



BRIDGING THE COMPETENCY GAP: ASSESSING TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS AND WORKPLACE APPLICATION OF iGOT KARMAYOGI AMONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN INDIA

Dr. Koushik Ghosh

TGT (English), PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya IIMC, Joka, Kolkata, India

Abstract:

India's transition from rule-based to role-based civil service administration requires systematic capacity building aligned with employee competencies. The iGOT Karmayogi digital learning platform, launched under Mission Karmayogi (2020), has achieved unprecedented scale—over 1.7 crore users and 5,600 courses across 23 languages by mid-2026. However, platform reach does not automatically translate into competency development or workplace performance improvement. This study examines the effectiveness of iGOT Karmayogi for central government employees through documentary analysis and literature synthesis, addressing a critical research gap: whether course completion represents genuine learning and competency transfer. Findings reveal significant opportunities in role-based learning pathways, multilingual accessibility, and competency-linked career progression, alongside challenges including completion-oriented compliance culture, limited workplace transfer mechanisms, and evaluation gaps. The study proposes an Access-Learning-Competency-Transfer-Impact framework that moves beyond quantitative completion metrics toward qualitative competency and performance outcomes. Recommendations focus on strengthening post-course workplace assessment, supervisor involvement, and impact evaluation. This research contributes to understanding how digital learning infrastructure can genuinely transform civil service capacity rather than merely expanding training participation.

Keywords: iGOT Karmayogi, competency-based training, digital learning, civil service capacity building, training transfer, workplace performance, central government employees, Mission Karmayogi

1. INTRODUCTION

The capacity and capability of civil servants directly influence public service quality, citizen satisfaction, and governance outcomes. In rapidly evolving contexts characterized by technological disruption, policy complexity, and rising citizen expectations, traditional episodic training models prove inadequate. The OECD (2021) argues that public organizations require embedded cultures of continuous learning because governments cannot simply recruit personnel with emerging competencies; instead, systematic capacity building must become central to workforce transformation.

India's institutional response has been Mission Karmayogi (NPCSCB), approved by the Union Cabinet in September 2020 (Department of Personnel and Training [DoPT], 2020). This initiative represents a paradigm shift from seniority-based, rule-bound human resource management toward competency-driven, role-based development. At its core sits iGOT Karmayogi, a digital public infrastructure linking 1.7 crore government employees to role-specific learning aligned with the Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRAC) (Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions [MPGP], 2026).

Despite impressive enrollment figures, a critical research gap persists: does participation in iGOT courses produce demonstrable changes in employee competence and workplace performance? The distinction between training accessibility and training effectiveness remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining not merely how many employees access iGOT learning, but whether such learning translates into competency development and meaningful workplace application.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Objectives:

- To assess the effectiveness of iGOT Karmayogi for central government employee development beyond completion metrics.
- To identify factors influencing the transfer of iGOT learning into workplace behavior and performance.
- To examine opportunities for deepening competency-linked career progression and professional development.
- To propose an evaluation framework that measures learning, competency development, and organizational impact.

Research Questions:

- RQ1: To what extent does iGOT Karmayogi course participation lead to demonstrable competency development among central government employees?
- RQ2: What organizational and individual factors influence the transfer of iGOT learning to workplace practices?
- RQ3: How can iGOT Karmayogi effectiveness be appropriately measured beyond course completion rates?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 From Rule-Based to Competency-Based Development

Mission Karmayogi operationalizes a fundamental shift in public-sector human resource philosophy. Traditionally, Indian civil service advancement emphasized tenure, seniority rules, and procedural compliance (Panda, 2021). In contrast, competency-based approaches recognize that effective performance depends on identifiable, developable clusters of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors specific to occupational roles (Boyatzis, 1982). FRAC systematically maps behavioral competencies (such as integrity, communication, and citizen-centricity), functional competencies (domain-specific knowledge and skills), and domain competencies (specialized technical expertise) to government positions (DoPT, 2020).

3.2 Training Transfer and Workplace Application

Kirkpatrick's four-level training evaluation model—reaction, learning, behavior, and results—remains foundational, yet Reio et al. (2017) demonstrate that positive course reactions and acquired knowledge do not automatically produce behavioral change or organizational outcomes. Research on training transfer consistently identifies three critical conditions: individual motivation to apply learning, workplace opportunities to practice new skills, and organizational support for application (Blume et al., 2010).

For government employees, this transfer challenge is particularly acute. An employee completing a course on citizen-centric service delivery faces limited opportunity to apply learning if institutional systems, supervisor expectations, or resource constraints prevent experimentation. Consequently, training effectiveness assessment must extend beyond post-course satisfaction surveys toward workplace practice changes.

3.3 Digital Learning in Adult Professional Development

Adult learning theory emphasizes autonomy, relevance, and immediate applicability (Brookfield, 1984). Digital platforms potentially address these principles through self-paced, accessible, role-relevant content. However, technology alone does not guarantee learning transfer. Factors including platform usability, content quality, learner motivation, and post-course environmental support shape outcomes (Moore, 2011).

The iGOT platform's design—incorporating 70:20:10 learning (70% experiential, 20% peer, 10% formal), offline-capable mobile access, and integration with lifelong learning records—aligns theoretically with adult learning principles. Yet actual effectiveness depends on implementation quality and workplace integration.

4. METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Documentary analysis and literature synthesis examining iGOT Karmayogi's institutional architecture, implementation evidence, and effectiveness indicators.

Data Sources:

- Official Government of India publications (DoPT, MPGP, Press Information Bureau)
- World Bank Public Service Capability Enhancement Project documentation
- Peer-reviewed literature on training evaluation, learning transfer, and digital learning (2020–2026)
- Parliamentary replies and policy documents

Analytical Framework: Five interconnected dimensions—accessibility, learning acquisition, competency development, workplace transfer, and organizational outcomes—guided thematic analysis.

Limitations: As a documentary study, this research cannot establish individual-level causal relationships between course participation and performance changes. Quantitative indicators in the public domain are predominantly output metrics (registrations, completions) rather than independently verified outcome measures.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Reach and Accessibility: Democratizing Professional Learning

iGOT has achieved remarkable scale. By July 2026, 1.7 crore users had registered across 5,600 courses, with over 14 crore course completions recorded (MPGP, 2026). Multilingual availability (23 languages) and offline mobile capability address accessibility barriers facing geographically dispersed employees. For central government employees posted in semi-urban and rural locations, such infrastructure removes traditional training access constraints.

Opportunity: Democratized access enables more equitable professional development, reducing dependence on centralized training institutions.

5.2 Role-Based Competency Architecture: From Generic to Specific Development

FRAC's core contribution is a systematic linkage between positions and required competencies. Rather than mandatory generic training for all employees, iGOT theoretically enables targeted development addressing specific competency gaps. Finance officers can pursue accounting and budget management competencies; citizen-facing officials can develop communication and grievance-handling skills.

Challenge: FRAC implementation requires continuous updating as government roles evolve. Preliminary evidence suggests inconsistent adoption across ministries (Panda, 2021).

5.3 Scale Versus Effectiveness: The Completion Paradox

While enrollment and completion metrics are impressive, they present an inherent measurement challenge. High course completion may reflect:

- Genuine learning and engagement
- Mandatory compliance with administrative directives
- Desire to accumulate credit toward annual performance appraisals
- Minimal engagement with content despite formal completion

Government data do not distinguish among these mechanisms. This ambiguity prompted recent policy changes: from 2025–26, iGOT course completion and assessment status have been incorporated into Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APAR) for central government employees (MPGP, 2025). While this may increase participation, it simultaneously risks creating a compliance-oriented, completion-focused culture rather than fostering intrinsic professional learning motivation.

5.4 The Transfer Gap: Learning to Workplace Performance

Organizational research on training transfer identifies that even well-designed learning is frequently not applied in workplace settings (Blume et al., 2010). For iGOT, this transfer challenge involves:

- Individual factors: Self-efficacy, motivation, prior knowledge, and perceived course relevance influence whether employees attempt to apply learning.
- Workplace factors: Access to resources, opportunity to practice, supervisor encouragement, peer support, and organizational systems either facilitate or inhibit application.

- Organizational factors: Whether learning is rewarded, recognized, and integrated into performance expectations affects sustained behavioral change.

Evidence from government data does not systematically address whether iGOT graduates subsequently demonstrate changed workplace practices. The absence of supervisor-rated performance assessments or objective productivity measures represents a significant evaluation gap.

5.5 Opportunities: Personalisation, Career Linkage, and Impact

Personalised Learning Pathways: AI-enabled systems could analyze individual competency profiles, career stage, role requirements, and learning history to recommend targeted content. This represents an evolution from one-size-fits-all training toward tailored professional development.

Career Progression Linkage: Incorporating demonstrated competency development into promotion criteria, placement decisions, and performance recognition would operationalize Mission Karmayogi's founding principle of role-based advancement. Currently, most decisions remain influenced by seniority and examination-based selection.

Impact Evaluation: Strengthened measurement of organizational outcomes—citizen satisfaction, grievance-redressal quality, service delivery timeliness, policy implementation effectiveness—would establish whether capacity building produces tangible public-service improvements.

6. PROPOSED COMPETENCY-TRANSFER-IMPACT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Drawing from training evaluation literature and documentary analysis, this study proposes a five-stage effectiveness framework moving beyond completion metrics:

- Stage 1—Access: Registration, platform accessibility, language availability, participation rates, user demographics.
- Stage 2—Learning: Knowledge acquisition, assessment performance, self-reported confidence, demonstrated understanding.
- Stage 3—Competency: Evidence of behavioral, functional, and domain competency development assessed through workplace observation, supervisor ratings, and performance indicators.
- Stage 4—Transfer: Demonstrated application of learning in actual work situations, supported by supervisor encouragement, peer collaboration, and organizational systems enabling practice.
- Stage 5—Impact: Improved organizational outcomes—efficiency gains, quality improvements, citizen satisfaction, transparency, responsiveness, innovation—traceable to capacity-building investments.

Framework Logic: Access → Learning → Competency → Workplace Transfer → Organizational Impact

The proposition is that movement between stages should be measured rather than assumed. High access (Stage 1) does not necessarily predict learning (Stage 2); learning completion does not automatically produce competency change (Stage 3); and competency development does not guarantee workplace transfer (Stage 4) without supportive organizational conditions.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING iGOT EFFECTIVENESS

For Policy Implementation:

- Shift evaluation emphasis from completion metrics toward learning and competency outcomes. Course completion should be an input indicator, not an outcome indicator.
- Integrate supervisor involvement by requiring supervisors to identify workplace opportunities for applying newly acquired competencies and to assess whether learning has influenced employee performance.
- Conduct post-course workplace assessments at specified intervals (3, 6, 12 months post-completion) to determine whether learning has transferred to workplace practices.
- Balance mandatory and voluntary learning. While prescribed competency development should be mandatory, allow employee discretion in selecting among course options and exploring self-directed professional interests.
- Strengthen quality assurance through independent content review, learning outcome assessment, and learner feedback integration, moving beyond completion rates toward demonstrated knowledge acquisition.
- Enhance career linkage by formally incorporating iGOT competency achievements into promotion criteria, lateral placement decisions, and special assignment eligibility, making learning demonstrably consequential for career progression.

For Organizational Operations:

- Address digital fatigue by periodically reviewing course duration, assessment load, frequency of mandatory courses, and learning time requirements to prevent compliance burnout.
- Expand multilingual content beyond the current 23 languages, with particular attention to regional and minority languages serving specific geographic regions.
- Develop learning analytics capability enabling ministries to identify which competencies most strongly correlate with organizational performance improvements, informing future content development.
- Establish independent evaluation mechanisms insulating performance assessment from institutional bias, potentially through CAG audit or external research partnerships.

8. DISCUSSION

iGOT Karmayogi represents one of the globally most ambitious public-sector digital learning infrastructure initiatives. Scale achievements are genuine: reaching 1.7 crore users across all Union ministries and departments within five years demonstrates substantial implementation success. The platform's architectural principles—role-based learning, multilingual accessibility, competency mapping, and integration with performance systems—align with contemporary evidence on effective adult learning and training transfer.

Yet effectiveness must be distinguished from reach. The current evidence base is considerably stronger on participation metrics than on competency or performance outcomes. This gap reflects both data limitations and measurement challenges inherent in training evaluation research. Government data transparently report registrations and completions; they do not systematically measure whether learning produces competency change or workplace performance improvement.

The introduction of iGOT completion status in APAR represents intentional policy design linking learning participation to career consequences. This may increase engagement, but it simultaneously creates risks of a compliance-oriented rather than learning-oriented participation culture, where employees pursue course completion primarily for appraisal credit rather than genuine professional development.

The most significant unrealized opportunity lies in deepening competency assessment and workplace transfer measurement. If iGOT could systematically establish that employees completing specific competency pathways subsequently demonstrate improved performance in relevant domains, this would transform Mission Karmayogi from a training initiative into a documented capacity-building transformation.

9. LIMITATIONS

This study is necessarily limited by reliance on documentary sources and public data. Actual survey research with central government employees would enable direct assessment of learning acquisition, transfer factors, and workplace application. Cross-sectional survey or longitudinal panel designs would strengthen causal inference beyond current correlational analysis. Additionally, the rapidly evolving iGOT ecosystem means published research often lags current platform capabilities and policy changes. Finally, this study cannot independently verify government-reported statistics, relying instead on official sources.

10. CONCLUSION

iGOT Karmayogi has successfully democratized access to professional learning across India's central government. The platform's scale, architectural sophistication, and multilingual design represent a genuine institutional achievement. The transition from rule-based to role-based administration requires exactly this kind of competency-driven, accessible learning infrastructure.

However, platform scale does not automatically ensure training effectiveness. The central finding of this study is that enrollment growth should not be confused with competency development or performance improvement. The next phase of Mission Karmayogi must therefore move from the quantitative logic of completion toward the qualitative logic of competence. The ultimate test of an iGOT course should not be whether an employee completed it, but whether the employee subsequently performs work tasks more effectively, makes better decisions, demonstrates a stronger citizen-centric orientation, or contributes to improved public service.

This requires strengthened evaluation mechanisms, supervisor engagement, workplace transfer support, and organizational systems rewarding demonstrated competency. If these conditions are met, iGOT Karmayogi can become not merely India's largest government learning platform, but a genuine instrument of civil service transformation.

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