuses on individual choice

between educational institutions and programmes. Having an information system is crucial for this to succeed. The credit bank System in South Korea is a good example. It allows individuals to accumulate credits from diverse non-formal educational institutions towards an associate or bachelor degree.

An Employer-led model is also possible in India. This can be by legal regulations or voluntary. The employers would invest as long as returns could be enjoyed already during the training period and if the training were firm specific, and if the training would allow some profit.

Co-financing of training by employers and those in employment- A model of financing of unemployment in some countries via job-placement and retraining Employers and employed pay a certain percentage of the monthly gross income of the workers and employees in a fund (agency of labour), and the agency spends part of that revenue for offering training to the unemployed and sometimes also to those who might be endangered by loss of their jobs. The focus is on job-placement and retraining

**Paid educational leave:**

- This model takes into account the important resource of time.
- Some countries have passed laws on education leave to provide work time for learning. The right to educational leave covers all types of education. During the leave, wage and salaries are maintained.

Finally, RPL has to One challenge is the targeting of educationally deprived groups, and SMEs) and such funding needs to be based on certain conditions like limited income, low initial level of education, no participation in training over a certain period. For this to succeed Information and counselling are of central importance.

Strengths and enablers	Weaknesses and barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May make education and training providers more willing to offer prior learning recognition, as it can be a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining the fee to charge can be complicated – as recognition is not a homogeneous process and varies for</li> </ul>

<p>source of income, or at least the costs are covered by the fee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fees can be determined in relation to the varying costs associated with different types of recognition, including different assessment methods applicable</li> <li>• Without national regulations/guidelines, fees may vary across a country, encouraging learners to “shop around” (which might also increase competition, which in turn can increase the quality of recognition services provided)</li> </ul>	<p>different education/occupational (sub) sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fees may be a barrier to participation for low-income and generally disadvantaged groups</li> <li>• Fees are likely to put off applicants if participation in education is otherwise free</li> <li>• Without national regulations/guidelines, fees may vary across a country, which may be a problem if applicants do not have the mobility to “shop around”</li> </ul>
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Source: Adapted from CEDEFOP (2017b: 53).

## QUALITY ASSURANCE-THE HEART OF RPL

Assessment tools form the foundation of RPL. In India assessment is primarily done by third party assessors empaneled by SSC. However, apart from in-person or virtual interviews and test, there has be a provision where the worker can submit

- **Written or e-portfolio:** to enable a more structured, iterative approach to building evidence, mixing and applying a number of tools (including those listed below).
- **Presentation:** formal or informal, which can be used to check the ability to present information in a way that is appropriate to both subject and audience.
- **Simulation and evidence extracted from work:** where applicants are placed in a situation that fulfils all the criteria of the real-life scenario to have their competencies assessed (observation of practice,

simulation) or a workplace observation.

- **Panel** of interviewers to test applicant’s knowledge.
- **Workplace-derived artefacts** to demonstrate competencies.
- **Employer reference/evidence.**
- Work-based learning **simulations** of practical tasks.
- **Record** of volunteer learning and experience.
- “Assessment on demand”, such as an **exam or assignment.**

Nature of evidence for RPL		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct evidence</li> <li>• Workplace observation</li> <li>• Demonstration of skill</li> <li>• Samples of work</li> <li>• The materials or tools with which the applicant works</li> <li>• Referees’ reports</li> <li>• Videos</li> <li>• Audio files</li> <li>• Photos</li> <li>• Published works, such as operational manuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indirect evidence</li> <li>• Industry awards</li> <li>• Job specifications or position descriptions</li> <li>• Curriculum vitae or résumé</li> <li>• Rosters or timesheets</li> <li>• Budgets</li> <li>• Visual presentations or written speeches</li> <li>• Letters or memos from the workplace</li> <li>• References/letters of support</li> <li>• Evidence of committee work</li> <li>• Reading lists</li> <li>• Workplace training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical evidence</li> <li>• Written references from past employers</li> <li>• Logbooks and other records of performance</li> <li>• Certificates or qualifications</li> <li>• Letters of support</li> <li>• Assignments, reports and documentation from previous courses</li> <li>• Past competency-based assessments</li> <li>• Record of academic results</li> <li>• Course attendance record</li> </ul>




	records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrapbooks</li> <li>• Magazine or newspaper articles</li> </ul>
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While assessment methods need to comply with existing standards to guarantee comparability and quality, the assessment methods should be designed as far as possible to accommodate the individual applicant's needs. Innovative assessment methods for RPL are required with the following qualities:

- less time-consuming, more cost-effective and simpler but still credible
- taking into account the context in which each applicant's learning has been acquired and their individual characteristics

Overall, a combination of methods is beneficial, as they can build on each other and create complementarity. A trade that falls under TVET, a practical test, which demonstrates specific skills, might be necessary (trade test), whereas documentation of certificates and evidence might be sufficient for credits in higher education.

One of the more widely used assessment methods for RPL is the learning portfolio method. This has been used for benefits for disadvantaged groups: RPL certificates for Syrian refugees in the construction sector – Jordan and can also be used for migrant workers. Such a portfolio is an organized collection of materials providing evidence of the competencies that were acquired through experience instead of formal learning. The portfolio allows the applicant to contribute actively to the collection of evidence and contains a combination of tools, which strengthen the overall validity of the process. Many countries have introduced the portfolio as a central element in their recognition approaches.



A portfolio includes:

- A written outline of education and career goals
- Learning outcomes and competency statements
- Documentation verifying the learning claimed

A portfolio **may** also include:

- A chronological record of significant learning experiences
- A life history paper
- Informal records of past learning achievements

## RPL ENABLERS-COUNTRY WISE ANALYSIS

RPL is an evolving concept, including the terminology and definitions involved. Many stakeholders and potential beneficiaries are still unaware of the opportunities that RPL offers in terms of outcomes, the process and the benefits. Lot of employer, education and training authorities do not understand the processes, undermining its acceptance. Below is a comparative analysis in different countries.

### REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Country	Regulatory framework
Australia	RPL is integrated into the Australian Qualifications Framework Qualifications Pathways Policy, which is built into Australia's national qualification framework and aims to maximize the credit that students can obtain from prior learning
European Union	RPL is integrated within broader education strategies/policies rather than single policy documents. Only France, Finland and Spain have a standalone RPL strategy/policy, covering all education sectors
India	RPL provisions are found in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE, 2015)</li> <li>• the National Skills Qualification Framework, implemented by the NCVET</li> </ul>

Malaysia	RPL is reflected in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework 2010, developed after lifelong learning became a primary goal within the country's National Higher Education Strategic Plan, 2007
Pakistan	RPL is reflected in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the TVET policy, 2015</li> <li>the National Skills Strategy, 2009–2013</li> </ul> RPL is further aligned to the TVET sub-framework of the NQF – the National Vocational Qualifications Framework
South Africa	The RPL regulatory framework includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Policy for the Implementation of RPL, 2013, a standalone policy making the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) responsible for RPL implementation and quality assurance</li> <li>“Policy for the implementation of RPL” of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO, 2016), QCTO Assessment Policy, 2014</li> </ul>

## RECOGNITION AUTHORITIES

Country	Recognition authorities
Australia	<p>Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Council: Implementation of the AQF</p> <p>National Skills Standards Council: Oversight of training packages and training provider quality (including representation of industry)</p> <p>National Insurance Brokers Association: Skills recognition for insurance brokers</p>
Brazil	Certific Net: Accrediting federal system encompassing: accrediting institutions (38 Federal Institutes of Technical and Technological Education); eligible entities for skills certification purposes (such as public and private schools, unions, enterprises, NGOs); and associated organizations in education,

	metrology, standardization and/or inspection.
China	Public occupation skill testing stations: Assessment organizations approved by the Government and set up by industries, associations and local governments
Germany	Universities: Skills recognition in higher education Chambers of Crafts, Industry, Commerce and Farming: Skills recognition in the area of vocational education and training Federal state level institutions: Skills recognition for regulated occupations (e.g., doctors)
India	NCVET- Overall skills regulator National Skills Development Corporation: Facilitation of private-sector participation in the skills development effort National Skills Qualifications Committee Directorate General for Employment and Training and National Council for Vocational Training under the Ministry of Labour and Employment
Malaysia	Malaysian Qualifications Agency: Implementation of Malaysian Qualifications Framework, quality assurance, programme accreditation, recognition and articulation of qualifications <sup>13</sup>
Pakistan	Qualification awarding bodies at provincial level: Either trade testing board or board of technical education
Singapore	Singapore Workforce Development Agency: Skills recognition and development body
South Africa	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO): Responsible for policy and criteria for assessment, RPL and credit accumulation and transfer for qualifications and part-qualifications

We look at two studies on some possible steps to improve quality assurance.

### **The Netherlands**

The Government of the Netherlands has put greater emphasis on quality assurance of RPL to increase transparency and accessibility. Part of these efforts was the establishment of the National Quality Code in 2006 as an instrument to create control of and promote trust in RPL providers. The National Quality Code (revised in 2012 after broad consultations across stakeholder groups) outlines the quality procedures and criteria for certified RPL procedures. The standards for RPL procedures are connected with the requirements in both vocational education and training and higher education, and all RPL procedures result in an “Ervaringscertificaat” (certificate of experience), describing the competencies.

RPL providers are registered and listed in a database. They have to abide by the quality code and are evaluated every 18 months.

A Knowledge Centre on Accreditation of Prior Learning, established in 2001, supports implementation, knowledge management, dissemination of information on RPL and quality standards.

### **Tanzania**

Tanzania has prescribed comprehensive quality assurance for RPL in its Guidelines (VETA, 2014), which detail the following provisions:

- policy, legal and regulatory framework
- institutional framework
- active engagement of employers and workers
- RPL guidelines
- development of competency standards, assessment tools and methodology
- portfolio of evidence
- accreditation of providers (RPL centers)
- grading of skills of applicants
- moderation of assessment

- training of facilitators, assessors and moderators (RPL professionals)
- support services to the RPL applicants (provision of information and skills upgrading)
- international cooperation research, monitoring and evaluation.

Country	Assessment methods
South Africa	<p>Uses the portfolio, publications, references and various testimony- and evidence-based methods, but in an extraordinarily open and dynamic system. These methods are examples, rather than prescribed. There is no all-inclusive list of assessment methods.</p> <p>Assessments have to be fair, valid, reliable and workable and are organized in three stages in which they are planned with applicants, carried out and then reported on. In practice, this approach may be further subdivided to distinguish between applications, their admissibility, preparation for assessment (identification), assessment (assembling evidence), judgement, moderation and a final report.</p>
The Netherlands	<p>Has chosen interviews, context-based observations and 360-degree assessments, in addition to the portfolio, justifying the choice on the grounds of cost, desired quality and the number of applicants to be assessed. It is regarded as a pioneer from the point of view of its assessment technique, as applicants are entitled to have their learning outcomes recognized in whichever of the four possible ways they prefer.</p> <p>The process of recognizing non-formal and informal learning outcomes is a real personal development plan in the Netherlands.</p>
Scotland	<p>Has the greatest number and most varied range of methods in use. Traditional methods exist alongside less traditional ones, which are very promising. Among them are simulation and observation of practice, mapping of learning outcomes, profiling, curriculum vitae (Europass or other kinds), learning portfolios, certified voluntary activity, assessment on request (examinations or homework), structured interviews, oral assessment and personal projects</p>

Canada	For over half of its applicants (54 per cent), Canada uses the “challenge” (examination), followed by the learning portfolio (23 per cent) and the demonstration (23 per cent)
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Country	Qualification for assessors
Australia	Developed a learning resource for assessors, namely “Informal learning: Learning from experience”, which includes assessment tools and case studies (
Norway	Organizes annual courses and seminars for assessors and the mentoring of inexperienced assessors. Assessment centers register trained assessors
Canada	The Red River College offers two levels of training: a 40-hour introduction to the PLAR system and an advanced 40-hour course on PLAR
South Africa	Evaluators are required to be “registered assessors”, who are trained and also meet the minimum SAQA criteria to perform assessments in particular sectors. Moreover, the assessor must be qualified at a higher NQF level than the level at which the assessment takes place. RPL practitioners are also trained by public universities
Tanzania	RPL assessors need to be licensed through a three-step process of training. The license is valid for three years only and can be withdrawn in the event of unsatisfactory performance. Performance of the assessors is regularly monitored by RPL facilitators (see the example provided below for further detail)
Mauritius	RPL facilitators receive training that stresses the different skills required for RPL and their role in guiding the applicant. The training puts particular emphasis on reflection in facilitation, active listening, a non-judgmental attitude etc., so that the facilitator supports the applicants in the identification of things they know (knowledge), things they do (skills), things they have (evidence) and the compilation of the evidence in a portfolio

## STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

### RPL social partners' involvement

- In South Africa, employers' and workers' organizations participate in the design and implementation of RPL through their respective sector education and training authorities; employers also directly promote RPL in many sectors, including insurance, banking, agriculture and the media.
- In Brazil, the SENAI certification (RPL) system aims to actively involve enterprises right from the design stage, and to promote human resources policies that favor the recognition of competencies for developing a career. The system considers occupational profiles, prepared jointly with representatives from enterprises and workers in the sectoral technical committees, as the reference for assessment (Vargas, 2004).
- PETROBRAS, Brazil's largest corporation, has established a certification system for its employees, especially for those working in the areas of quality control function, in order to ensure competent personnel for safe installations and operational continuity (Vargas, 2004).

The main stakeholders involved in RPL in the Netherlands are:

- national authorities, which facilitate the development and implementation of RPL (in fields such as law and finance)
- social partners, who encourage organizations to use RPL (through sectoral regulations and training funds)
- companies and organizations, which guide their employees towards RPL
- citizens who can, with or without support from RPL providers, build up their personal portfolio for RPL procedures.

## MARKETING RPL



In **Belgium**, the public employment services (PES) are the primary channel for reaching individual users. Jobseekers have been the main target group of the scheme since its inception. Validation centers also provide information to anyone interested in the scheme. Prior to registering for a test, guidance is provided to applicants to assess their chances of success. Other ways to reach potential users include the Consortium website, the diffusion of information material, targeted emails to jobseekers, media campaigns and the creation of an online portal providing information about all types of validation procedures in French-speaking Belgium.

In **South Africa**, the occupational learning system is a relatively new innovation. A number of marketing and communications activities are being undertaken to keep stakeholders informed about occupational qualifications development and assessment processes: (1) national road shows are held in all nine provinces; (2) a website was developed providing vital information; (3) a management information system was installed; (4)

a marketing and communication strategy was developed; (5) the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations participates in major exhibitions and produces a range of printed materials. The different stakeholders also actively use Facebook and Twitter to promote RPL, including a one-page summary of the process, benefits and stakeholders, which uses visual elements to make it more appealing.

In **Germany**, the website “Recognition in Germany” acts as a one-stop-shop information center, focusing mainly on individual users but also catering for employers and stakeholders.

It serves as an information portal of the German Government for the recognition of foreign qualifications or certificates for migrant workers and refugees who wish to take up employment in Germany.

The website collates relevant information and services that pertain to how professional recognition can be obtained and includes information on, among other things: (1) a step-by-step process of recognition for selected

occupations, which are searchable via a user-friendly “Recognition Finder” function; (2) preconditions for skills recognition; (3) success stories relating to skills recognition; (4) hotline and counselling information; (5) relevant authorities, institutions and their contact information.

Under “success stories”, the website provides examples, offering information on people going through the recognition process and how it improved their chances of finding better jobs.

It also provides guidance related to working in Germany, indicating ways of finding counselling providers, information on legal matters and on the recognition procedure itself and, most importantly, information on occupations covered and on authorities that may provide the competencies assessment.

Users can access this website in eight different languages, including Turkish and Romanian, and the mobile application is available in German and English as well as in the five major languages spoken by refugees:

In **Ghana**, awareness is supported through meetings, workshops,

stakeholder consultations, exhibitions, trade fairs and participation in graduation ceremonies for the recognition of competencies of graduated apprentices.

For migrant workers, RPL is further complicated by the challenges associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications and experience – or the lack of relevant mutual recognition agreements. The RPL procedure for migrant workers typically involves the recognition of qualifications which have been acquired in their home country, including verification of documents of formal education outcomes: checking of individual evidence (outcomes of informal and non-formal learning – occupational experience and continuing training) and competency-assessment procedures (testing).

For potential migrants, it is therefore important to start the recognition procedure before departure, wherever possible. In addition, an automated recognition process may be established – on the basis of an agreement reached between countries. Such agreements would be further supported and promoted

by establishing coherence and aligning national and regional qualification frameworks.

Supporting measures, such as guidance and recommendations for skills upgrading for migrants, are also critically important .

In **Australia**, there is increasing action on developing assessors' capacities, aimed at helping assessors to see their own strengths as professionals.

In **Portugal**, professionalization is sought through the sharing of practices, knowledge and experiences among teachers and trainers who carry out adult learning programmes and undertake RPL assessments. Many countries (e.g., Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Chile, Tanzania and Mauritius) require registration or accreditation of assessors, often in conjunction with training measures that are provided for them .

## COST TO INDIVIDUALS

Austria	External exams (general education): EUR 15; admission to external exams (VET): EUR 125–150; BRP ( <i>Berufsreifeprüfung</i> , a particular type of VET diploma that provides general access to HE. This exam can be taken without prior attendance from upper-secondary schools.): exam fee: approx. EUR 450; preparatory classes for BRP: EUR 2600–2800
Canada	Approx. EUR 72–236, depending on trade, examination and type of application
France	Depending on the type and level of qualification between EUR 0 and 1000. For VET qualifications, fees are approx. EUR 800
Germany	Approx. EUR 100–600, depending on Land, trade, time and effort
Ireland	Depending on institutions, discipline, NQF level and purpose; applications for the consideration of certified learning are usually cheaper than assessment of experiential learning; approx. EUR 600–2000 (in general); levels 4–7 of the Irish NQF: approx. EUR 1000–1250; levels 4–5 of the Irish NQF, VET only, approx. EUR 800–1350
Italy	No reliable data available; in Tuscany: approx. EUR 500–1200

Netherlands	HE: approx. EUR 1000–1250 (including costs of assessment and recognition of the results); on average, procedures carried out by MBO institutions (VET at upper-secondary level) are cheaper, since part of the costs is compensated for by the enrolment of the participant in regular training programmes; overall costs for RPL at VET levels: EUR 800–1300 (shared by employer and employee). If RPL is not funded by the government or the social partners, applicants can fiscally deduct all costs for RPL exceeding EUR 500
Norway	Free of charge for unemployed and disabled and those born before 1978; otherwise, approx. EUR 100–1800
Spain	According to Royal Decree 1224/2009 approx. EUR 10–30 per candidate
Switzerland	Average costs per person for validation procedures EUR 5142

## COUNTRY PRACTICES: RPL SCOPE PROCESS AND METHODS

<b>MEXICO</b>	Scope	Covers both general education (from primary to tertiary level) and TVET • Higher education is covered by a set of national criteria and standards Legal. Mexico has a National System of Competency Standards • A Mexican Qualifications Framework is also in place
	Process	The Ministry of Education awards bachelor degrees and professional qualifications • Professional bodies are involved in designing and carrying out assessments • National Council for Standardization and Certification of Labour Competencies issues labour competence certificates Stages and steps: • Educational Model for Life and Work (Modelo Education para la Vida y el Trabajo) covers primary and secondary education
	Methods	Different methods and tools apply to the different sectors covered: - For primary and secondary education, credits or certification can be awarded

		<p>following an assessment of learning outcomes, which is viewed as a formative and ongoing process - For higher education (higher secondary and tertiary level), the assessment is structured in three parts • For TVET, applicants take a diagnostic test for the preliminary assessment of their level of competencies. The results of the test direct applicants to either the fully fledged evaluation process, or a skilling programme or additional work experience</p>
	Further observations	<p>Information on the RPL process, rights and obligations of applicants, and costs, is provided to key players such as applicants and to employers' and workers' organizations</p>
<b>NORWAY</b>	Scope	<p>Norway offers certification on (adapted) primary and secondary education based on RPL, as well as access to higher education based on documented prior learning• RPL in Norway also covers TVET– this includes the validation of non-formal and informal learning towards national curricula, as well as the right to a trade certificate based on RPL for applicants with more than 5 years of work experience Legal and policy framework: • The country is developing a national qualifications framework for RPL</p>
	Process	<p>Standards are currently set by sectoral institutions, in cooperation with Government ministries and the TVET education system• TVET institutions and employers are involved• Service centers implement RPL across the country (e.g. regional centers for quality assurance) Stages and steps: • In the case of TVET, the applicant needs to undergo the same final examination as apprentices, comprising both theoretical and practical elements</p>
	Methods	<p>Assessment methods are mostly dialogue-based, such as one-to-one portfolio assessment and testing• The system uses portfolio assessments, which are based</p>

		on documentation, photographs etc. • For TVET, assessment entails interviews and practical testing
	Further observations	RPL is most frequently used for secondary education
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	Scope	Coverage: • RPL includes formal, non-formal and informal learning • RPL in New Zealand covers TVET, secondary and higher education Legal and policy framework: • New Zealand has a national qualifications framework in place (NZQF) and a credit recognition and transfer policy (2002) • RPL is closely linked to the NZQF • RPL in both general education and TVET, and in all economic sectors, follows the same policy for recognition
	Process	Institutional responsibilities: • The Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is the institution responsible for RPL • Assessment takes place in designated Centers for Assessment of Prior Learning Stages and steps: • The system entails a “profiling procedure”, during which an applicant is interviewed about their experience • Support is provided to applicants to facilitate preparation for the assessment
	Methods	Depending on the qualification level sought, assessment methods vary. These may range from a panel of experts assessing evidence from prior work experience, up to what is called a “challenge” assessment, which is a demonstration of skills • Assessments are carried out against qualifications in the NZQF and standards in the Directory of Assessment Standards
	Further observations	TVET is the education sector in which RPL is most accepted • The system is known as APL (accreditation of prior learning) • Costs are a constraint, and they are shared between the individual applicant and the organization implementing RPL • The system in New Zealand is, in fact, two systems – one for the awarding

		of credits, and a second one for the awarding of qualifications
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	Scope	<p>The RPL system in South Africa covers TVET (craftspeople are called artisans in South Africa) and higher education. It provides recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Legal and policy framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The South African Qualifications Act 1995 includes RPL and mandates the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to develop a policy on RPL.</li> <li>• In 2013, the country introduced a national policy for the implementation of RPL, which enables RPL to be applied in the diverse National Qualifications Framework (NQF) sub-frameworks.</li> <li>• The National Qualifications Framework Act 2009 states that qualifications and standards must be registered in the NQF.</li> </ul>
	Process	<p>SAQA has issued guidelines for the implementation of RPL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Councils are responsible for quality assurance.</li> </ul> <p>Stages and steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPL can result in qualifications and partial qualifications, credits towards certification of further education, direct access to further education, or the awarding of a new certification.</li> </ul>
	Methods	<p>During the assessment, what the applicant knows and can do is measured against specific standards, as indicated in the NQF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The form and sources of evidence required by the recognition process depend on the qualification to be obtained.</li> </ul>
	Further observations	SAQA guidelines include an appeal process

## RPL IN SOUTH ASIA

What are the central aims of RPL policies, considering the historical, political, and

social context of each country? What are their target groups – individuals and social groups? What are their formats and structures of action – processes, networks, and instruments adopted for recognition of prior learning? Below we briefly analyze the policy discourses on RPL, outline the methodological approach, describe the RPL programmes, and analyze them based on their similarities and differences.

## CASE OF INDIA

With the approval of the National Policy on Skill Development in 2009, India embarked on an ambitious target of skilling and/or upskilling its youth. It was a recognition by the government of the urgent need to skill youth for in the domestic and global labor market.

Now a monumental task is at hand to mobilize the public and private sector to work together through a massive coordination, consolidation, and implementation effort.

Three critical elements are evolving rapidly as a policy response from the government to operationalize its agenda of the skilling of the new entrants and the upskilling of the existing workers. First, there is an increased coordination between public and private sectors. National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and its training partners work for on implementation Second, the National Council for Vocational Education and

Training (NCVET) has been established in 2018 as the overarching skills regulator tasked to help operationalize a National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) to ensure a quality-assured skills development system, coordinate the targets of skilling across public and private institutions, and strengthen the state skills development mission in each state to coordinate training programs to meet the targets. Third, the impetus given by the new Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is significant to further consolidate, coordinate, and enhance the skills development agenda. It has also issued a new National Skill Development Policy 2015.

The NSQF organizes qualifications according to levels of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It is a nationally integrated education and competence-based skills framework that provides



multiple pathways and multiple entry and exit points at horizontal and vertical levels. It has 10 levels, starting from level 1 and going up to level 10. The framework allows people to move from work to training (formal and informal) or from training to work and has a provision for recognition of prior learning, so people may earn credits for what they have learned in training, education, and work. It is mandatory for all training programs to be NSQF compliant within 5 years of the notification.

The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) was notified by MSDE on 5th December 2018. NCVET subsumes the existing skill regulatory bodies- National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) & National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) and will act as an overarching skills regulator. It was operationalized on in end 2019.

The NCVET regulates the functioning of entities engaged in vocational education and training, both long & short-term, and establish minimum standards for the functioning of such entities. The major functions of NCVET would be recognition and regulation of

Awarding Bodies, Assessment Agencies, and Skill related Information Providers; approval of Qualifications; monitoring and supervision of recognized entities and grievance redressal.

The NCVET would enable integration of fragmented regulatory system and infuse quality assurance across the entire vocational training value chain, leading to better outcomes.

NSDC has operationalized over 38+ Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). The SSCs have established National Occupational Standards for each of these sectors. The SSCs have also developed Qualifications Packs. Assessment agencies are empaneled by them to provide independent assessment of trainees to enhance accountability of training providers. Credible certification is emerging through partnerships.

India cannot wait too long to establish a perfect system given its urgency to train a large number of people either entering the labor market every year or to upskill the labor force. Therefore, short-term courses were implemented on a large scale, but a sound

operational credit system is a distant possibility, without which a lot of it cannot be streamlined. Credit transfer mechanisms are crucial to provide different entry and exit points for people to continue to build their skills base. The provision of short-term courses may be a predominant mechanism for skilling new entrants and upskilling existing workers in the next 10 years. RPL offers the same scale as short term courses but the focus on RPL has been comparatively low.

The focus has been on skilling not upskilling or reskilling which are the two key areas that will define the future of work and the workforce requirements. To get the scale that India needs to achieve, it is critical to tie upskills

training with the formal schooling system. This process has already started, but this will require much more effort to bridge the link between high school level vocational education and training and the private sector and employer groups. RPL in India is also only restricted to vocational education and not applicable to higher education. All this can change if NSQF framework can be operationalized by NCVET in letter and spirit. A major advantage of this approach is that it will allow a natural application of CBT, as general schooling is also competence-based. This synergy will help to broaden the profile of learners by addressing cognitive and noncognitive skills that are critical to enhance employability of school graduates.

## RPL IN INDIA

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a skill certification component to enable a large number of Indian youths to take on industry-relevant skill certification which will help them to secure a better livelihood. Individuals with prior learning experience or skills can register themselves and get assessed and certified under the RPL component

of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) scheme. RPL focuses mainly on individuals engaged in unregulated sectors.

## BENEFITS OF RPL

- No fee is charged from a candidate for participating in the RPL program.

- RPL recognizes the value of learning acquired outside a formal setting and provides a government certificate for skills acquired in informal settings or during work.
- Every certified candidate receives a reward money of INR 500.
- Candidates receive exposure to concepts such as digital literacy, financial literacy, entrepreneurship etc.
- Candidates receive free of cost accidental insurance coverage for three year

CHRONOLOGY OF RPL IN INDIA

Year	Programme	Source Ministry	Focus of the Initiative
2008	Part of Skills Development Initiative Scheme, Modular Employable Skills	Ministry of Labour and Employment	<p>Launching RPL:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on skills;</li> <li>2. Only informal (experiential) learning included;</li> <li>3. Aimed at enhancing employability, promoting social inclusion and adding up to the country's human resource;</li> <li>4. Offered: a) better employment and formal education possibilities to applicants; b) certified human resources to employers saving their assessment costs; c) reimbursement of assessment costs to providers.</li> </ol>
2012	RPL linked to National Vocational Education Qualification Framework	Ministry of HRD (now education)	Standardization of prior learning to establish equivalency between formal learning certification and certification from RPL.
2013	Skill Knowledge Provider Scheme	Ministry of Human Resource and Development	Direct pathway provided from informal learning to formal education based on assessment by linking it to offers for further formal education.

2013	Skill Training Assessment and Reward Scheme	Ministry of Finance	Monetary award to applicants for getting their skills recognized.
2014	Initiative under the National Institute of Open Schooling	Ministry of Human Resource and Development	Assessment of the prior learning of dropouts from the formal system by accepting different types of evidence like pictures, reports from supervisors, videos and the like.
2015	Guidelines on Recognition of Prior Learning Under the Prime Minister Skill Development Scheme	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consolidated policy on RPL including existing provisions but with more weightage to actors from the market.</li> <li>2. Highlighting the social value of RPL by providing:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) recognition to traditional job profiles to provide social prestige to selected traditional practices for livelihood and formal recognition to their contribution to national income;</li> <li>b) recognition to informal learning models where no alternative formal models exist to conserve the existing knowledge and skills.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
2016	Sharda Prasad Committee formed for Reorganizing Sector Skill Councils	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Committee provides clear roadmap to align Sector Skill Councils as per international impact. It also provides detailed analysis of placement data for understanding.
2016	Types of RPL	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	<p>RPL Camps (TYPE-1)-RPL at a location (i.e. Industrial/Traditional Clusters) where workers from a sector are available in large numbers. E.g. Automotive Cluster of Mumbai-Pune</p> <p>Premises (TYPE-2)-RPL conducted on-site at</p>

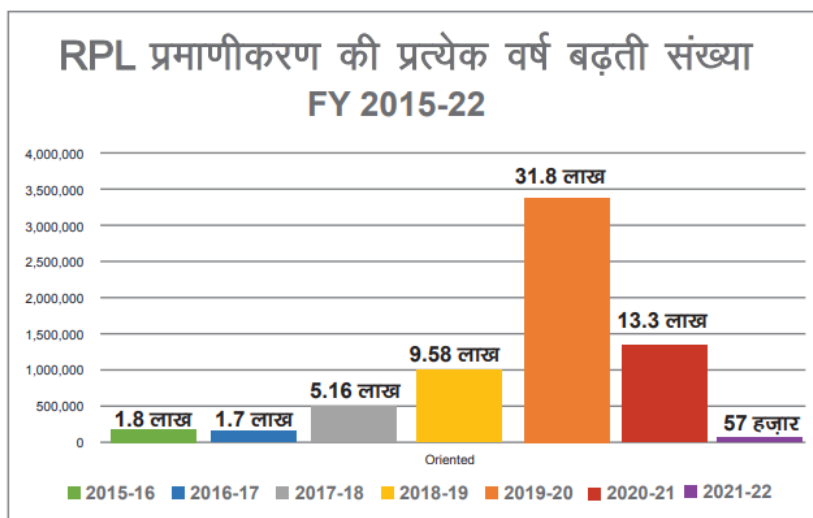
			<p>an employer's premise i.e. workshop, factory, store or outlet etc.</p> <p>RPL Centre's(TYPE-3)-RPL at designated centersfor geographically scattered workers who need to be mobilized.o</p> <p>Best in class Employer (Type 4)-A new type of RPL category is being envisaged under PMKVY 2016-20 to ensure certification of skills available in the organized sector with best in class employers. This helps achieve certification at scale while ensuring quality of certification at lower operational cost</p>
2018	Overall Skills Regulator	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	<p>The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) was notified by MSDE on 5th December 2018. NCVET subsumes the existing skill regulatory bodies- National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) &amp; National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) and will act as an overarching skills regulator. It was operationalized on in late 2019</p>

## CHALLENGES FOR RPL IN INDIA

Description	Challenge
People are not aware of the possibility of RPL, the process that it entails and the benefits it can offer them	Lack of awareness and knowledge about RPL
Employers are not aware of or do not recognize qualifications achieved through RPL	Lack of awareness, understanding and trust on the part of employers
Women who have been out of the workforce do not know that they can take RPL also RPL offers do not focus on the needs of this group	Lack of awareness and targeting of RPL towards those in particular need (vulnerable groups)

Language is a barrier for potential applicants	Multilanguage support
People do not understand the process to follow at an individual level	Lack of guidance and counselling
Employers do not have confidence in the RPL process	Lack of confidence in the quality of the assessment applied during the RPL process
Insufficient numbers of counsellors or competent staff available for RPL and guidance support services inadequate	Lack of capacity – number and competencies of RPL professionals inadequate
The competencies acquired are not sufficient to meet the qualification standards but no opportunity to advance or close the competencies gap is available	Lack of competencies upgrading or competencies gap training opportunities

So far more than 50 lakh people have been certified RPL in the country as of Aug 2021



[https://msde.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-09/PMO\\_RPL\\_Hindi\\_6Aug.pdf](https://msde.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-09/PMO_RPL_Hindi_6Aug.pdf)

There are broadly the following kinds of RPL in the country

**RPL Camps:** located within industrial or Traditional Clusters

**Employer premises:** if there are sufficient number of people working in the same organisation

**Training Centers:** where people can walk-in and take the assessment over a weekend

**Best-in-Class Employers:** in select places where SSC has partnered with leading organisation in the industry to provide access to the best assessment infrastructure

## CASE OF BANGLADESH

The National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) was approved by the government in January 2012 that includes a new qualification framework “National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework” (NTVQF). The NTVQF was developed with support from the ILO-TVET Reform Project in 2010. Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), the apex body for quality assurance, is responsible for its management and implementation.

Competency based courses based on the NTVQF framework have been developed. The piloting of CBT courses started in 2010. The challenges faced in effective implementation are (1) while CBT courses are aligned with NTVQF, conventional long courses are also implemented in parallel. The teachers and staff are more interested in running conventional courses; (2)

CBT courses are implemented in addition to the conventional long courses (secondary school certificate vocational), but these institutions focus more on conventional courses; (3) (4) Availability of courses is limited for scale up. (5) BTEB certified teachers and assessors are not available to implement CBT courses in a much larger scale; (

Several projects plan to support CBT training, but would require clarity in policy direction and implementation arrangements to address the initial challenges encountered. In addition, there is also an need to ensure effective coordination to harmonize initiatives from different projects to support the CBT courses in a systematic way. This will require simplifying the procedures, incentivizing the system to implement CBT courses, developing and

improving guidelines to implement CBT courses, strengthening BTEB to provide technical support to training institutions to implement CBT courses, and seeking buy-ins from major training providers to implement CBT courses within a stipulated time to ensure compliance.

A comprehensive plan for enhancing capacity for application of CBT in skills development is yet to evolve. The major elements for CBT implementation are (1) certified trainers, (2) institutions to be upgraded to become certified RTOs, (3) certified assessors, (4) capacity of BTEB to monitor and effectively manage implementation, 5) occupational standards aligned with NTVQF with endorsement of employers, and (6) awareness of the industrial sectors regarding implication of NTVQF certified skilled workers.

Currently, the preparation of different elements is being done through different projects. Therefore, it is now critical to develop concerted plans within an agreed framework to sustain and complete the rollout of CBT courses. The standards prepared in different occupations at different levels

are yet to be implemented fully. Also, the trainers trained under these two projects focused mainly on pedagogical skills, but more needs to be done on the technical skills. Another crucial element is identification of industry assessors, training, and certification by BTEB. The capacity of BTEB has to be enhanced substantially to manage the scaling up and institutionalization of implementation.

The major constraints in the implementation of CBT programs leading to NTVQF are inadequate infrastructure of the institutions like equipment, trained teachers, and assessors, and lack of clarity in respect of implementation within specified time frame and other issues as mentioned above. Thus, CBT implementation is still at an initial stage in Bangladesh. There is also a need to develop a system of providing credits for modules that can lead to NTVQF levels. There is plan of capacity building of BTEB and NSDC Secretariat and training of trainers and assessors for about 1,620 staff and management training of 150 principals and key administrators under the Skills for Employment Investment Pro (SEIP) initiative.



RPL in Bangladesh follows two pathways Assessment-only pathway (RPL) and Combination pathway (Training and assessment for some units of competency and RPL for other units of competency)

The result of an RPL process can be credit for all the competencies in a qualification or just some of them. Credit given can allow for entry into a qualification and/or provide credit towards achieving the qualification, thereby possibly reducing the training time required for a learner to achieve a qualification. Assessment can only be conducted by Registered Assessors

who have completed training on RPL, familiarization with common types of evidence and assessment plans. For example, a skilled individual working in an informal sector that wants to get a job in the formal sector but needs certificate If he has no paperwork to prove his skills and has trouble reading. He comes into the BTEB, gets an application form and submits it with photos of him welding and a letter from his employer. He is asked to do a skill test and is given credit for all units except for two specific literacy units, which he completes through a night class. He is given his Level 2 Certificate

<p>Scope</p>	<p>RPL in Bangladesh offers certifications in TVET only and covers recognition of formal and informal learning and competencies</p> <p>Legal and policy framework:• Bangladesh has a National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF), which establishes TVET assessment requirements and entry points. RPL is linked to the NTVQF</p>
<p><b>Process</b></p>	<p>The main institution responsible for RPL is the Bangladesh Technical Education Board• Industry advisory groups and private sector are involved• Assessment centres must be accredited to operateStages and steps:• The RPL system in Bangladesh allows for several options towards certification. These are based on a combination of credits obtained through RPL, training and assessment. The options are called the “assessment-only” pathway and the “combination” pathway• Assessors need to be trained on RPL and be registered</p>

<b>Methods</b>	The system in Bangladesh relies on centrally set examinations (a proposal has been made to abandon centrally set examinations and introduce a competency logbook to document competencies in the informal economy)• Assessment is based on evidence only• The decision on whether or not to certify an applicant is made following assessment against existing standards (NTVQF)
<b>Further observations</b>	The system is still in the process of being established

We now focus on issues and contexts related to RPL in three different countries: Brazil, Germany and India. The aim of this comparative study is to present RPL programmes – Certific Network, and ProfilPass Project and Indian RPL to analyse the differences and the similarities among them according to:

- 1) their central aims, considering the historical, political, and social context of each country;
- 2) their target groups – individuals and social groups; and
- 3) their formats and structures of action – processes, networks, and instruments adopted for recognition and certification..

The comparison involves four steps:

- 1) descriptive juxtaposition;
- 2) analytical juxtaposition;
- 3) descriptive comparison; and finally
- 4) analytical comparison

## RPL IN BRAZIL

Certific Network is considered an exemplary case of RPL in Brazil.

While it is important to highlight that there isn't a tradition of RPL policies in Brazil but government initiatives in recent years has stimulated recognition of learning. The most relevant one is the 'National Network of Professional Certification and Initial and Continuing Training', in short 'Certific Network'. It is a public policy for professional education focused on what the Brazilian government calls 'social inclusion'. It focuses on low-skilled workers, who seek the certification of professional knowledge obtained through processes of non-formal and informal learning.

It was in November 2009 that the Certific Network was actually regulated and created through Interministerial Ordinance. The creation was possible due to demands and pressures made by education professionals, researchers, and civil society organizations.

The Certific Network bases its recognition process on the concept of professional certification, which presents itself as something that transcends reductionist notions of merely educational or occupational certification. The pillars of this

perspective of professional certification is based on the French policy of acquired experiences validation and on the Portuguese programme of recognition of school and work knowledge, modelling it on aspects and needs of Brazilian reality.

The "Guiding Document" of the Certific Network was created and published in 2014, it mentions specifications of the labour context in Brazil. These include: low education level of the labour force (especially among professions linked to manual and rural activities); deep presence of informal and illegal labour (child labour and slavery-like labour are also an issue); maintenance of fordist or hyperfordist production regimes in the present context of neoliberal globalisation; the impact of the dimensions of race, ethnicity, and gender in the integration into the labour market, which means extremely high inequalities between men, women, white, black and indigenous people, etc.; public education, social security, and employment systems which are still far from satisfying the needs of the population; persistent existence of misery and hunger in several regions and large sectors of the population.

Thus, taking some foreign examples as an inspiration, but seeking to consider the national reality, the supporting pillars of the Certific Network actions may be summarized by: 1) Social recognition of knowledge built throughout life, linked to a profession; 2) Continuity of studies in professional education; 3) Increase in educational levels; 4) Articulation with the Public Employment System.

The policy targets young and adult workers, over 18 years old, who fit the following requirements: 'holders of a certificate or diploma compatible with the minimum education required for the respective professional certification process'; 'inserted or not in the labour market'; interested in 'formal recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences developed in formal and non- formal learning processes and in their life and work trajectory'). The Network is configured as

[...] a set of actions that aim to establish professional certification processes to assist young and adult workers who seek for formal recognition and certification of professional knowledge, skills and competences, for the purpose of

further studies and/or professional practice.

Therefore, its central aims are:

- offer professional certification processes free of charge for purposes of study or professional practice;
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of professional certification processes; and
- articulate public policies on employment, work and income, professional training and schooling, through strategies that aim for social inclusion and equity in the creation and construction of educational projects for professional certification. (Certific Network, 2014, p. 26)

It is based on these pillars and aims that the Certific Network was implemented in 2009 as a state strategy that includes a large set of governmental and non-governmental sectors and organisations. Such large dimensions can be observed since the beginning of the policy, which is planned, organised and developed by the Ministries of Education and Labour.

Its governance structure is composed of three levels (national level; institutions and networks level;

educational units level), which have their own deliberative and operational organisations (such as the 'National Committee for Professional Education Policies' at the national level; the 'Deliberative Chambers' at the institutions and networks level; and the 'Councils' at the educational units level). Although the organisations that compose the national level have strategic responsibilities (build, approve, and disseminate rules; monitor activities, etc.), it is at the other two levels that the concrete actions in professional certification are developed, such as creating certification processes and training qualified professionals to act in them (institutions and networks level); create procedures for the development, monitoring and evaluation of professional certification processes (educational units level).

In addition to the strategic core, the Network includes other entities that assume responsibilities related to 'education, certification, metrics, standardization and professional use'. They are public institutions that encompass the federal, provincial, district, and municipal networks of vocational education, the national learning services, and non-

governmental organizations.

The Certific Network was created in the midst of a series of initiatives by the Brazilian government that had the ultimate goal of reorganizing and expanding federal institutions focused on basic and vocational education. In this context, the Certific Network was organized according to the structure of the 'Federal System of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education', a public system which connects vocational and college education. It is composed of 64 institutions, located in all regions and states of the federation, with 661 units currently in operation. This system is very important for the Certific Network. For example, the Certific Centres (the units that effectively develop the certification processes) operate through the existing structure of the 'Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education'.

However, it is very difficult to measure and confirm the success of this RPL policy. Besides that, there is unclear information about the number of Certific Centres currently in operation and the number of workers who benefited from the Certific Network.

Funding is major challenge as no extra funds for physical structure or even for hiring professionals for the Certific Network. This means that there is no allocation of financial resources to the certification units. The used resources (physical structure and labour force) are those that already exist in the institutions (ex: the regular budget and teachers

#### RPL IN GERMANY

The German concept ProfilPASS (PP) as an instrument for adults is based very much on the Lisbon Strategy, launched by the European Council, which identifies Lifelong Learning (LLL) as a priority of the European Union's education policy. In 2001, the working document 'Memorandum on Lifelong Learning' marked the start of the consultation process between the Commission and the Member States. Within the mega idea and political concept of life-long and life wide learning, proposals 'focus on the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning, and the transfer and mutual recognition of qualifications and diplomas'. All documents that have appeared in the wake of the European communication process

of the 'Federal System of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education'), which had started to develop one more task (in addition to all the previously existing demands): the RPL process. This situation has 'hampered, delayed or prevented the policy from being implemented.

can be interpreted as affirmations of the concept of learning assessment, recognition and validation. The developments guided by the Memorandum should be classified as a political mandate for the development of, firstly, the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, followed by the development of RPL concepts and instruments.

From 2006 the ProfilPASS was developed by a national consortium (German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE), German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), and the Institute for Development Planning and Structural Research (IES) at the University of Hanover). Funding was provided by

the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the EU

The ProfilPASS is a German tool that assists people in finding out what their strengths and competences are. With the help of an advisor they discover their hidden competences and set their goals. Therefore, the ProfilPASS tool prevents people from dropping out of training and education.

The ProfilPASS system assumes that people acquire a large part of their competences in informal areas of life such as family, caring, voluntary work, and the like, which is of great importance. In Germany, there is no national strategy or regulation (law) for the recognition of prior learning. Therefore, 'users' are addressed instead of target groups:

Users are mostly people who are transitioning: job seekers, individuals keen to re-enter the labour market, immigrants, unqualified workers, people from marginalized groups, people who are endangered by unemployment, students transitioning from education to work or individuals who dropped out of education and training courses previously. In addition, entrepreneurs can use it to source employees.

The concept tries to balance, on the one hand, an economic notion, the need for employment and being employable, and labour market needs, and, on the other hand, individual interests and personal self-discovery. As the PP tool has it, 'Working with the ProfilPASS is like a "timeout" from everyday routine. If you do decide to take the plunge, you will be embarking on a voyage of discovery – destination: you. At its end, you will have come a lot closer to your own answers for "Where am I now?" and "Where am I going?".' The concept promotes a resource-oriented approach that contributes to a person's self-assurance.

Today, the ProfilPASS is a strong instrument that comprises 1) a tool, which provides 2) ProfilPASS service points (professional guidance) and assures 3) quality. More than 200,000 people have used ProfilPASS since 2006, of which half were adults (74,000) and the other half young people (89,000). Regional ProfilPASS-centres and PP counsellors in Germany support adults in the process of RPL. Disseminators promote the ProfilPASS system in their region. So-called 'dialogue centres' have been

established to train advisors in the methodology of documenting competences in a two-day preparatory seminar. The training of advisors is coordinated at the national level by the ProfilPASS Service Centre of the German Institute of Adult Education (DIE).

The ProfilPASS emphasizes self-exploration and self-reflection rather than an exact measurement of competences certificates and qualifications are also mentioned. The various steps in the PP are:

Biographical interviews to stimulate users to narrate activities and episodes of successful performance.

Small-group discussions to highlight personal competences.

Self-assessment through performance of their identified competences.

Developing a vision for the future by combining users' own preferences and choices with the competences they themselves identify

To expand the use and availability of PP and to adapt it to specific needs, several European projects have been launched, including 'CORE', which is designed to assess competencies for

the re-integration of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. 'COOCO' is a project that builds on the ProfilPASS and addresses counsellors working with cognitively impaired people to bring forward their potential and interests for competence development. For this purpose, the ProfilPASS is adapted to the needs of cognitively impaired people, that is, in a barrier-free format. 'SCOUT' is a project that is linked to counsellors working with new immigrants. For this purpose, the ProfilPASS is adapted and translated into Simple Language.

During the start of the ProfilPASS in Germany, the ever-increasing number persons in low-skilled jobs, contractual and part-time work, were the top priority for RPL. But with ubiquitous digitalization of societies, experiences during COVID-19, and the transformations within and after (economic instability and short-time work, social instability, individual uncertainty) the role and development may change on recognition infrastructure; on guidance and counselling; assessment procedures; assessment standards; transparent and quality assured systems that support and complement the existing education system. For example, it is



not transparent who has already participated in the ProfilPASS and with what outcomes and benefits (individual, collective, and social level). How do professional adult educators and counsellors experience and evaluate this instrument?

According to early studies, training providers are sometimes unable to adequately classify knowledge

acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning. Tailormade courses on offer and teaching methods to reflect previous learning. Appropriate teaching methods should be developed to promote the intended informal learning so as to create at the same time a systematic link between different forms of learning.'

## COMPARISON OF BRAZIL, GERMANY AND INDIA

After the short descriptive juxtaposition of RPL programs in Brazil, India, and Germany, in this section, an analytical comparison between these programmes by highlighting some details of their similarities and differences and, consequently, some explanations. One first aspect is connected to the long (not so long) tradition these countries have in the field of adult education. Adult education in Germany became a central issue in the early 1970s. In fact, the state of Germany declared adult education to be an independent fourth sector of education in the 1970s. In Brazil, the

subject of adult education as a specific area has been the topic of debates and initiatives at least since the 1940s. The current understanding of adult education was defined only in 1996. This long historical experience happened mainly because of pressure coming from civil society organizations, such as teachers' unions and literacy movements. Despite that, in Brazil, adult education continues to be a devalued object within the scope of laws, programmes, and the allocation of state resources.

In India adult literacy was a priority

post-independence and work on adult education picked up in 1970s but adult skills in particular are recent developments. Adult education continues to be a devalued object in the overall framework. RPL also does not have the financial and support of a supranational institution that Germany has because of EU.

Germany became a member of the EU in 1958, The EU entry of Germany has enabled new opportunities thanks to financing programmes. Additionally, the influence of the European Union has been evident in German education policy, especially after the Memorandum of Lifelong Learning. Therefore, the EU performs an important role in adult education programmes such as strategies of lifelong learning in Germany. The ProfilPASS concept and instrument were established in the context of lifelong learning policy. According to the Lisbon Strategy, it is important to improve the employability and qualification of workers. The Lisbon Strategy had the purpose of 'constructing the most dynamic and competitive economy in the world by 2010, based on knowledge and,

simultaneously, capable of guaranteeing a sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. Thus, the fundamental aspects of the Lisbon Strategy focus on education, training, lifelong learning in articulation with labour and the knowledge society. Following the influence of the EU, funding emerges as an important tool.

Financing coming from structural funds (ESF) promotes several adult education programmes and activities directed to labour market needs. The ProfilPASS is supported by EU structural funds and national funds. For example, ProfilPASS is co-funded by the ERASMUS+ and/or Socrates Programmes of the EU, the German federal government and the state governments (Federal Ministry of Education).

On the other hand, Brazil had a late development inside the monopolist capitalist order of the 20th century. The country has a persistent tradition of undervaluing adult education policies. In fact, it is a negative historical trend that affects all social policies, including adult education in particular. Therefore, it is not surprising that RPL policies have

never received much attention from the different governments. The Certific Network is a great example of that. Despite being the most important RPL experience in the country, it does not have its own funding source. This is certainly one of the main causes of difficulties and delays in the implementation and operationalization of this policy.

Concerning the historical, political, and social context, Certific is an innovative and recent policy that addresses RPL in Brazil. In fact, it was regulated and created in 2009 as a public policy for professional education focused on social inclusion.

The state had an important role in adult education policy implementation through the intervention of central government entities – Ministry of Education and Labour (Certific) and Ministry of Education (ProfilPASS). Besides that, there are other national public institutions responsible for these programmes, such as Federal Institutes of Education (Certific), Nand German Institute for Adult Education, German Institute for International Educational Research, and Institute for Development Planning and

Structural Research (ProfilPASS). In the case of Brazil, the institutions involved in Certific are federal, provincial, district, and municipal networks of vocational education, the national learning services, and non-governmental organizations.

While Certific is a public policy for adult education, the ProfilPASS is an instrument for adults. Certific is regulated, whereas ProfilPASS does not have regulation. Adult Education 'is not regulated in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany' (p. 19).

Taking into account the low level of qualifications in Brazil, the Certific are seen as political strategies. Both programmes are aimed to increase adult qualification. With the purpose of social inclusion, the Certific aims to assist workers who are interested in having their professional knowledge recognized and certified for the purpose of further studies or professional practice. This means that the knowledge that is acquired in non-formal and informal learning processes can be valued and certified – professional certification.

The aims of ProfilPASS are similar to those of Certific and India's RPL. It is

designed to promote: 1) personal and professional (re)orientation; 2) (re)integration into professional life; 3) planning of professional evolution. These results show that employability seems to be an issue relevant to the adult education field. The purposes arise in the context of globalization and the re- structuring of the Portuguese economy, also in keeping with the lifelong learning perspective established by the EU as part of human resources management principles, and with values related to social cohesion aimed at the

integration of different participants in ALE, in line with the modernization and social control and democratic and emancipatory models. (p. 51)

Nonetheless, these three programmes encompass an individual and reflexive approach, insofar as they want to help adults reflect on their experiences and learnings developed in non-formal and informal settings. Furthermore, this raises several issues related to individual self-esteem.

	Brazil <i>Certific Network</i>	Germany <i>ProfilPASS Concept and Instrument</i>	India <i>RPL</i>
<b>Context</b>	1.Late capitalist development, with low education levels, deep presence of informal labour, high levels of inequality, etc.  2.History of devaluation in adult education and low tradition in RPL policies	EU Member State since 1958;  Adult education became a central issue in early 1970s  State declared adult education as an independent fourth sector of education in the 1970s	Adult Literacy post-independence to some continuing education centers Adult education had some place in 5 year plans Low tradition in RPL policies History of devaluation in adult education and low

			tradition in RPL policies  Is at its infancy
<b>Aims</b>	<p>Offer professional certification process free of charge for purposes of study or professional practice</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the implementation of professional certification processes</p> <p>Articulate public policies on employment, work and income, professional training and schooling through strategies for social inclusion and equity in the creation and building of education projects for professional certification</p>	<p>Increase adults' skills and qualifications level for the labour market</p> <p>Assist people in finding out their strengths and competencies</p> <p>Prevent people from dropping out of training and education</p>	<p>Certification for skills acquired in the workplace for enhanced income and productivity</p>
<b>Target</b>	<p>Young and adult workers above 18 years</p> <p> Holders of a certificate or diploma compatible with the minimum education required for the respective professional certification process</p>	<p>People who are transitioning: job seekers, immigrants, unqualified workers, marginalized groups, students transitioning to work etc.</p> <p>Entrepreneurs can use the instrument to source employees</p>	<p>Primarily workers in formal sectors since</p> <p>Work in informal sectors is picking up.</p>

<b>Format and Structures</b>	<p>Organized and developed by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour</p> <p>Governance and operational structures are composed of public institutions of vocational education networks and non-governmental organizations</p> <p>The most important institution inside the Network is the Federal System of Professional, scientific and technological education which contains the units that effectively develop the certification processes (Certifica Centres) Operationalization problems, there are no extra funds for a specific physical structure or labour force</p>	<p>An instrument organized by the Ministries of Education</p> <p>Not regulated by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany</p> <p>Supported by EU structural funds and national funds</p>	<p>Organized by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship</p> <p>Regulated by NCVET</p> <p>Implemented by Sector Skill Councils and partners</p>
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It is safe to say that the potential of RPL is not yet realized. (Critical) lessons learnt demonstrate the ongoing need for:

- high-level commitment by policymakers, institutional leaders, stake- holders and practitioners at the federal, provincial/territorial, and community levels
- tools and guidance as the currency of learning
- awareness-raising to highlight the benefits and opportunities of RPL to

learners, employees, people not in education or employment, and employers

- processes for RPL that facilitate access for underprivileged people who lack educational opportunities
- processes that are trustworthy, reliable, and flexible, as well as rigorous in terms of Adult Education professional expertise;
- the provision of transparent and openly accessible RPL information and support for learners (candidates);
- the presence of strong links between the education and training sectors, the world of work, and civil society

## DETAILED ANALYSIS OF FIELD EXERCISE

The Recognition of Prior Learning program undertaken by CEMCA covered identification of industry and certification of uncertified workforce in 4 sectors indicated below

<b>Sector Skill Council</b>
Capital Goods Skill Council (CGSC)
Automotive Sector Development Council
Furniture and Fittings Sector Skill Council
Domestic workers Sector Skill Council

The workers were mapped to relevant NSQF approved Job roles. The mapped candidates were provided 12 hrs training over 2-4 days followed by assessments. Since as soon as the project started, India was severely affected by the Covid Pandemic, therefore work was halted and then realigned for implementation using Covid appropriate tools. All workers who successfully pass the assessment will be certified and honored with a certification. In addition, a sum of Rs 300 was transferred

to the bank account of the candidate who clears the assessment successfully. The RPL involved

Group Discussions & Exercises

- Instructor- led teaching
- Practical assessment on Machine

Mobilization & Selection-Mobilization involved activities related to mobilization of potential candidates who are skilled but uncertified.

Counselling and pre-screening-Potential candidates are counselled on, what is RPL, and how the skill certification will assist them in transforming their life. After counselling, a pre-screening was conducted to ascertain the job role which matches the prior knowledge. The candidate is assessed on both Core as well as Non-Core NOSs. National Occupational Standards (NOS) describe best practices by bringing together performance criteria, knowledge and skills pertaining to a job role.

Certification and Award Ceremony- SSC upon approving the result issues the certificate to successful candidate. The duration of Training of Trainers Program is 2-4 days. This included 12 hours of training and then Assessment of Skills and knowledge of the potential candidates. Pre-screening involves collection of supporting documentation/ evidences from the candidates and a candidate self-assessment.

Orientation- All candidates are mandatorily provided orientation of 8 hours. This orientation includes domain specific training, training on health and safety and familiarization with the assessment processes and methods. Knowledge gaps identified during the counselling stage are also addressed during the orientation delivery.

Final assessment-Assessment of candidates was conducted by agencies nominated by Sector Skill Councils





## METHODOLOGY

Quantitative and Qualitative analysis of the exercise was done for the following RPL

SectorSkill Council	No of workers	Job Role	Locations
Capital Goods Skill Council (CGSC)	250	Stainless Steel Fabricator Fitter Mechanical Assembly Polisher-Machine	Gurgaon. Faridabad
Automotive Sector Development Council	250	Welding Technician Maintenance Technician - Mechanical- Press Shop Operator Tool Room operator/ Technician QC Inspector	Haridwar, Manesar

Furniture and Fittings Sector Skill Council	250	Assistant Carpenter -Wooden Furniture Lead Carpenter-Wooden Furniture	Delhi, Udaipur, Singrur
Domestic workers Sector Skill Council	500	Housekeeping cum Cook	Villages around Varanasi and Lakhimpur Khiri

## DATA COLLECTION

The research group collected data and assessments responses of each worker at predefined assessment locations in person and by online means. As required phone interactions were also held to gain more understanding. Objective questions were asked to each worker. Our field research enumeration team in partnership with SSC representatives proctored the survey.

764 candidates filled the base line survey but only 503 candidates filled the endline survey. This report is based on the complete final poll dataset collected and draws on qualitative research from 10 focus groups discussions, individual discussions, pre , post and conducted across sectors.

The study used a mix of primary and secondary research techniques to get the information and required data. Primary research adopted a blend of quantitative and qualitative research techniques. It included the following;

- One-to-one structured interview with the selected workers. The sample comprised of three different categories (a) workers who were trained ; (b) untrained workers.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with the members of Project Implementing agencies (Sector Skill Councils, training partners, employers)

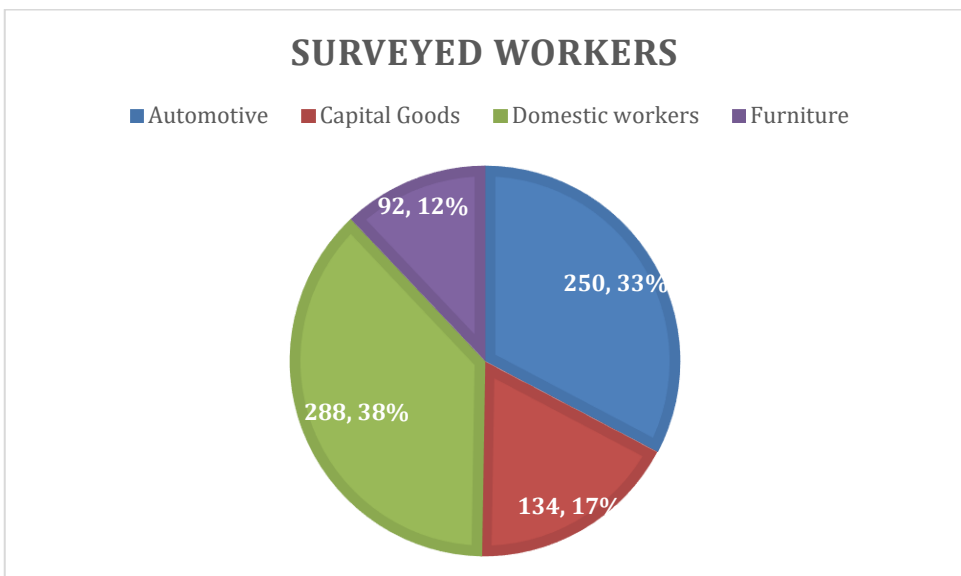
- Checklists for eliciting information from the other key stakeholders were circulated by in person meetings/email/call for their responses to key questions on the project.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The study gathered data for 764 candidates through both online and offline mechanism. Below is an analysis of the data collected. There was a 8-10% dropout rate of the candidates, these filled the survey but did not attend all the steps of the RPL exercise for personal reasons or change of plans from the implementers. The data set was evenly modified to reflect this.

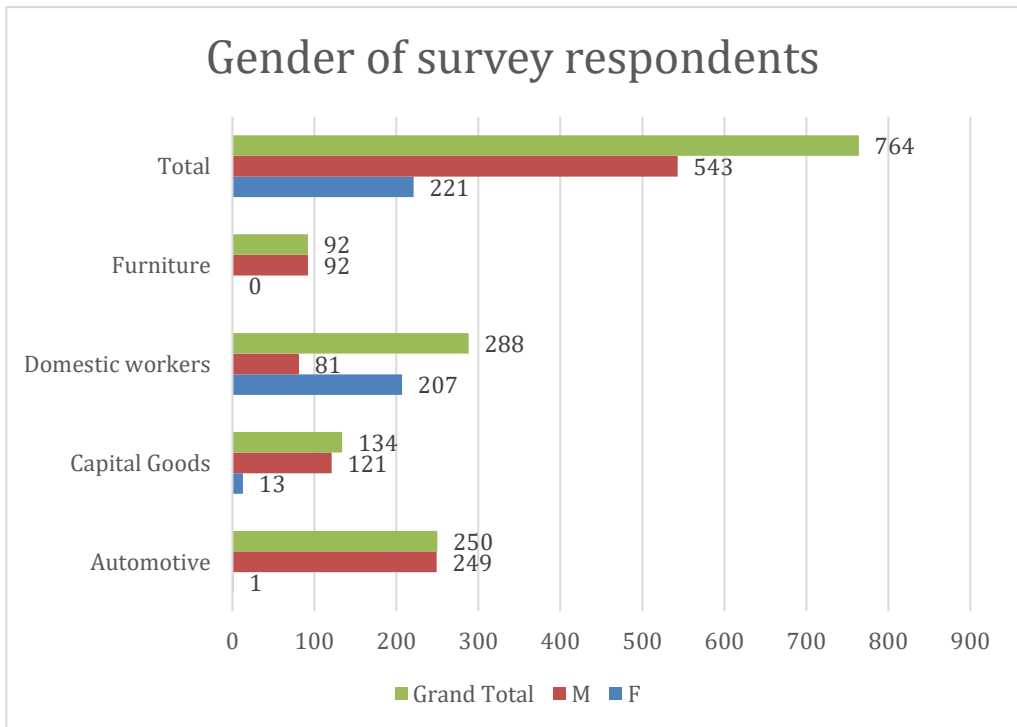
### Sector wise participation

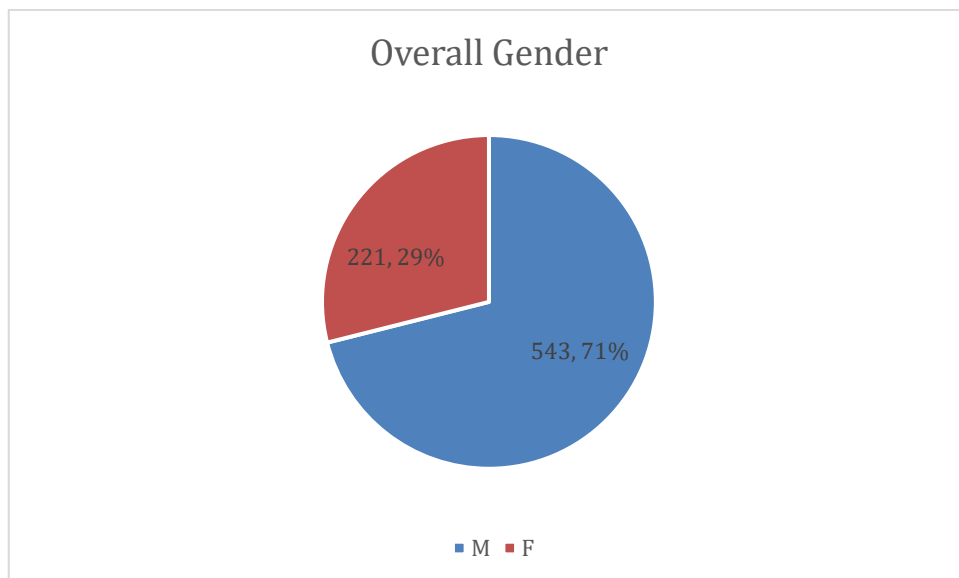
Participants from all sector skill councils participated in the exercise evenly in the exercise.



Sector	Surveyed workers
<b>Automotive</b>	250
<b>Capital Goods</b>	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>	288
<b>Furniture</b>	92
<b>Total</b>	764

**Gender**





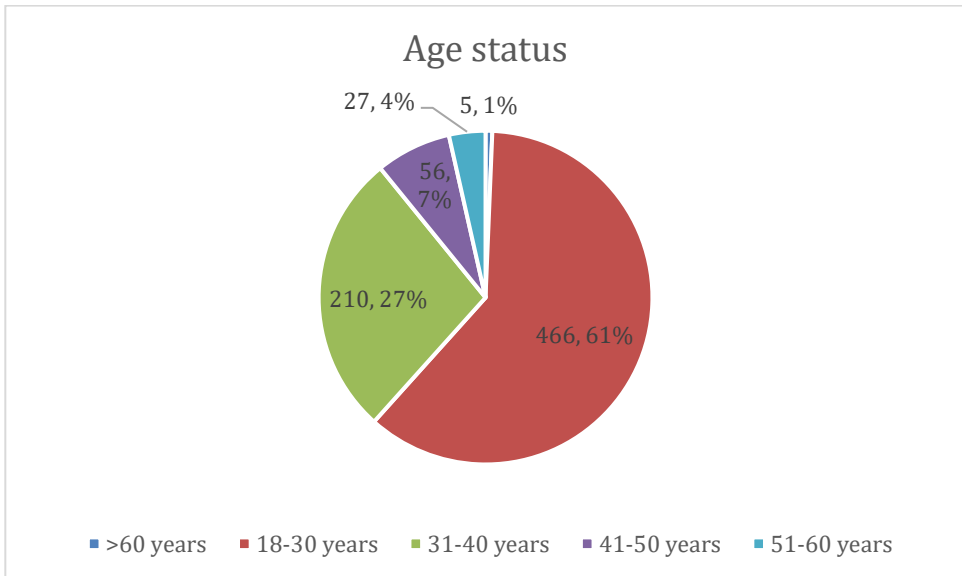
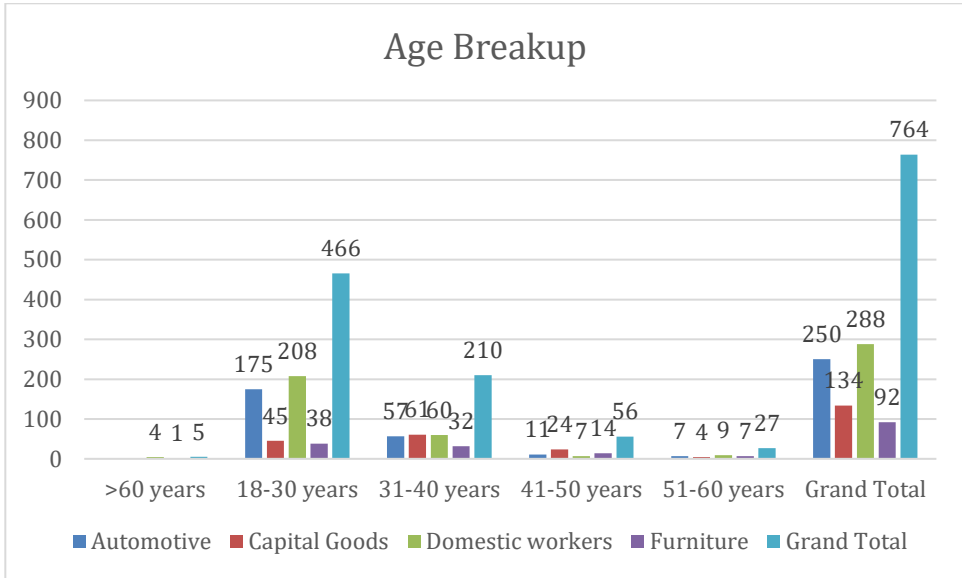
Though the women form a large percentage of workers in the sectors it was observed that participation for RPL formal training programme is higher amongst males than females. This is reflected in the gender wise number where 71 % are male trainees and 29% are female trainees

There was no participation from female in the Furniture Sector Skill Council while there was maximum participation of the females in the Domestic Work Sector Skill Council.

	F	M	Grand Total
<b>Automotive</b>	1	249	250
<b>Capital Goods</b>	13	121	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>	207	81	288
<b>Furniture</b>	0	92	92
<b>Total</b>	221	543	764

### Demography of the workers

RPL programme is applicable to all workers but a majority of workers 61% was from the age of 18-30

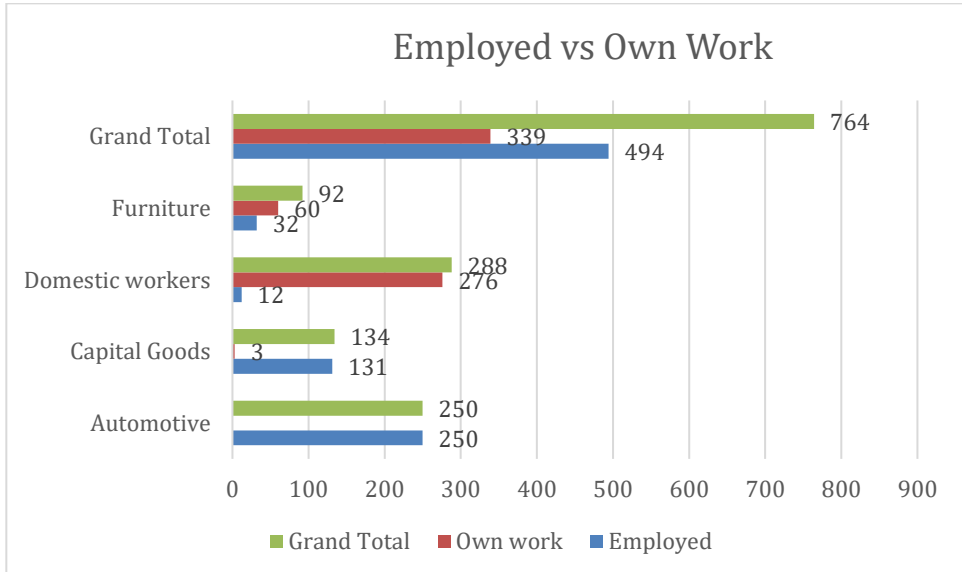


Age	>60 years	18-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	Grand Total
	10	466	210	56	27	764

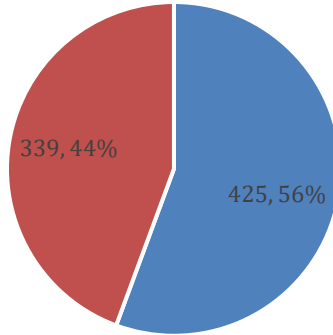
<b>Automotive</b>		175	57	11	7	250
<b>Capital Goods</b>		45	61	24	4	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>	4	208	60	7	9	288
<b>Furniture</b>	1	38	32	14	7	92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>764</b>

### Employment status of workers

Lot of the sectors like furniture and domestic workers are largely informal sectors. The survey had a mix of participation from the formal and informal sector. The %age of people who participated in the programme and were employed was around 56% while the percentage of people who were self-employed was around 44%.



Employed vs own work

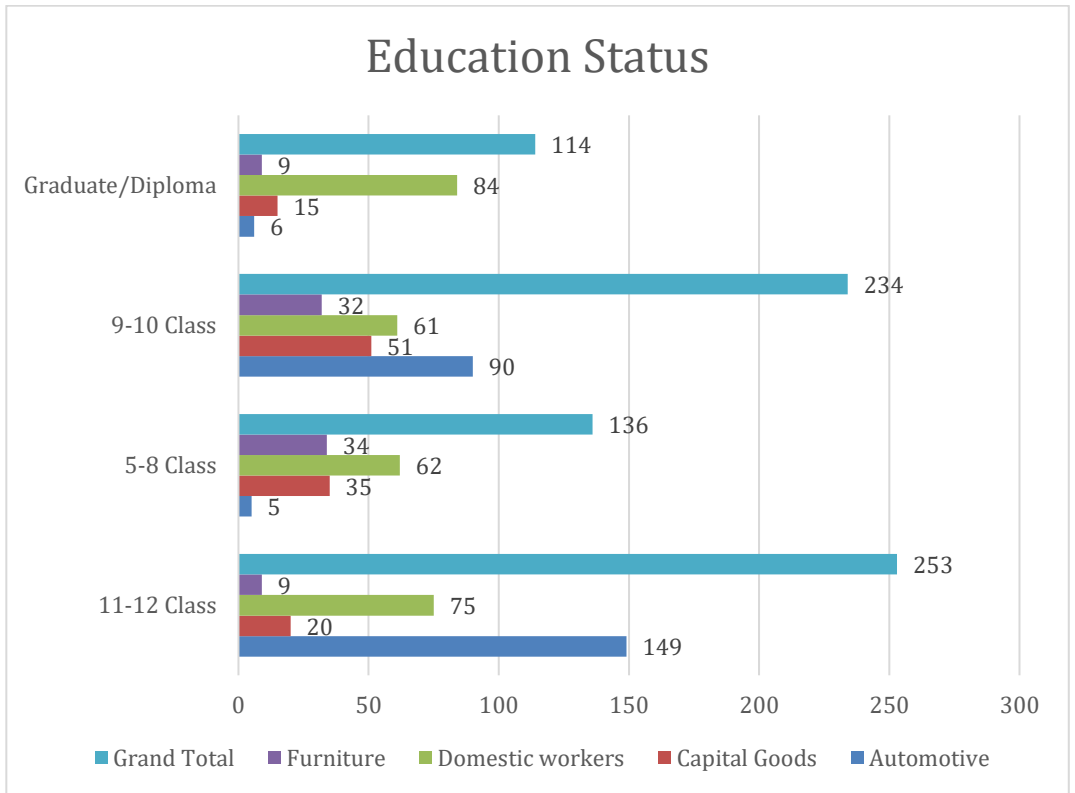


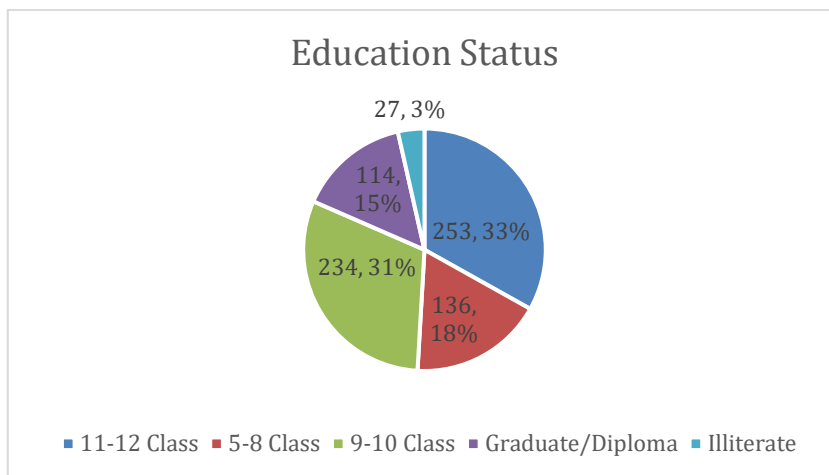
■ Employed ■ Own work

	Employed	Own work	Grand Total
<b>Automotive</b>	250		250
<b>Capital Goods</b>	131	3	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>	12	276	288
<b>Furniture</b>	32	60	92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>764</b>



**Educational Status of the workers**





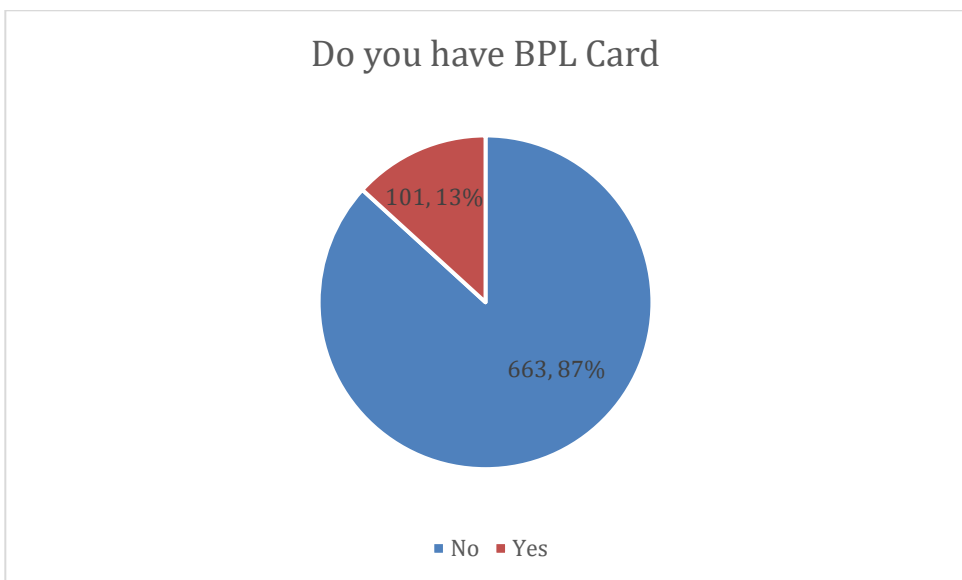
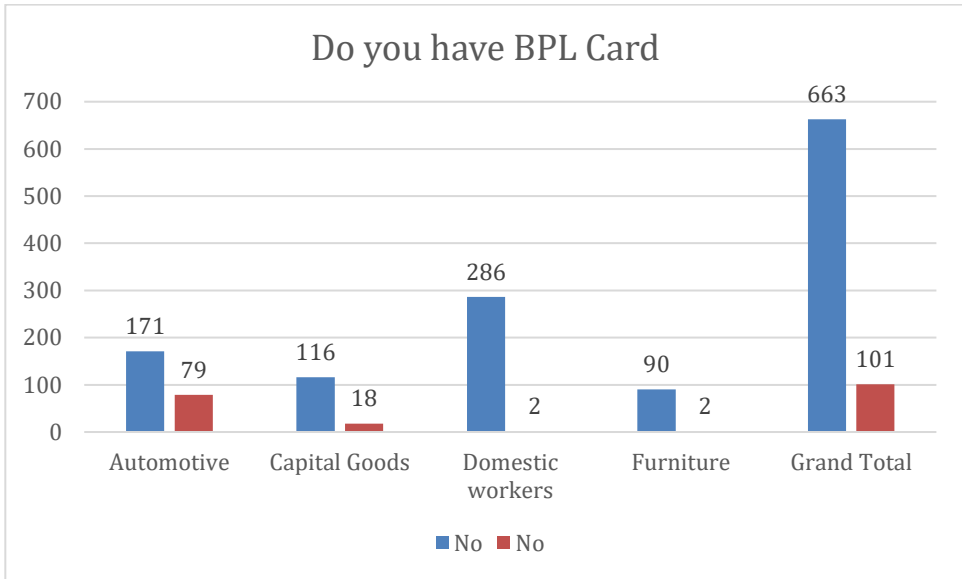
	11-12 Class	5-8 Class	9-10 Class	Graduate/Diploma	Illiterate	Grand Total
<b>Automotive</b>	149	5	90	6		250
<b>Capital Goods</b>	20	35	51	15	13	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>	75	62	61	84	6	288
<b>Furniture</b>	9	34	32	9	8	92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>764</b>

### Poverty Level of workers

Understanding the poverty level of the workers maybe a good idea to understand if they can pay for the programme if they have to. From the data collected it is evident that 87% most workers are above poverty line.

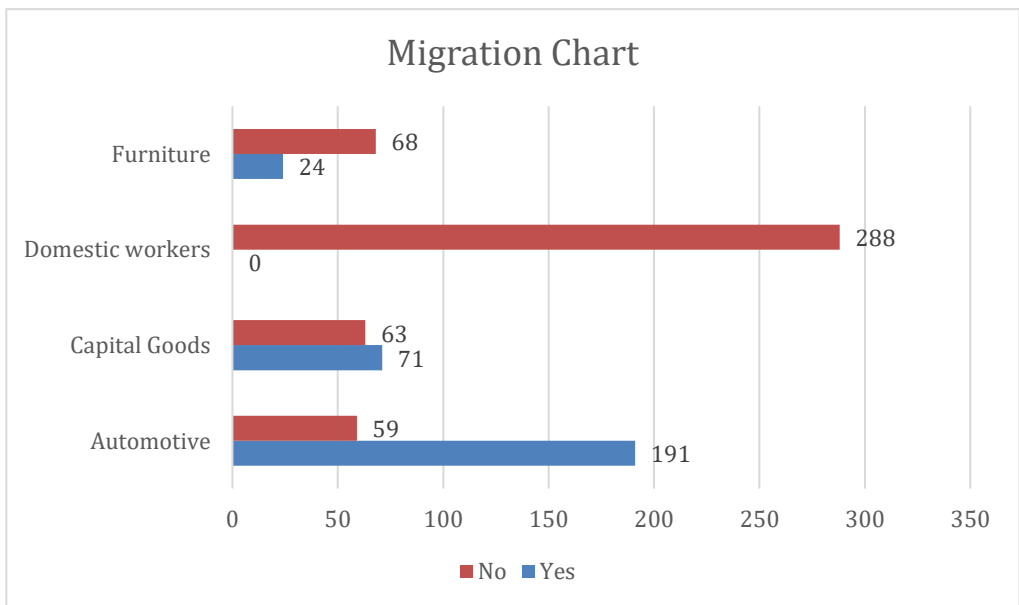
Do you have BPL Card	No	Yes	Grand Total
Automotive	171	79	250

Capital Goods	116	18	134
Domestic workers	286	2	288
Furniture	90	2	92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>764</b>



**Migrant status of workers**

The domicile status was asked to ascertain the impact of RPL on vulnerable migrant workers. Since a lot of workers in Delhi NCR are migrant workers. As assumed data shows that 40% of the workers were migrant workers. Almost all migrant workers were from Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. The sample for migration was skewed since training for domestic workers was conducted in villages via phone when they were largely unemployed.

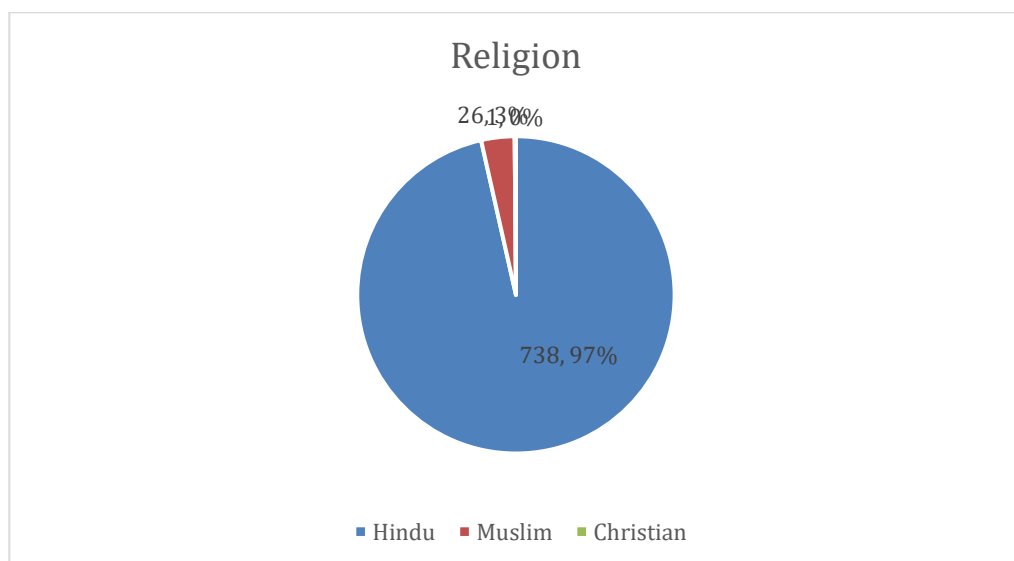


Sector	Yes	No	From	Grand Total
Automotive	191	59		250

Capital Goods	71	63	From UP- Baghpat , Azamgarh , Bareilly, Basti, Jaunpur, Rampur, Saharanpur From Bihar- Darbhanga, Samastipur From Bengal And Kerala	134
Domestic workers	0	288		288
Furniture	24	68	Bareilly, Basti , Deoria , Gonda , Gorakhpur , Hardoi, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Farukhabad, Saharanpur, Siddharthnagar From Bihar Motihari, Muzaffarnagar, Samastipur	92
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>764</b>

## Religion

Most of the participating workers were Hindus.

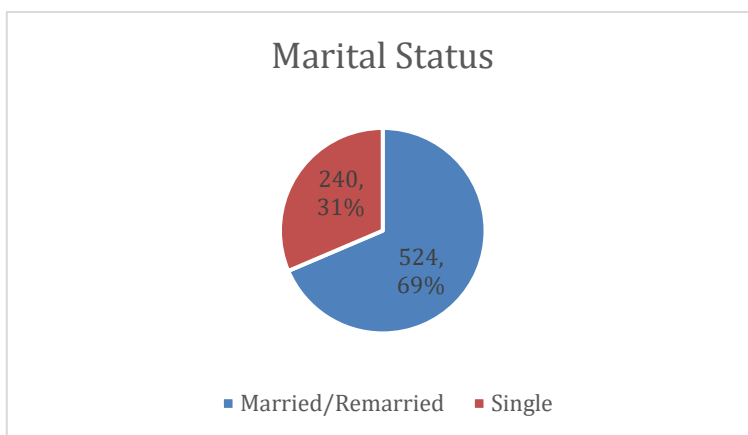


Religion	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Grand Total
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<b>Automotive</b>		249	1	250
<b>Capital Goods</b>	1	124	9	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>		279	9	288
<b>Furniture</b>		86	6	92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>764</b>

### Marital Status of workers

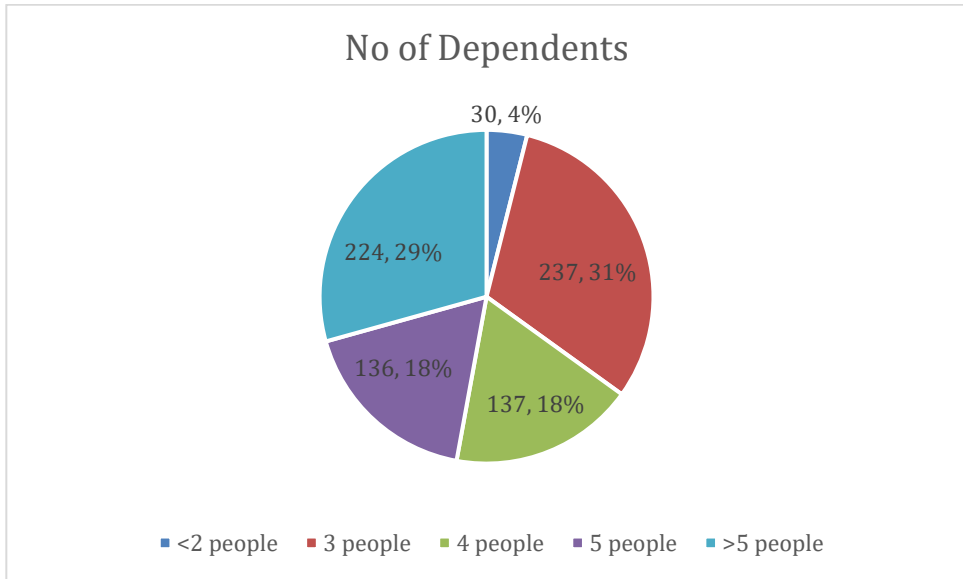
Around 69% of attending workers were married and had family obligations. Rest were single.

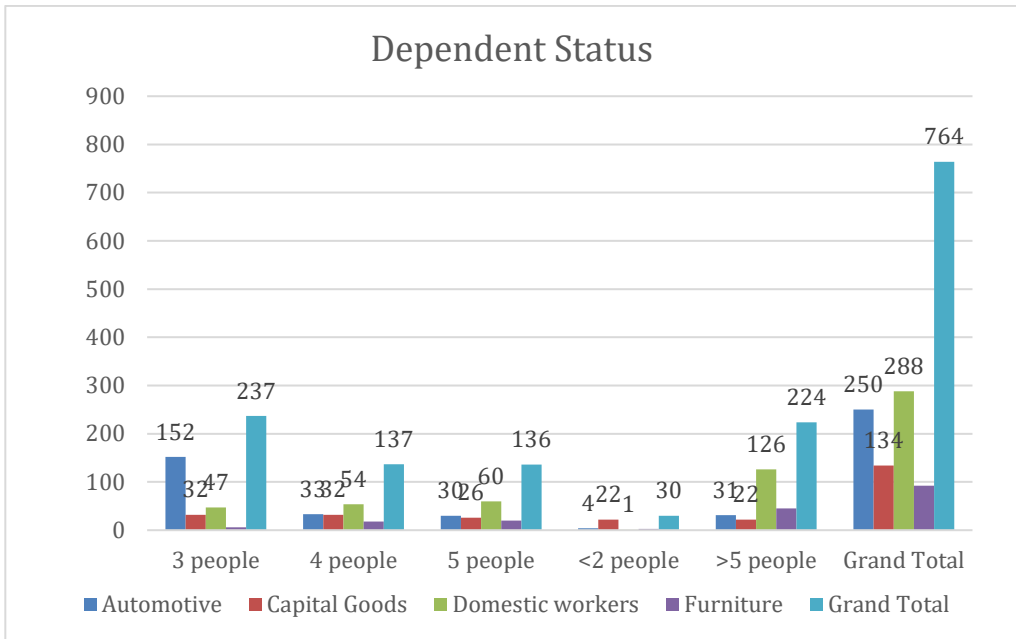


Row Labels	Married	Remarried	Divorced	Single	Grand Total
<b>Automotive</b>	168		0	82	250
<b>Capital Goods</b>	118	1	0	15	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>	163		0	125	288
<b>Furniture</b>	74		0	18	92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>764</b>

### Number of dependents on workers

People primarily earn not just for themselves but their families. A larger family size puts pressure on the workers for more income. More than 30% of people had more than 5 members to support.



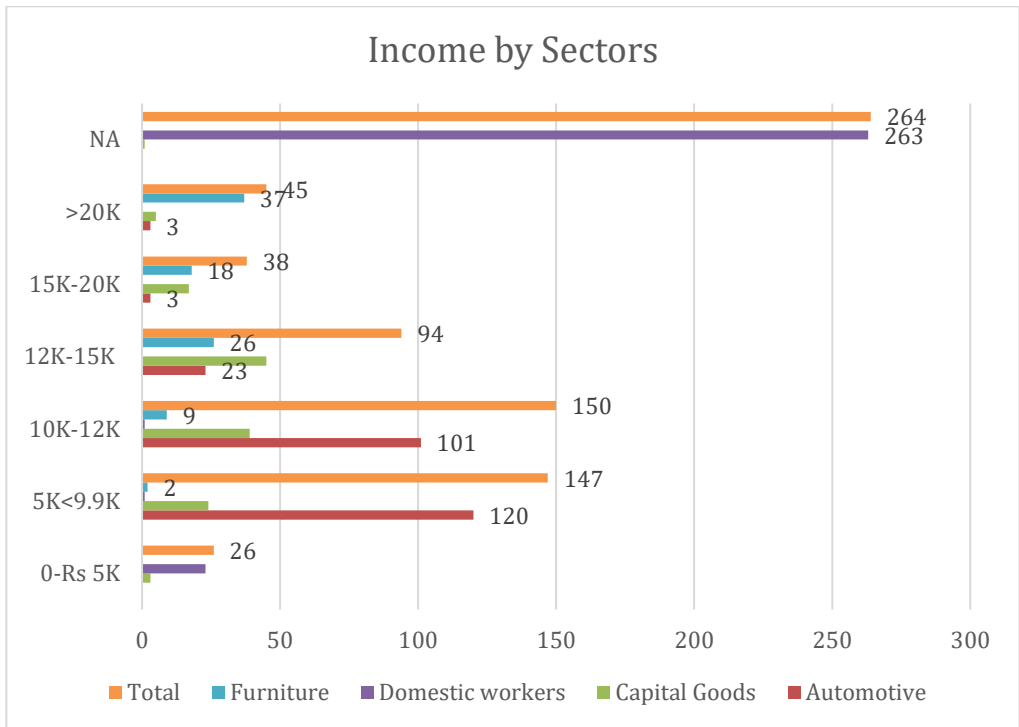


Row Labels	3 people	4 people	5 people	<2 people	>5 people	Grand Total
<b>Automotive</b>	152	33	30	4	31	250
<b>Capital Goods</b>	32	32	26	22	22	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>	47	54	60	1	126	288
<b>Furniture</b>	6	18	20	3	45	92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>764</b>

**Current Monthly earnings**



The current income distribution of the workers is plotted below. It must be noted that almost all workers from the Domestic Sector Skill Council were not working but were looking for job. They were a better fit for fresh training rather than RPL.

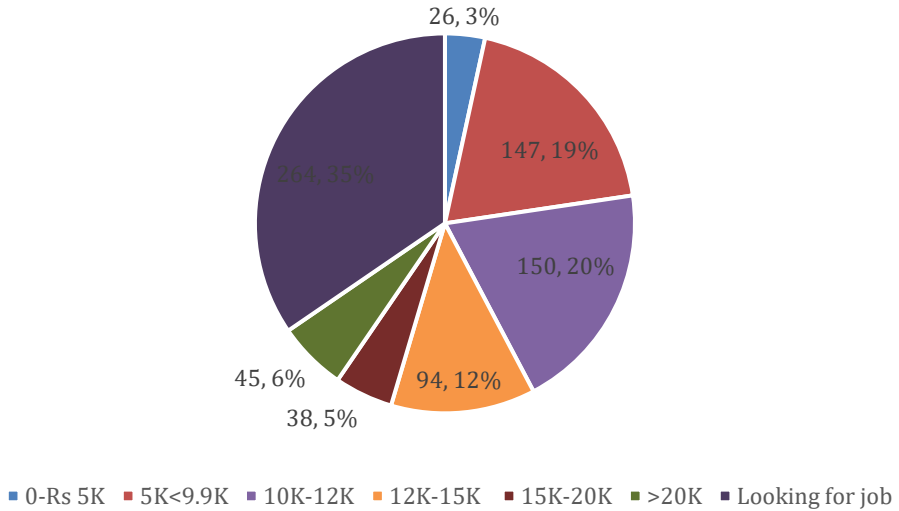


Average monthly income of ~Rs 12605

Income (Rs) K=1000	0-Rs 5K	5K<9.9K	10K- 12K	12K- 15K	15K- 20K	>20K	NA
<b>Automotive</b>		120	101	23	3	3	
<b>Capital Goods</b>	3	24	39	45	17	5	1
<b>Domestic workers</b>	23	1	1				263
<b>Furniture</b>		2	9	26	18	37	

<b>Total</b>	26	147	150	102	38	45	264
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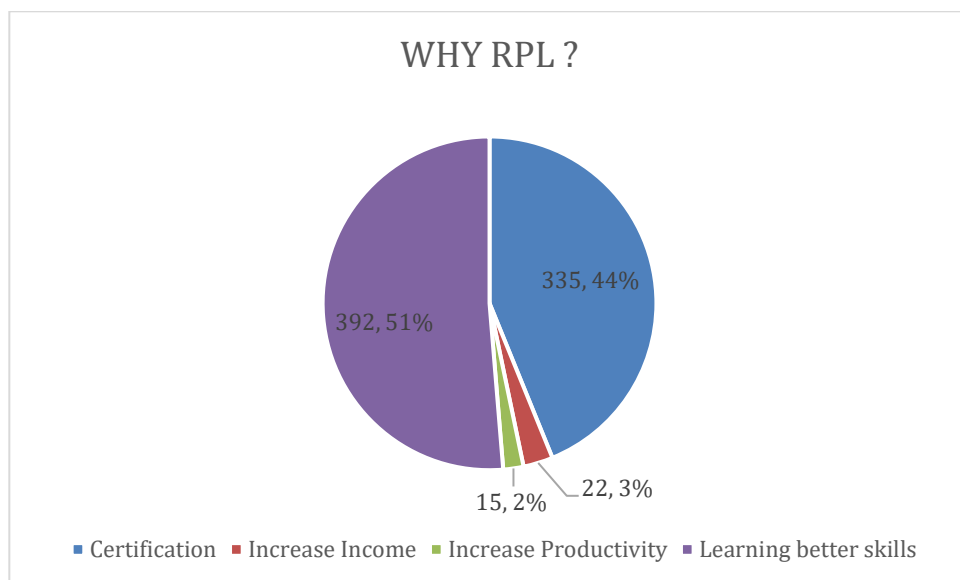
Income of workers in different slabs



Salary Bracket	No of workers
0-Rs 5K	26
5K<9.9K	147
10K-12K	150
12K-15K	94
15K-20K	38
>20K	45
Looking for job	264
<b>Total</b>	<b>764</b>

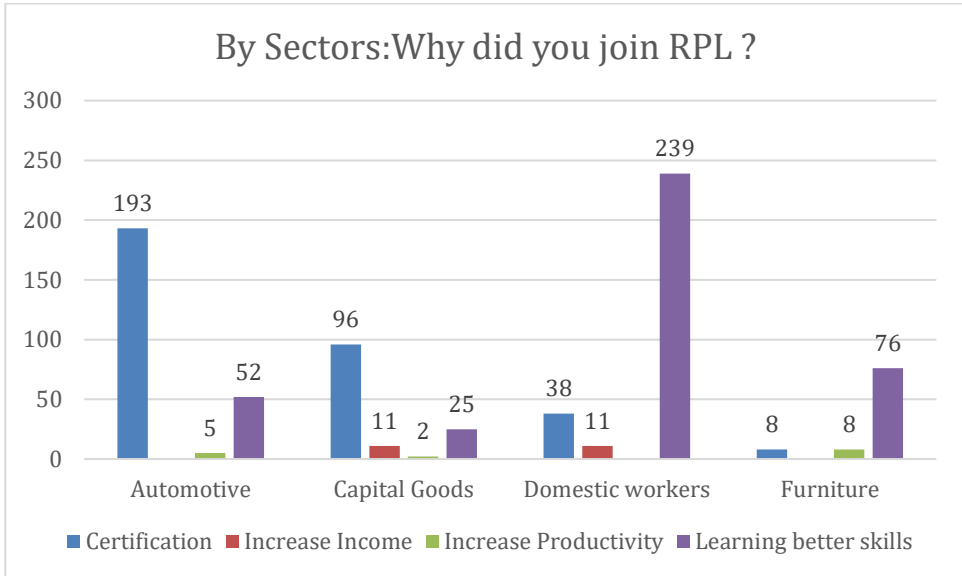
From the above it is understood that most of the workers earned between Rs 5000 to Rs 15000. The majority of workers earned less than Rs 12000

### Motivation of workers for joining the RPL programme



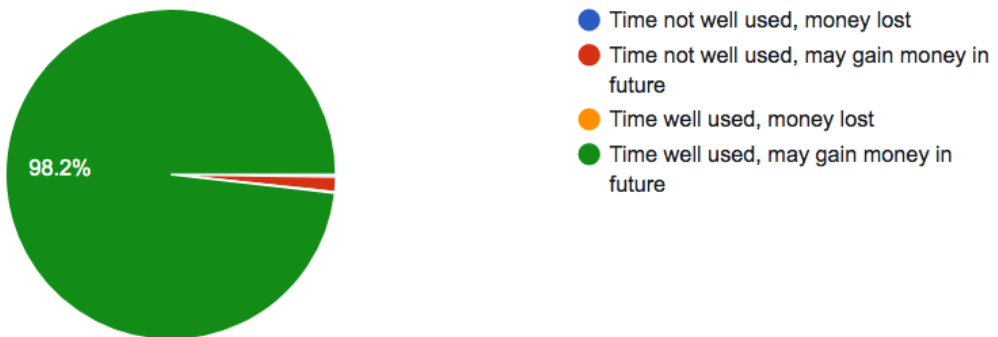
The promise of a certificate and opportunity to better their skills were the primary motivators for workers to join the RPL programme. Income increase and productivity improvement may be thought as an additional outcome but not primary outcome.

Row Labels	Certification	Increase Income	Increase Productivity	Learning better skills	Grand Total
<b>Automotive</b>	193		5	52	250
<b>Capital Goods</b>	96	11	2	25	134
<b>Domestic workers</b>	38	11		239	288
<b>Furniture</b>	8		8	76	92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>764</b>



**Workers Utility of time and money-direct and indirect**

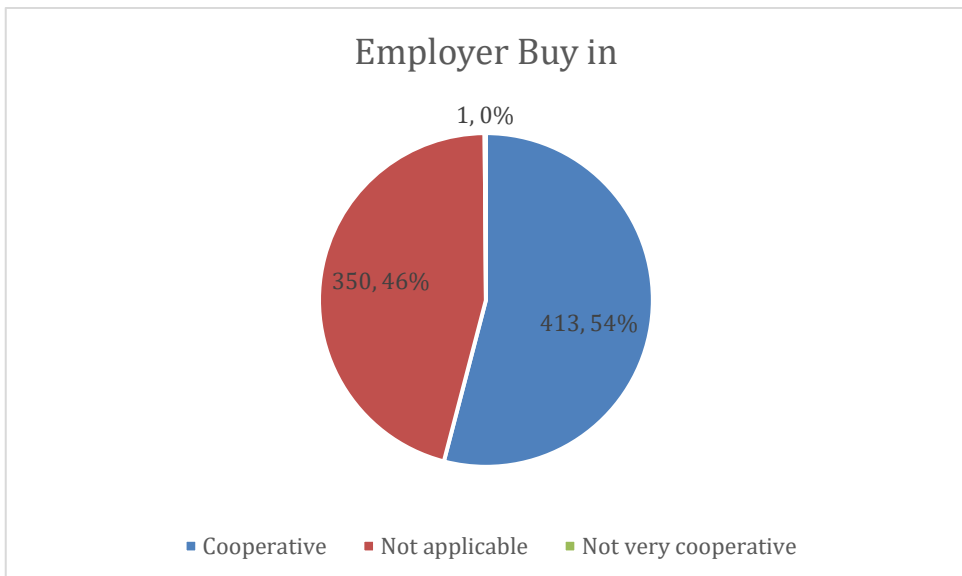
Workers spend their time and monetary resources (not fees but travel etc.) 98% workers felt that the programme was a good use of their financial and non-financial resources.



Row Labels	Time not well used, may gain money in fut	Time not well used, money lost	Time well used, may gain money in future	Time well used, money lost	Grand Total
Automotive			250		250
Capital Goods			134		134
Domestic workers	6	1	281		288
Furniture	6	1	84	1	92
Grand Total	12	2	749	1	764

### Employers perception of RPL participation of workers

Employer support is important to allow employees participate in the RPL. .In the research survey almost all the employees participating mentioned that their employers supported their participation.



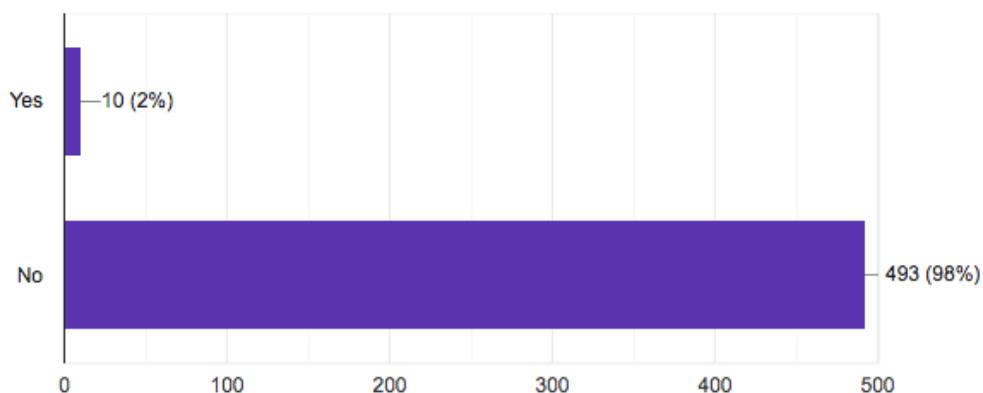
Employer buy in	Cooperative	Not applicable	Not very cooperative	Grand Total
Automotive	250			250
Capital Goods	132	1	1	134
Domestic workers	11	277		288
Furniture	20	72		92
Grand Total	413	350	1	764

### Expectation of workers from RPL

Between the obvious and not so obvious reasons it is important to understand what are the biggest expectations from the RPL. 53% opted to learn new skills, knowledge and path while 47% opted to gain a certificate and reward money

**A questionnaire was circulated towards the end of the assesment, 503 candidates filled the assesment. The analysis of this data is below**

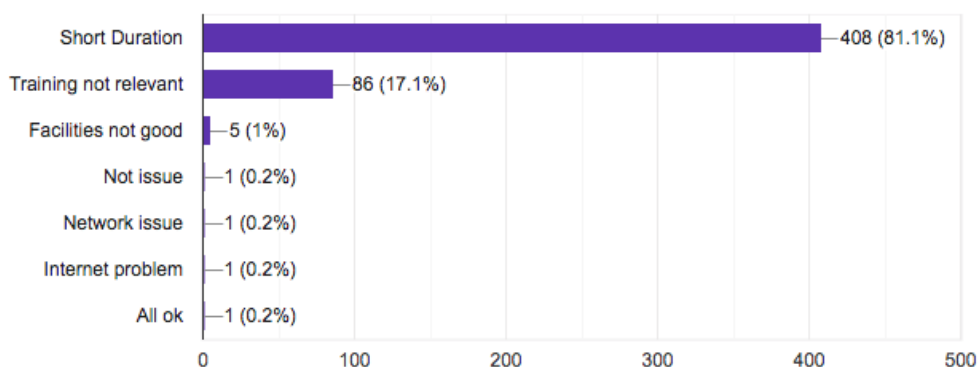
### Issues faced during RPL programme



During the phase 2 of the survey, participants filled details of their experience in the RPL exercise.

### Challenges/Issues faced

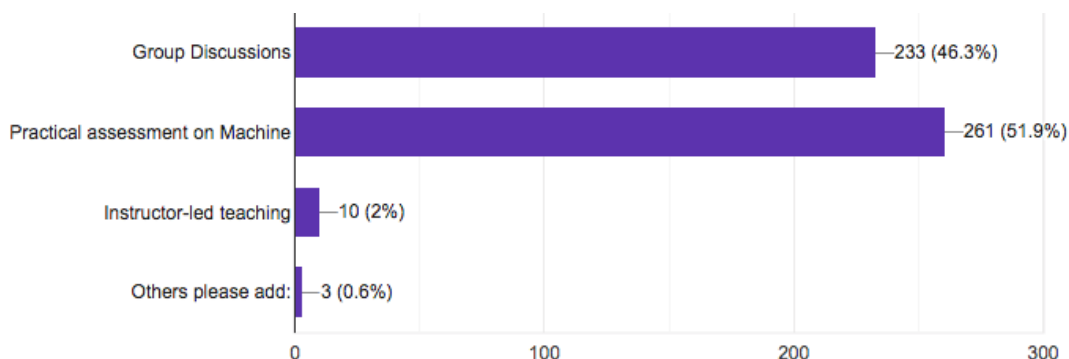
What kind of issues did people experience in the RPL. The most prominent is that the process that is still in its infancy, therefore lot of improvements needed to made. Workers felt that there should be more interaction by group discussions and the assessment must be more practical oriented on the machine.



Row Labels	All ok	Facilities not good	Internet problem	Network issue	Not issue	Short Duration	Training not relevant	Grand Total
Capital Goods	1	4				117	12	134
Domestic workers	0	1	1	1	0	212	71	286
Furniture					1	79	3	83
Grand Total	1	5	1	1	1	408	86	503

### Additions to be made to RPL

RPL is a process that is still in its infancy, therefore lot of improvements needed to be made. Workers felt that there should be more interaction by group discussions and the assessment must be more practical oriented on the machine.

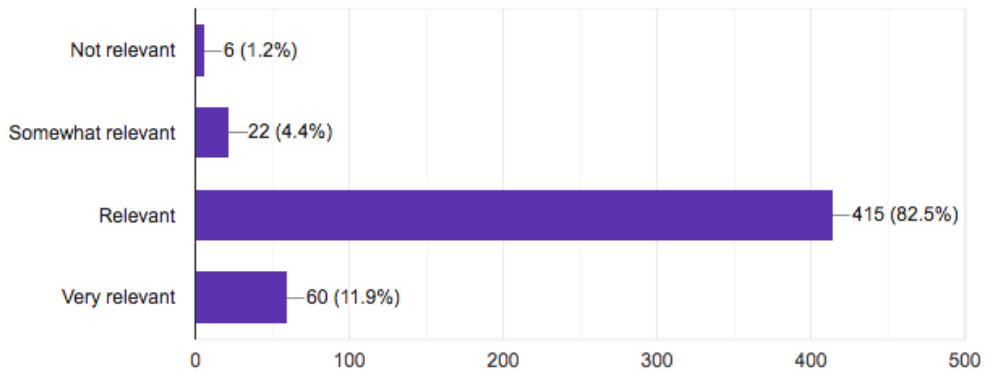


Row Labels	Group Discussions	Instructor-led teaching	Others please add:	Practical assessment on Machine	Grand Total
<b>Capital Goods</b>	74	7	2	51	134
<b>Furniture</b>	5		1	77	83
<b>Domestic worker</b>	154	3	0	129	286
<b>Grand Total</b>	233	10	3	257	503

### Relevance of the RPL to their daily work

The quality of content makes a big difference to impact. Relevance of the content to the work of the trainees was very high, it was around 82.5 %.

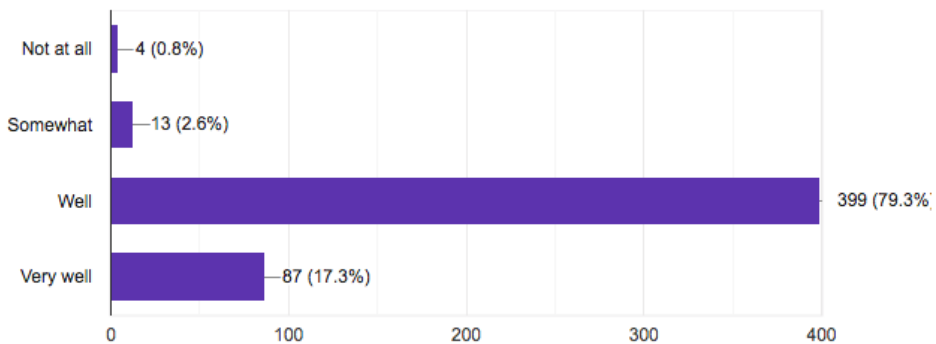




Row Labels	Not at all	Somewhat	Very well	Well	Grand Total
<b>Capital Goods</b>	3	1	75	55	134
<b>Furniture</b>		1	11	71	83
<b>Domestic worker</b>	1	11	1	273	286
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>503</b>

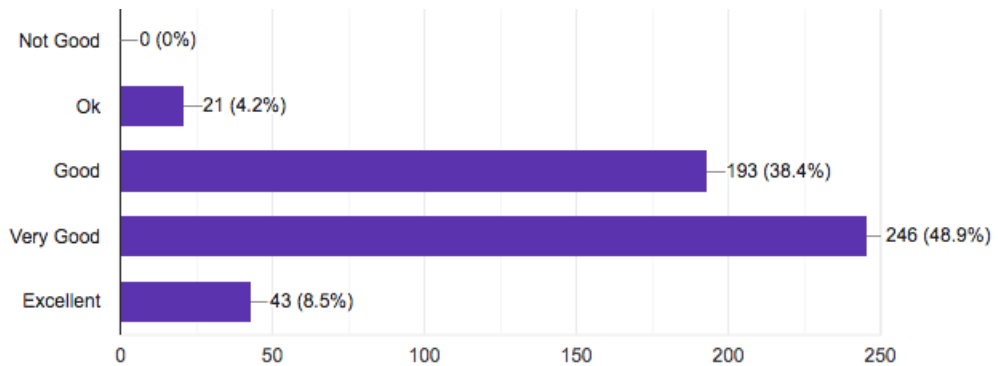
**Demonstrating their acquired skills**

How comfortable were people in demonstrating their acquired skills. Almost 96% people were comfortable in demonstrating their skills.



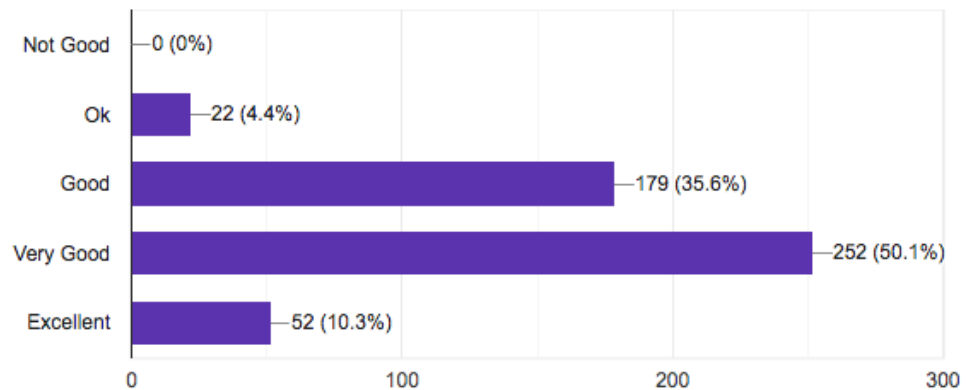
### Quality of the Assessors

Assessment is at the heart of RPL. It is heartening to see that workers were satisfied with the quality of assessors.



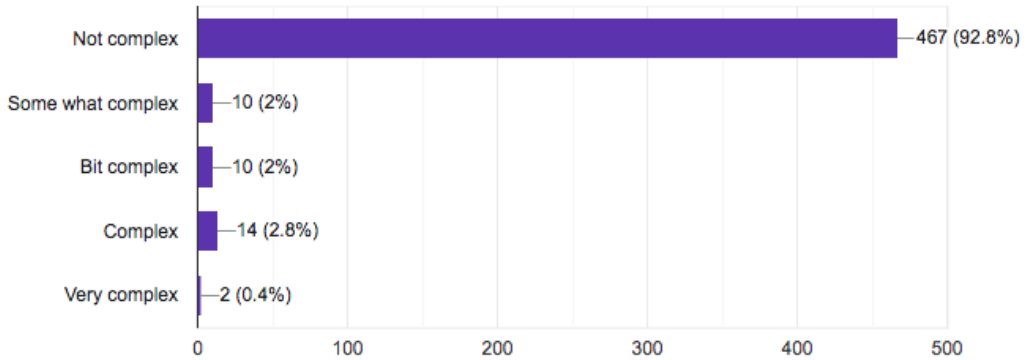
### Quality of the trainers

The quality of trainers makes a big difference to RPL impact. 85% people felt that the quality of trainers were good or very good.



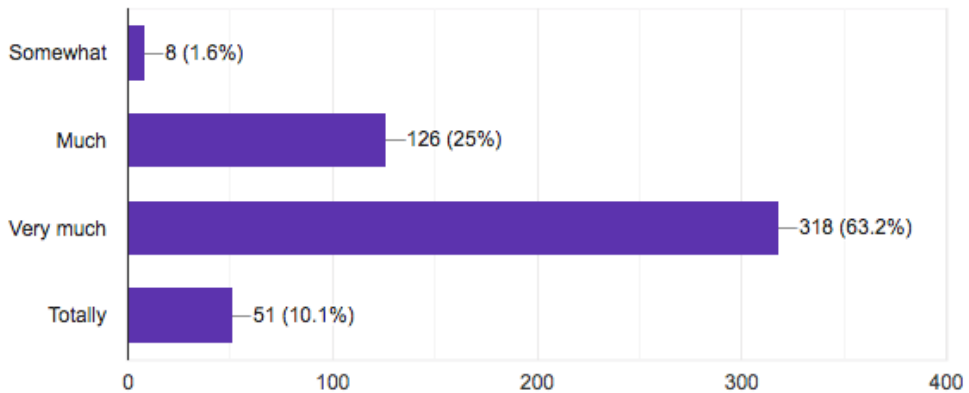
### Complexity of the RPL process

RPL is conceptually complex but the process can be made simple for all .



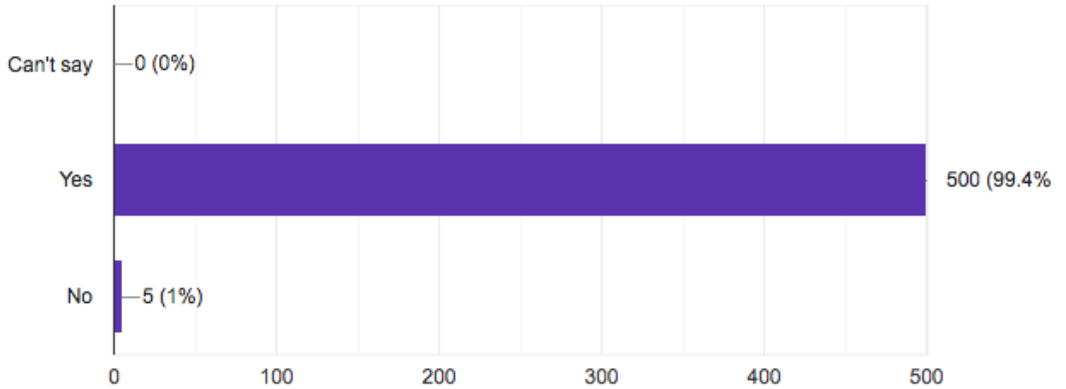
### RPL impact on their living

RPL impact people to different degrees. Most people felt that there is some impact of RPL on them.



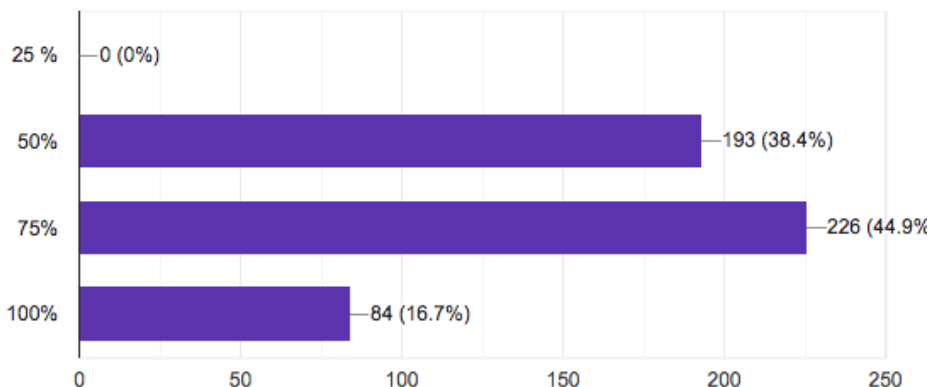
### Hope of income increase

Almost all the participants were confident that there will be an income increase post the RPL.



**Perception of percentage workers skills validated by RPL**

How well does the RPL validate the skills of the worker? While this is a very deep question, a good way would be to ask the person being assessed. When we asked this question there was a variety of response. Almost 40% felt that it only measured 50% of their skills, 45% felt that it measured it to a large extent around 75% only 17% felt that completely measured their skills.

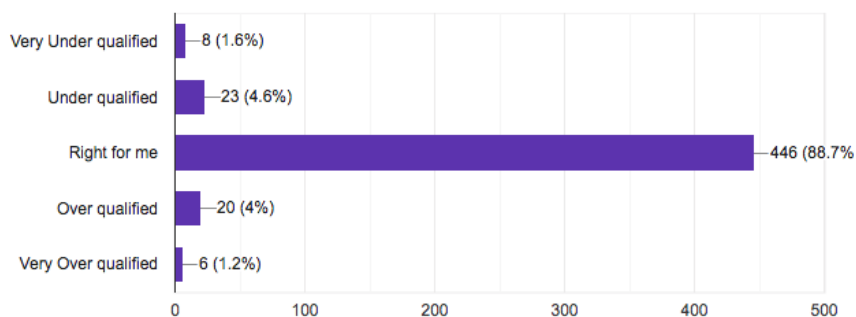


Row Labels	50%	75%	100%	Total
<b>Capital</b>	8	53	73	134
<b>Goods</b>				

<b>Furniture</b>	17	62	4	83
<b>Domestic</b>	168	111	7	286
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>503</b>

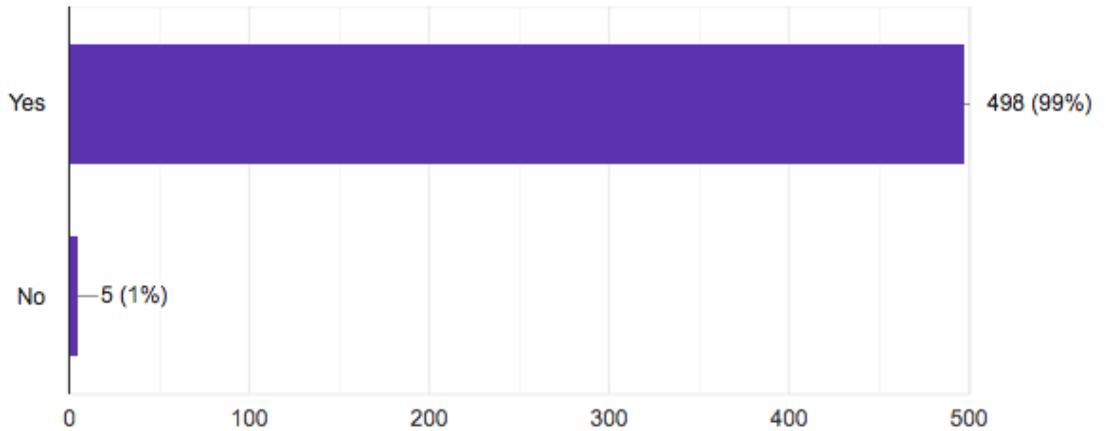
### Right candidates for RPL

Selecting the right candidate is the foundation of good RPL outcomes, selecting under qualified candidates or over qualified candidates will make them loose interest.



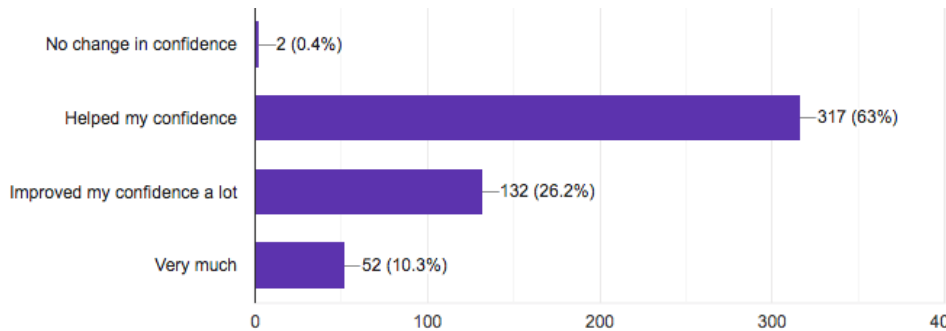
### Willingness to participate in RPL programmes in the future

The willingness to participate in the future RPL programmes indicate that the programme has been useful in its impact.



**RPL programme impact on worker’s confidence**

Across the study, a recurring theme in meetings and also in the survey. It is the lasting impact on confidence from the RPL. This is also clearly visible in the survey results where almost everyone felt that it has helped improve their confidence to some extent.



**Other Feedback**

The following points have emerged from the feedback given. Most of them mentioned that the training was good. Few people mentioned that more time should be given for training and also for discussion. They also felt that such trainings should be held more

frequently.

## **Spreading RPL to more workers**

Most of them volunteered to speak to friends

### **Some key Positives**

- Appreciation of skills in the workforce has a higher likelihood of an increase in income
- The chances of income increase are higher for people with little or no education, as it would almost for the first time that their skills have been credentialled.
- Content quality was not a concern raised by anyone
- Use of basic terms to help understanding of the participants was appreciated
- Use of videos and simple examples was
- Candidates were taking training seriously

### **ISSUES IN ONLINE TRAINING**

- Not every candidates has a smartphone
- Internet issues
- Group of 3-4 candidates used single phone for attending the training
- Engagement, follow up, attention span all are much harder

## NON RPL TAKERS FEEDBACK

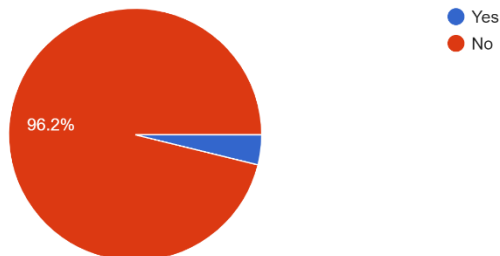
A dipstick survey was carried out to understand why did some people opt to not take RPL.



who did not take RPL

The following

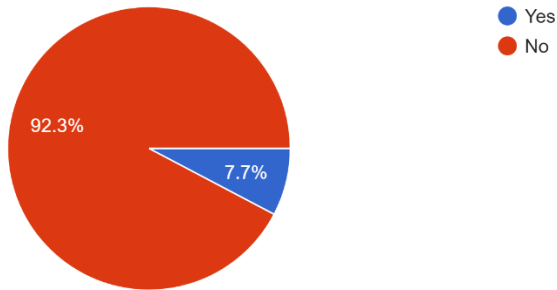
**Do you know what is RPL?**



Almost everyone who did not take RPL did not know what RPL is and therefore it can be inferred were not inclined to take RPL

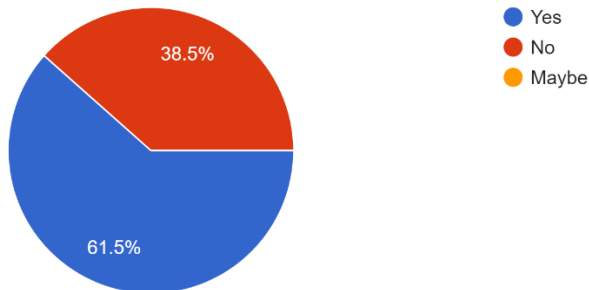


**Do you know anyone who has taken RPL?**



92% of those who did not take RPL did not know anyone in their circle who took RPL. It can be inferred that there could have been a lack of immediate influencers for them to take RPL

**Are you keen to take up RPL in the future?**



More than 60% people were willing to take up RPL. This indicates that while there maybe some interest. A lot work on mass communication needs to be done.

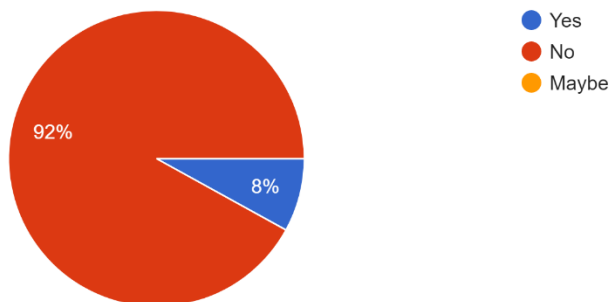
**How to make RPL more attractive for you?**

Workers responded that Certification itself and the ability to have a Aadhar like card to show their skills would make it attractive for them to consider RPL.

**What should be done to help you earn more income?**

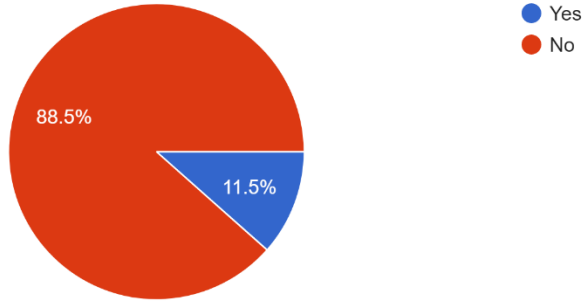
Most people asked associate more income with better skills and getting more work. If RPL can provide more customers and improve their skills it would

**Do you know you get financial incentive for RPL?**



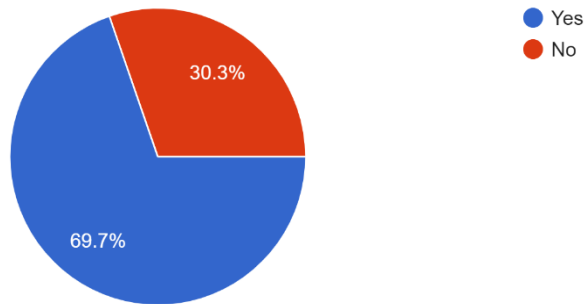
More than 92% people were unaware that they would received some monetary award benefit from the RPL programme.

**Do you know you get a Govt Certificate?**



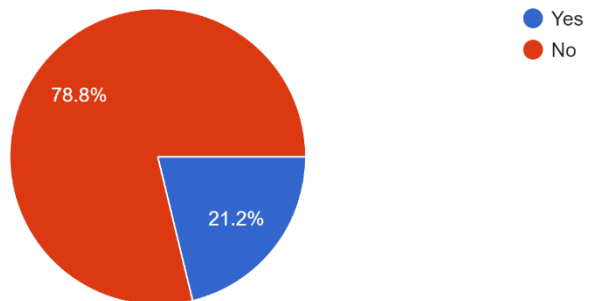
90% people were not aware of the government certificate benefits of the programme.





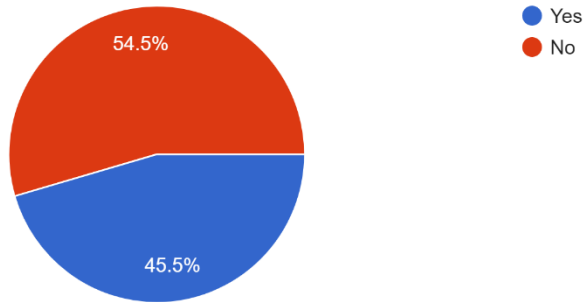
- 70% of the students received the certificates.

**Did you receive any money?**



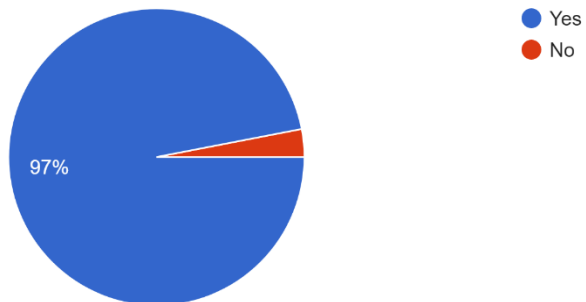
- 80% of the workers did not receive any award money so far

**Did you receive any kit?**



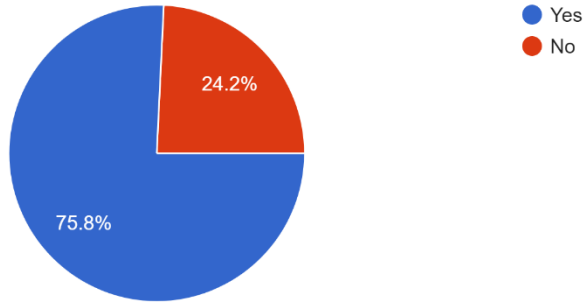
- 45% of the people have received the kit

**Is there any difference between you and those who did not take RPL ?**



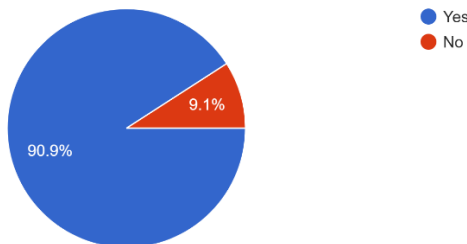
97% believed that there is a skill difference between them and those who did not take RPL

**Do you think people who did not take RPL have missed an opportunity ?**



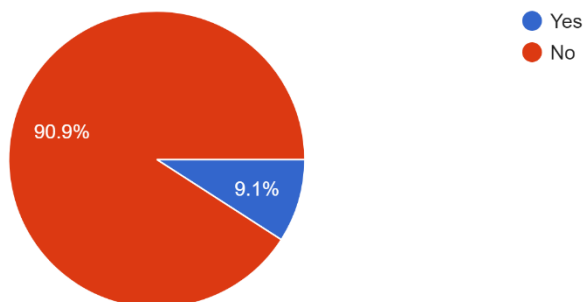
- 76% of the people believed that those who did not take the RPL have missed an opportunity

**In 6 months time do you think you will be better placed than people who did not take RPL ?**



- 90% of the people believed that in 6 months time they would be better placed in terms of career than those who did not take RPL
- Most people wanted that such training should be done more frequently i.e every month.

**Are you aware of the next steps for your career?**



Vast majority of the people ~90% were aware of the next steps they should take for their career.

The above indicates that there is scope of improvement in speed of delivery of all stated entitlement benefits. It also points to providing a roadmap for workers that they can take for forward growth.

### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Focus group discussions with Sector Skill Council leadership teams, employers and workers brought to light the following points.

#### **Informal Sector RPL**

RPL offers a unique mechanism to organize the informal sector. It can provide a solid foundation to the government priorities to formalise the Indian economy by taking pragmatic steps in organizing the workforce base.

#### **Formal Sector RPL**

Formal sector RPL is very different from conventional RPL and must be thought and implemented keeping this in mind. Most of the formal sector mandates qualifications for its workforce and filters them with it, therefore RPL would be applicable in a different manner. In the formal sector it enables transition between the sectors or to prove competency beyond everyday work. Comparatively there are many other avenues for formal sector participants like industry certifications of technologies and practices. However, the participants in the formal sector who have no qualifications would be helped by RPL

### **Marketing**

There are two clear ways to market RPL- Focus on employers or focus on workers. Skill India has struggled to get employers onboard for its overall development. Getting employers on board is likely to remain a challenge. Since substantial thrust of RPL is in places where employers are unorganized/not there therefore it may be far more effective for RPL to focus on having a direct mechanism to engage with the workers. While for the formal sector particularly in manufacturing where there is huge uneducated workforce who could not attain formal qualifications and RPL is critical while for formal sector like IT, there maybe lesser appeal/need of a government qualification and an industry qualification maybe more preferred to showcase competency. The focus of the government must be done accordingly.

### **Implementation improvement**

Several of the benefits proposed by RPL are lost, due to implementation issues. Let us take an example, one of the final outcomes of the RPL exercise is certificate and reward money. Both of these needs to be credited to the worker at the quickest possible time. This becomes necessary as it allows demand generation to be more agile and effective. Our survey revealed that even after 2 months of the exercise, a reward money and certificate has not been provided to a large %age of people. This can be rectified soon.

## **RPL – A NEW APPROACH**



Skills recognition and certification initiatives in the informal economy through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes will provide an important pathway for the 90 per cent of Indians who work in the so-called unorganized sector. It is a crucial area for also open and distance learning system to lend its hand. RPL also has the potential to be a powerful tool in the development of India and in the implementation of the SDGs. The following are some mechanism to look at things bit differently or tweak from current implementation

### **How will informal sector workers be attracted to RPL?**

In the focus group discussions, it was evident that the understanding of RPL is a key problem area that needs to be tackled. The benefits of RPL needs to be pitched well and succinctly. All those who understand RPL and the current RPL certificate holders are first crucial links in the entire chain. Therefore, it needs to be nurtured and provided incentives to further communicate it to other likely candidates. If the 50 lakh certified RPL people start acting as brand ambassadors for the RPL programme it is likely that the programme can be scaled quickly. Therefore, it is proposed to ensure we have a network of participants in RPL not just participants.

### **Rebranding RPL takers as Progressive workers**

Taking the above point forward. All workers who take part in RPL need to be highlighted and differentiated from other workers. This differentiation would be the reason why many would aspire to take the RPL. We may term the RPL takers as “Progressive workers” to ensure that they inspire many other people to take RPL.

### **Bouquet of services**

RPL as an instance of providing social security benefits and other critical government. The tangible benefits are Skill certificate, Award money, Improved soft skills, Enhanced efficiency, Five Year Insurance under Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY). But there is scope to provide Formalised Market Connect, Skills

Premium/Industry Recognition, Bank Loans/ Financing, further, Licenses, Course on Digital Transactions (E-Wallet

### **Utilizing the skill card well**

Skill card is provided along with the certificate. There is a need to provide a chip enabled card which can provide the worker, a currency for further career upgrade and upliftment. The skill card offered by RPL has to be technologically equipped to provide all the data the candidate or the authorities need to further plan. It has to record the current skill along with the new skill updated and should be provided to other government departments on request. This can be initiated soon and taken to scale.

### **Other key life altering services in RPL**

RPL is a key point in worker's growth where programmes like business group formation, allotment of mentors, auto enrolment to higher education if they wish. These are all some potential add ons that need to be explored in RPL.

### **What after training?**

What happens after training is the most crucial bit. The RPL candidate data is fed into the ASEEM portal ([Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping \(nsdcindia.org\)](http://Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (nsdcindia.org))). It is not understood what kind of services are provided after then 24 hours period of RPL training. This is one area that can really improve the RPL if services are built for RPL workers on top of this portal infrastructure.

### **Utilizing participants of the Insurance Scheme**

As of now, RPL candidates are provided an insurance scheme, however, it may also be useful to do vice versa provide all insurance scheme holders an opportunity to do RPL. This would ensure that a large portion of the informal workforce get skill certification

**Utilizing Swades Portal Data**

The pandemic saw lot of workers trying to come back to homeland. Their information along with their competency is captured in Swades data base of NSDC. These need to be revisited and those trainers who have had international experience need to provided opportunities for national service as master trainers.

**RPL as a Service by private companies.**

If RPL has to achieve scale in the country, we should allow private sector companies to step in by charging a fee. The companies will take a small fees and provide smoother mechanism of onboarding for candidates. It may be thought of as the current involvement of private sector in the immigration sector. Providing RPL as a service is the next but obvious step in skill training.

**Linking RPL to migration and immigration.**

State governments have prepared migration databases. RPL can be an important means to feed into the migration database. Similarly RPL linked to immigration particularly to Middle east needs to be streamlined. There is a crucial role of Ministry of External Affairs here. If they provide priority to people who have undertaken RPL and market it in their campaigns, this itself will give a big boost and ensure better qualified people for international work.

**Time gaps for preparing skill evidences**

The time gap between mobilization meetings and the actual assessments is ~1-2 months, which ideally should be closer to 1-2 weeks. This is due to the process of mobilization itself since staff have to go directly to the field to recruit and meet the workers and private sector. This needs to be rethought . Ideally for most RPL takers-Time is required to prepare evidences(in case we go for this system) For others, providing time will ensure dropout as they will pursue other interests and leave. A judicious choice needs to be made based on the sector and assessment modality

Just as the private sector has its systems of reference letters and testimonials. RPL assessment should also take into account such documents. The candidate must be encouraged to collect and digitize such documents, this will provide them with a life long repository for further use.

### **Auto admit to open distance learnings**

Since the idea behind RPL is to accredit and value workplace-based learning and experience and to create a bridge between the world of work and the formal education and training system for workers without formal qualification. While there are some results to show for the first, we have not started working on the second goal. It is very important that RPL workers have access and utilize opportunities for enrolling themselves in more opportunities of formal education. It is important also for education institutions, particularly open distance learning institutions and those funded by the government that they must take visible steps to ensure enrolment of RPL workers. They must open a channel for enrolment and provide a learning path. It is not hard to provide open enrolment option to all RPL people if they desire to do so. This is to provide for higher learning pathway This would be a step forward to make their knowledge from tacit to explicit.

**Bridge Courses-** This should be more mainstream than it currently is. In our implementation of the CEMCA programme, there was no mention of providing a bridge course to any one in the 1500 group sample. Most likely, bridge courses are not routine events but they need to be seen as an everyday tool in the RPL framework for implementation.

### **Moving from mobilization to creating demand**

Intake of RPL candidates can be done by fanfare thrice yearly namely: Jan/Feb, April /May and August /September through open industry invitations. Events like these provide short term focus and create a buzz. There is a reason why people look up to festivals and plan them. Candidates will be given a three-month period to complete the Portfolio and subsequently once the portfolio is finalised. Assessment may be

organised twice on a yearly basis [depending on quantity of portfolio submission]. The three months may, be extended on a case to case basis, upon agreement with all parties involved in the RPL process, be extended. This will also ensure better preparation from the candidates itself. This can also be suitably aligned to the calendar of open universities.

### **Learnings from other discussions**

Detailed discussions were held with all stakeholders along with head brass of Sector Skill councils They provided their understanding and lessons from their deep experience in implementing RPL. The following are key points from the meetings:

Most of our workers obtain work in informal ways, without employer neither enquiring their training background, nor testing the competence of skilled workers. In a rough sense people going in for a RPL programme and certified are in a way indicator of some level of formalization of the informal sector.

Eligibility Condition for RPL- SSC have independence in structuring of processes for the RPL assessment. While some inherent basics like a minimum year of experience has been articulated in the guidelines, it is critical to ensure that they are implemented. Some occupations should require more years in work experience than others depending on the complexity of the competency of the tasks. SSCs should provide specific entry requirement for each occupation.

Mapping of the SSC courses and the actual skills on their job is a key challenge, the only way to resolve this is to sit down with the manager and ensure some topical changes can be done. These customizations particularly for the formal sector where they are company specific differences in the kinds and ways skills are applied would be important. The freedom to change 30% of the curriculum must be exercised by the SSCs.

Sector skill Councils being different organizations under different leaders with their own unique DNA are also not at the same level of competency, they differ widely. Incentives

for SSC alignment for RPL, If better roadmap was provided for SSC so that they can think more holistically.

Mobilization and preparation of candidates -The challenges in RPL are interlinked and affect each other. Mobilization is hampered by a lack of market demand and knowledge about RPL in the sector. Workers, owners, and managers do not know about the benefits of or how to use RPL after successful recognition. Therefore, it was initially difficult to advocate for RPL and convince them to participate. RPL has to take a steady path, For example, if the direct and indirect cost of assessments is too high, they will not be affordable for the government, candidates, and employers, meaning it will not be possible to roll it out to a substantially larger number of candidates. If the number of assessments cannot be substantially increased not many employers and workers will become aware of RPL and demand will remain low. Certificates will not become credible if the quality of assessment and certification cannot gain major recognition or be improved. Therefore, though scaling up is a challenge it is imperative for the future success of RPL. To effectively reduce the costs, assessors at the assessment points are required to be based in the t local enterprises. The cost of materials for the tests also have to be carefully calculated

Discussions were held with CEO and the top management of the Furniture SSC mentioned on the need to reflect Why was RPL itself created ? and look back to achieve the mission. It is primarily to realign workforce and cover this milestone step by step. The test and training are crucial bits. They informed that they are working on a new programme under Sankalp in which they have done a skill gap and skill plan exercise for all the RPL candidates in 5 states in 7 batches. This involves maximum utilization of video material, products, providing connections, experiential learning and inter village level competition, etc. These are particularly useful in family run occupations. The SSC has a clear plan of action for RPL in the sector and aim to enhance the the level of esteem of the learner through their Meri Skill Meri Pehchaan initiative. An important point underscored by them is that RPL is the initiation not the end of activities for the worker. Therefore mechanisms to provide support over a period of time would be useful. Since the industry follows the government, therefore more

recognition of RPL in the government hiring would lead to better RPL outcomes.

Capital Goods mentioned that their RPL process requires formal orientation, infrastructure and therefore needs strong employer support. Sensitizing of the employer is crucial. RPL in their view falls way above beyond organization branding and HR activity and has long term repercussions. Their effort is to know where is the candidate right now in his career and what are the skill gaps, what are the ways they can overcome them. They want to provide clear roadmap and small trainings towards this. They underscored that RPL has to cater to the expectation level of skill outcomes of the supervisor in the company while at the same time making the supervisor aware of the potential productivity improvements. Supervisor satisfaction is an important outcome.

Since the training is short training- industry has to partner in a modular design. For some sectors it may be hard to explain to end users directly but far easier to explain to employers. Therefore, frequent orientation needs to be held for employers. Employer must find enough merit in RPL so that he can prioritize RPL assessments amongst competing concerns.

For a lot of potential places of productivity improvement, the Labour unions are key part of setup. It would be important to collaboratively work with labour unions on company and individual productivity. Safety and Precaution are key components of RPL for our country and we should strive to ensure these are inculcated well.

### **Furniture SSC**

- Mr Subhankar an employer from West Bengal mentioned about emotional connect with the employees and the need to provide encourage to them. Although he is new to RPL, the training that the organization could not give in an organized manner was the gap filled in by the RPL exercise. It will help in manpower planning and skill development. For a small company it is a fantastic programme.

- Harsh a partner of FFSC mentioned that the RPL is an innovative programme from the government. The thinking in it is outstanding. Though it was first time for him the fact that the workers could participate in the training initiative would help.
- Mr Mahendra informed that the carpenters were enthusiastic for the RPL study and it clarified their concept
- None of the employers felt uneasy with the fact that the skills recognition may lead to attrition as now the worker has a certificate to recognize his skills. On the contrary they felt it would motivate them to work more as the employer had facilitated this, that too during the Covid time. Lot of employers mentioned that RPL was new information, they had received about government initiatives With regards, to suggesting mechanism to further scale up the programme, they suggested that the best mechanism for publicity is word of mouth by the participants themselves.
- It was also mentioned that clubbing of other government schemes in RPL would be very beneficial for the workers. e.g the insurance scheme of the Govt of India.
- They indicated that there is still a need for specialized RPL in sectors where there is high labour shortage. In furniture RPL for skilled labour in wooden flooring, blinds, wall paper for interiors would be very beneficial.
- Most employers viewed RPL also as refresher training. While this may not be conceptually accurate, it is a good indicator of the way the training is perceived in the field. In terms of its usage, there is no harm in propagating this perception as long as other core concepts are communicated equally well.



- Almost everyone agree that it would improve confidence and provide better service to the customers. There will be a basic level of skills in the workers. RPL is viewed as a primary level skill by many employers.
- What would be the most prominent outcome of RPL was an important question deeply probed. Is it productive employees? their confidence, or an income enhancement. Most employers viewed that at a fundamental level the most important outcome would be the confidence of the workers. It would be the single biggest takeaway for most participants
- For furniture sector, there is a sharp difference in the nature of employees, at one level we have uneducated workers but we also have educated designers who create new products. The key to bridge this gap is communication. In a highly informal segment there are islands of formality.
- Online assessment was a pain area mentioned by all employers. While it is easier to implement and monitor it is not effective. There is a fine line for scale up of RPL here. Online assessments cannot be wished away. The goal should be to provide digital skills to the potential RPL candidates as a first step before taking them on for such courses.
- There was a discussion on language concerns too, the huge diversity of the country makes it incumbent to provide services in local language, particularly those related to education and skills so that there is more absorption of the content and better life long impact.

### **Automotive SSC**

- At the initial stage there were some confusions on the benefits, amount employee will receive as incentive. But a Govt approved certificate was a Motivational factor

- The mindset change of employee has changed and we have some champion employees who can spread information.
- RPL helps trainees to change companies because it provides evidence of their competences
- Employers mentioned that other functions not directly linked to the SSC needs to be taken for RPL this requires critical focus on collaboration between SSCs.
- The pandemic forced RPL implementers to use virtual tools, the digital divide is far more pronounced in the information sector, not having digital skills was an important lacuna that needs addressal beyond RPL. There is some fear on technology tools for RPL, Test on computer not encouraging, Not very exciting. Candidate does not feel comfortable. Tech increase became a distinct point of concern. When the camera is on candidate, the candidate is scared and may not perform optimally.
- There were 90 girls in RPL Mitsubishi had done earlier. This is a welcome sign and signifies women entering the workforce in non-traditional jobs.
- For employers that want to do something RPL provides them a godsend opportunity to do so and supports in starting an organizational culture of learning and retaining
- RPL pilots where launched by CEMCA for four SSCs, there was a sharp difference in the ways, mechanism in which the SSCs implemented it. Some SSCs implemented it in letter and spirit, while some did a very hush job which nullified the very purpose of RPL.

- In the discussions it was evident that employers would provide some sort of differential treatment to workers who had undergone RPL training. Separate slabs are likely to be made for them when salary revisions are due.
- They highlighted that assessment has become delayed and complicated and the viva-voice should take supervisor viewpoint. There are auto proctoring issues, social distancing norms etc.
- Some employers mentioned that the numbers of people allowed in the pilot is too less and they would request target to be increased many times over.
- Auto Dealers have people on sell side for skills training beyond manufacturing which the SSC can cater to in partnership with other SSC.
- Finally, RPL implementation is about awareness, leadership and executions.

## SSCs WISE ANALYSIS FOR RPL

### FURNITURE SSC



The Furniture and Fittings Sector Skill Council did a recognition of prior learning for 250 trainees in the following two job roles Assistant Carpenter - Wooden Furniture and Lead Carpenter-Wooden Furniture

Topic taught in Assistant Carpenter - Wooden Furniture

(FFS/N0104) Assist in furniture planning and organizing work to meet expected outcome

(FFS/N0105) Assist in furniture making

(FFS/N8601) Ensure health and safety at workplace

(FFS/N8801) work effectively with others

(FFS/N8501) Maintain work area tools and machines Employability and Entrepreneurship Skills

## Topic taught in Lead Carpenter-Wooden Furniture

### Compulsory:

- 1.FFS/N0106 Plan and organize wood work to meet expected outcome
- 2.FFS/N0107 Make furniture
- 3.FFS/N8601 Ensure health and safety at workplace
- 4.FFS/N8501 Maintain work area, tools and machines
- 5.FFS/N8801 Work effectively with others

### Optional:

#### Lock Installer:

- 6.FFS/N5703 Carry out lock installation activities
- 7.FFS/N5704 Perform lock repairing and servicing

In order to mobilize the candidates they identified wood working clusters were with the help of local industries and contractors at Kirti Nagar, Delhi, Udaipur, Rajasthan and Singur, West Bengal. In order to select the candidates post mobilization prescreening of candidates was done to gauge their work experience in the sector and to align them in respective job role.

The training: took place in Kirti Nagar, Delhi, Urban Udaipur, Jadol, Udaipur and Singur, West Bengal. Industry led sessions were done via online and offline medium both. Post Training candidates were awarded certificate along with a work kit.

Stakeholder conversations were held with Mr. Mahendra Pokharna (Proprietor)-Vinayak Furniture, Udaipur, Mr. Harsh Bokadia (Director)Sun Interiors, Udaipur, Mr. Ankur Mehta (Director)-Vaibhav Interior, Udaipur-and Mr. Subhankar, Managing Director-STS Realtors and Decor Pvt Ltd, Kolkata.

The data for the sector shows that no female participated in the exercise. 92 people participated. While 72% of the participants were 18-40 years of age. 65% of the people were self-employed. 71% of the participants had studied below 10th class. 93% of them

were Hindu.80% of them were married. 70% of them had 5 or more dependents. 40% of them earned above Rs 20000/- per month while 47% of them earned between 12 to 20000.

84% of them joined to improve their skills. 91% They felt that their time was well use and hoped to gain money in the future due to the RPL training. As compared to other SSCs the RPL process was much smoother as more than 97% workers did not face an issues or challenges in the RPL. However, most of them felt that the training was of short duration and the time of training should be increased.

An overwhelming no of people 93% felt that practical assessment on the machine must be carried out.

There was no issue of over qualified or underqualified candidates as the candidates felt that the programme was completely relevant to their work.

Did the programme recognize the skills they had developed at work. Most people felt that it partially did. More than 70% people felt that it recognized 3/4th of their acquired skills.

## **Sample worker profiles**

Nathu Singh is aged- 33 years. He has passed class 8<sup>th</sup> and has work experience of 15 Years. He earns Rs 700 per day and has a joint family of 10 People. He is married and works in Udaipur, Rajasthan. He loves his work. He learnt this work in Pune. He spent there around 5 years. That time, He was earning Rs 200 per day with food. Now, he is getting money 700 per day. He is giving education to his children. He is excited by the opportunities RPL will open for him.

Raju Ram is from Rajasthan around 24 years of age and has a BA degree. He has work experience of 10 Years and earns Rs 900 per day. He is married and has nuclear family of 8 People in his village in Rajasthan. He works in Udaipur. He likes

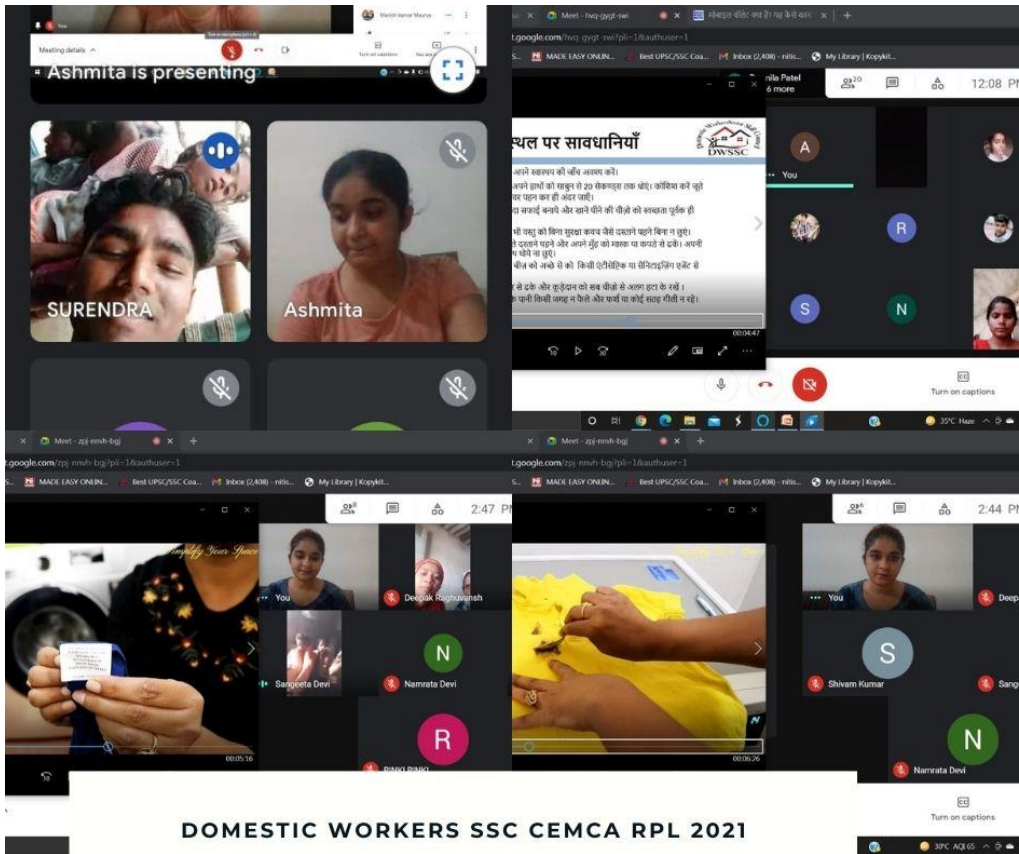
his work. He worked around 8 years under contractors. Now, He is doing own job. He is doing everything for his family with this work. 3 people are working under him. He sees immense benefit from RPL and hopes it will attract more customers.

Tehjeeb is aged 35 years and has passed class 8<sup>th</sup>. He has a work experience of 16 Years and his salary is Rs 25000 Per month. He has a joint family of 9 People in UP. He is married and works in Rajasthan. He likes his work. He manages his family with this work. He worked around 4 years under contractors. Now, He is doing own job.

## DOMESTIC WORKERS SSC



## IMPROVING RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING IN INDIA



The Domestic Worker Sector Skill Council did a recognition of prior learning for 500 workers in the Housekeeping cum Cook job role. The RPL was completely delegated to an agency with no ownership from the SSC. It may be worthwhile to mention that it is apparent that there is a huge deficit in terms of implementation skills and the purpose of the study did not seem to elicit any proactive response from the SSC.

In order to mobilize the candidates they identified people in villages around Varanasi and Lakhimpur Khiri. Around 288 candidates participated in the study out of which 71% were women. Discussions indicate that most participant were looking for a job. The primary purpose of their participation was to get a certificate for getting a job rather than showcase their learnt skills. Women had never seen a dishwasher, washing machine etc. and while it may have been possible to demonstrate it in person and learn to operate. Explaining online for trouble shooting or operating appliances for uneducated women is a tough ask.

The training: took place via mobile phones on google meet platform. In many case up to 8 people were taught using the same mobile phone. Due to the rainy season, the network issues were prominent. Training happened in large batches and very rapidly with no window for course correction. The efficacy of such a method needs little elaboration.

Outsourcing work is a steep slope if not monitored well. 500 trainees being trained in 10 days, all by online training in villages. RPL for Domestic Workers in cities maybe more impactful. Training 70% women workers in villages with a surety that most of them will not leave the village for domestic work may not be very optimal priority use of resources. It is far better to have fresh training for such a group so that they can get local employment.

The data for the sector shows that 288 people participated in the exercise. While 72% of the participants were women. 93% were from age 18-40. 95% of the people mentioned that they did not work for someone. A good number of people 30% people had graduate/diploma degree, 68% had education from class 5 to 12 while 2% was illiterate. 56% of them were married. 62% of them had 5 or more dependents. 92% of them indicated that current monthly earning was not applicable to them, which substantiates points made in the earlier. The majority of them were hopeful to gain money as a result of this training.

74% of them felt that the training was of short duration and the time of training should be increased.

54% felt that there should have been more group discussion while 45% people felt that practical assessment on the machine must be carried out.

There was no issue of over qualified or underqualified candidates as the candidates felt that the programme was completely relevant to their work.

Did the programme recognize the skills they had developed at work. Most people felt that it partially did. More than 70% people felt that it recognized 3/4th of their acquired skills.

**Topic covered in the training.**

- 1.DWC/N0101: Carry out basic housekeeping services
- 2.DWC/N0102: Carry Out Basic Laundry
3. DWC/N0103: Clean and Maintain Kitchen Premises
4. DWC/N0104: Carry out Household Cooking Services
5. DWC/N0105: Provide Basic Table Service during Meal Time
6. DWC/N9902: Display standards of hygiene and work etiquettes
7. DWC/N9903: Maintain a clean and secure working environment



CAPITAL GOODS SSC CEMCA RPL 2021

RPL Program was conducted in late July- early Aug about 250 employees of Jindal Stainless Steel Lifestyle at Bilaspur Khurd, Gurgaon and PR Components, Faridabad

The 3 Job roles selected were

Stainless Steel Fabricator

1. CSC/N0310 Plan and prepare for stainless steel fabrication
2. CSC/N0311 Perform cutting and forming tasks for stainless steel fabrication
3. CSC/N0312 Perform pre-welding operations for stainless steel fabrication
4. CSC/N0208 Manually weld carbon steel/ low alloy steel and austenitic stainless steel using Metal Arc Welding/ Shielded Metal Arc Welding
5. CSC/N0212 Perform basic Tungsten Inert Gas (TIG) Welding also known as Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) Welding

6. CSC/N0214 Manually weld stainless steel using Metal Inert Gas (MIG) welding technique
7. CSC/N0313 Perform finishing and installation of fabricated stainless steel structures
8. CSC/N1335 Use basic health and safety practices at the workplace
9. CSC/N1336 Work effectively with others

#### Fitter Mechanical Assembly

1. CSC/N0304 Perform fitting and assembly operations on metal components
2. CSC/N1335 Use basic health and safety practices at the workplace
3. CSC/N1336 Work effectively with others

#### Polisher-Machine.

- CSC/N0113 Perform polishing on metals and metal alloys with the help of machines
- CSC/N1335 Use basic health and safety practices at the workplace
- CSC/N1336 Work effectively with others



The automotive skill council partnered with Minerva skills and held RPL at Sigma Moulds and Stampings at IMT Manesar and Victoria Haridwar.

The job roles for RPL were:

- Welding Technician Level 3
- Maintenance Technician -Mechanical- Level 3
- Press Shop Operator Level 4
- Tool Room operator/ Technician
- QC Inspector Level 3

### Sample profile of workers

Amit Kumar is aged 23 years and has passed class 12. He has 7 Years Work experience and earns 11000. He has a nuclear family of 7 People in his village in Bijnor. He works in Haridwar. He is Single. He is helping his younger brother to do D-Pharma and has paid fee around 1 lakh for his brother. He also pays premium of Insurance. He joined RPL because he sees a chance to prove his skills for a certificate.

Amit is 26 years and has passed class 9<sup>th</sup>. He has a work experience of 3 Years and earns Rs 10000. He has a joint Family of 12 People in his Village in Muzafarnagar. He works in Haridwar and is Single. His father is a Raj Mistri and his three Brothers are working along with him. He will fill class 10th form. He likes this job. He wants to make career in this sector and therefore applied for RPL.

Rohit Kumar is 24 years and is pursuing Bed. He has 2 Years Work experience and earns Rs 12000/- per month. He has a nuclear Family of 4 People in his village in Shahjahanpur. He works in Haridwar and is single. He is hardworking person. He is pursuing B.Ed and doing 8 hours job. Here, he is getting Rs 12000. He spends some amount on his study and supports his family with financially. He volunteered for RPL to get his skills certified for career growth.

### PANDEMIC AND RPL

The study was marked by the global uncertainties of the pandemic. As it affected daily lives, the RPL too was severely affected. It was a major roadblock to planned work and forced a change in approach, cancellations, re-schedulings and lot of changes on the ground.

The geographical areas also changed. Most of the activity was planned to be conducted in and around Delhi NCR, however in the pandemic, the deadlines meant that non Delhi places soon became a part of the exercise. It would be advisable to plan in a manner that even if similar situation reoccurs, we would be in a position to take forward the work.

### TECHNOLOGY AND RPL

One key concern during the RPL exercise was the non-fluency of workers in using technology tools. In lot of case employers also forbid taking in mobiles in the workplace. Technology is all pervasive and needs to be adopted for RPL implementation by implementers and also for learning by the candidates.

For implementers, it means using tools that can match demand for RPL with our implementation capability and supply. Making RPL more market centric would mean using tools that attract, provides a seamless experience and finally provide window for future opportunities

### SELF-PACED LEARNING FOR RPL

Self-paced learning is a critical dimension for RPL. If we want to scale up RPL in the country we need to create self-paced content for consumption of the workers. Assessors should be satisfied with the portfolios created by the workers post the self-paced course.

## IMPROVING RPL IN INDIA

The multidimensional changes in our world since Covid 19 pandemic, violent conflicts, migrant labour issues and low education status of our workers makes it incumbent on us to devise methods to acknowledge lifelong learning, with an emphasis on adult education. It is an unsaid human right to recognize, validate and accredit learning we



have in our different micro contextual worlds. We need to democratize individual and social learning demands. This will build a more an inclusive Indian society. Recognition of prior learning is more important than ever for vulnerable and disadvantaged target groups.

RPL can only happen, if four kinds of resources are available :

*Mental resources* – the willingness to learn: This is paramount and requires us to value skills and continuously keep working on refining them.

*The time for learning-* While an individual has to make his own time, it is also important for his supervisors and his employees to provide a window for employee learning beyond office duties. The employer can provide paid leave for RPL or such endeavours

*Physical resources-* This refers to materials, training infrastructure, tools, aids that help learning. Such aids enhance learning and provide opportunity to practice the skills we learnt.

*Finance-* At a country level, we need to think of sustainable methods to implement RPL. Funding from government has initiated the programme but if the programme has to scale up, have quality and be a part of our culture it would need to move beyond government to private sector entrepreneurial implementation.

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. RPL must be renamed to 'Experience Certificate'
2. RPL must be an integral part of all government schemes for workers.
3. RPL should be linked to worker portals of government for wider adoption and demand creation e.g. ESI, PF portal

4. Worker should be able to apply for RPL achievement from anytime, anywhere. One should be able to walk-in to a place, get one assessed and walk out with a RPL certificate. RPL assessment centres should be ubiquitous across the country and should allow anyone to walk in and take an RPL assessment.
5. Timely generation of certificates and incentives for RPL candidates is advised as it forms the basis for more word of mouth marketing.
6. RPL should not be free, either the employer or candidate or both should pay a nominal amount to generate trust and value for it.
7. RPL's public perception should not be as a sub component of a programme. It has a very distinct space, target and mechanism that needs to be treated differently from fresh skilling. There should be a separate portal for RPL which has no public facing connection with PMKVY or other schemes. The target segment of RPL is very different from fresher training and should be perceived as such by the people
8. RPL corrects the past for more productive future, while fresh training corrects the present for the future. Both have a role to play in the skill development scale up and must be treated separately. The perception of RPL must be more pronounced. It may be far easier to scale of RPL than it is to scale fresh training.
9. The RPL process must be streamlined further by more optimal used of technology
10. Self-paced learning must be piloted, encouraged and used extensively for RPL candidates.

11. RPL offers much more easy mechanism for government to increase employer ownership in the skill development ecosystem of the country. Clearly the demand for RPL is more easily felt and is a stepping stone for all other skill development programmes
12. CEMCA has deep experience in open learning, it may be helpful to explore convergence between open/distance learning with the RPL framework.
13. RPL provides opportunity to focus on women and this opportunity must be utilized to empower women. Women who have been out of the workforce for a significant period of time often do not know how to go about it RPL offers an opportunity to impact such women lives.
14. In the pandemic scenario, RPL can be a good model to alleviate some of migrant problems by deeply focusing a tailor made RPL on them.
15. RPL should not be limited to skill development but should serve as entry points to higher education too.
16. RPL should be seen as a tool to formalize the informal sector and adequate next steps should be taken for it.
17. RPL should be looked at the primary means to achieve adult education
18. Adult education departments should be roped in for RPL
19. While it is worthwhile to study other countries experience, it should be noted that there is no set precedent to follow, it is likely that replicable models will first come up in India rather than overseas. Germany is a clear leader in TVET and it is worth deeply understanding their Profipass project.
20. The provision of transparent and openly accessible RPL information

and support for learners (candidates) in multiple languages by using technology is important.

21. Assessment is at the heart of good RPL system and Assessment has been the weakest link of the skill development cycle due to issues of integrity of field assessors. RPL's credibility and scale is dependent on free, fair assessments.

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