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PM Internship Scheme

(A learning curve - The Hindu, 05-10-24)

Context: On October 3, without much fanfare, the Centre launched an online portal that will serve as the platform for implementing one of the major announcements in the Budget for India's unemployed - PM Internship Scheme.

What is the PM Internship Scheme and its main objective?

- Part of a five-scheme package to spur job creation and impart skills to 4.1 crore youth over five years
- Aims to match companies offering year-long on-the-job training with young job seekers
- Designed to bridge the gap between education and practical skills desired by employers
- A pilot project will begin with 1.25 lakh interns starting on December 2, 2024 whereby participating companies will voluntarily offer internships

What are the potential benefits of the scheme?

- Addresses youth unemployment and skill gaps
- Provides practical work experience and potential certification from well-known firms
- Could improve employability of participants
- Businesses can use the internship period to assess potential employees, potentially reducing recruitment and training costs.
- Exposure to real-world business operations might inspire some interns to start their own ventures.
- By encouraging placements within districts or states, the scheme could contribute to more balanced regional economic development.
- The scheme could stimulate the growth of a broader skill development ecosystem, including training providers and assessment agencies.
- Beyond technical skills, interns could develop crucial soft skills like communication, teamwork, and professional etiquette.

What challenges and concerns does the article raise about the scheme?

- Placement of interns within or near their district/state may be difficult in less industrialized areas
- Uneven distribution of manufacturing and services across states may affect implementation
- Need for incorporating digital and soft skills in addition to shop floor skills
- Importance of monitoring dropout rates and grievances

Can you answer the following question?

Evaluate the potential of the PM Internship Scheme in addressing India's youth unemployment challenge. What steps should be taken to ensure its effective implementation across diverse regional and economic contexts?

Maharashtra's Ladki Bahin Scheme

(Maharashtra's populist gamble: The Hindu - 07-10-24)

What 'Ladki Bahin' scheme?

- The "Mukhyamantri - Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana" is a scheme launched by the Women and Child Development Department, Government of Maharashtra.
- Key features of the scheme is the financial assistance where the government provides a monthly financial benefit of ₹1,500 through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to eligible women.
- **Target beneficiaries:** Women permanently residing in Maharashtra between the ages of 21 and 65 years.
 - Marital status can be married, widowed, divorced, abandoned, or destitute.
 - Annual family income from all sources should not exceed ₹2.5 lakh.
- **Objectives:**
 - Empower women financially.
 - Enhance their health and nutrition.
 - Strengthen their decision-making role within the family.

What are the arguments in favor of the 'Ladki Bahin' scheme?

- Provides quick financial aid to beneficiaries, potentially alleviating short-term economic hardships.
- Targets women, potentially contributing to their financial independence and empowerment.
- Cash transfers could potentially boost local economies through increased consumer spending.
- Direct cash transfers can be simpler to administer than complex, service-based welfare programmes, potentially reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies.
- Demonstrates Political responsiveness and government's attention to voters' immediate needs and concerns.

What are the concerns about the 'Ladki Bahin' scheme?

- Exacerbates Maharashtra's already precarious financial situation, potentially worsening the state's revenue deficit (₹20,151 crore) and fiscal deficits (₹1,10,355 crore).
- Prioritizes short-term electoral gains over long-term fiscal stability and economic growth.
- May lead to reallocation of funds away from essential services and existing critical programmes.
- It is considered as ineffective poverty alleviation measure as it fails to address root causes of poverty and economic inequality, offering only temporary relief.
- Appears to be a hasty copy of schemes from other states without thoughtful adaptation to Maharashtra's specific context and needs.

What alternatives does the article suggest for more sustainable welfare policies?

- Focus on employment creation (e.g., MNREGA during UPA-II)
- Prioritize sustainable job creation and infrastructure development
- Expand successful programmes and ensure efficient execution of welfare schemes
- Shift from short-term freebies to solutions offering long-term benefits

Can you answer the following question?

Critically examine the trend of populist welfare schemes in Indian states, using Maharashtra's 'Ladki Bahin' scheme as a case study.