

## Empowering Youth, Realizing Aatm-Nirbhar India

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### ABSTRACT

*India is now looking at a unique opportunity in the upcoming decade in form of a young demographic dividend, but there lie challenges in training and developing relevant marketable skills of our vast population as the risk of demographic liability of unemployed, untrained and unproductive population lingers close by. In present picture, skill training in India lacks industry interface, poor infrastructure pulls back various efforts by the government all the while the negative effects of the CoViD-19 pandemic are still not over. Recent initiatives have raised the standard of our country on various international metrics but now the need of the hour is to fine tune the skill distribution mechanism and fast-track various development initiatives so that our country can reap the benefits of the opportunity in time. Skill training plays an important role in releasing a self-sufficient India as skill initiatives and training will lead to employment as it will not only boost the entrepreneurial practices but also help in providing a capable workforce which can be employed in various sectors. Both these factors will boost the economy promoting economic growth, preparing our country for the global stage.*

### I INTRODUCTION

Delving deep into India's rich heritage, before the dawn of Vedic age, there was no formal education system. A father passed on the knowledge either religious or professional to his child closely mentoring him. Traditional skills in forms of diverse craftsmanship and connoisseurs which root on indigenous resources have been passed from generations in families in various parts of the country and from ancient times, have formed the backbone of the country's economy. Much later two system developed based on the cultural movements, which were Vedic and Buddhist education system. The difference lied in the medium of instruction which was Sanskrit for Vedic and Pali for Buddhist. Children from a young age were required to attend "gurukul" where they were taught sixty-four "kala" (performing arts) which included something as basic as "tarku-karma" or spinning a spindle to as diverse as "vastu-vidya" or engineering. It is well known that gradually our country became a learning hub as fifteen universities that existed from 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to 1200 AD, among which Takshashila is the oldest, used to attract talent from all over the world. Thus, distribution of skills, essential at the time were done from the fundamental level which supported the economy and culture of the society. In the medieval period, education was closely linked to religion. It was also a time of constant shift in state boundaries and rise and fall of kingdoms and hence with each different ruler came a different take on education. This effect slowly segregated basic skill training from educational institutes but promoted skills like art, singing, dancing, poetry etc. which added to the heritage of the country. The onset of British Empire brought western educational values in India which completely sidelined the Indian Knowledge system. British expansionist policies ruthlessly exploited India by imposing taxes, banning Indian textiles which declined the industries at the time. After Independence, much of the importance was awarded to formal education resulting in increased spending to establish centers of higher learning across the country. Nevertheless,

Government of India has constantly endeavored to promote education and awareness for the youths of our country. Right to education (RTE), open schooling, Industrial Training Institute (ITI) and Industrial Training Centers (ITC) are right steps in this direction along with several major policies that are released and revised often by central and state governments. But despite all these efforts, country witness high dropout rates up to class X (More boys dropped out of school than girls at secondary level in India in 2019-20: Report, 2021). In addition to this a large size of youth population is also slowing down skill distribution. Also, Skill-based education today is synonymous with vocational skill which is almost always not the part of the main curriculum. Hence deprived from formal and focused development, the youths in our country obtain skills through short-term courses. Looking beyond grades is also an enormous challenge for students to tackle.

### II RESEARCH DESIGN

Main objective of this paper is to present the various studies and comprehensive reviews which have been conducted in the skill discipline and also to propose the conceptual model based on these studies. For this secondary data has been collected and analyzed

### III LITERATURE REVIEW

Skill may be defined as the set of competencies essential to carry out the required tasks in the most efficient way while maintaining the agreed set of quality standards. Skill development is a way to empower the workforce with the necessary skills; knowledge through vocational or technical training to meet the industry requirements and to ensure competitiveness in the dynamic global market (MaClean, 2013).

Skill development not only involves acquiring new skills but also upgrading existing skills governed by modern trends and advances in technologies at disposal. It is found that most of the youth being educated are facing severe unemployment problem due to lack of skills and technical knowledge. (Dr Sharma & Sethi, 2015) The author in the paper titled “Skill Development: Opportunities & Challenges in India” has identified the gap in demand and supply of skill in India. The Challenges as identified are the unavailability of infrastructure for training which deprives more than 50% of newcomers of the opportunities. Training lacks industry interface which lead to poor placements. Lack of pre-assessment tests enable direct admissions to institute which mismatch the interests and abilities of students down the road. There is no solid standard by which the universities can be compared and a lack of proper career counseling leads to uninformed skill acquisition choices. Finally, the high cost of training restricts the institutes to influx student from rural and urban areas and as a result more than 80% of workforce enters the market untrained. In another research work undertaken in the Bundelkhand region (Districts Sagar and Damoh) of Madhya Pradesh (Uddin, 2020) concludes that most of the youth residing have medium level of understanding and were in desperate need of capacity building. The youth in the region had sufficient educational qualification to undertake entrepreneurial tasks. Economic status also influenced their decision of entrepreneurship as a career option. 38.33% and 31.67% individuals of Sagar and Damoh districts respectively were above the poverty line and had a strong base to start with whereas 61.67% and 68.33% individuals were below the poverty line. The identified study variables for entrepreneurial growth were namely risk taking, hope of success, determination, use of feedback, self-confidence, knowledge ability, motivation, manageability, innovativeness and achievement. Based on three levels of High, Medium and Low, each participant was asked to rate themselves and the result points two thirds of the youth find themselves in the medium category for determination and use of feedback. In the high category, highest score was counted for manageability (23.17%) and minimum for motivation (10%). Overall, more than 50% of the population resides with medium level in all ten variables.

In another article (Dr. Chakraborty, 2020), author presents facts and figures related to slowing down of economy and decline in employment due to the pandemic. In harrowing times of the CoViD pandemic, industries have struggles to keep afloat, while 121.5 million jobs were lost in the first month that is April of 2020 and then narrowed down to 100.3 million in May 2020, 29.9 million in June 202 to 11 million in July 2020. In a report by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) only 20% out of the five million students who graduate every year get employed in India whereas

per ‘India Skills Report’ by Wheebox, People Strong and CII, only 46% students are employable. Despite the setup of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with various schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Skill India, National Skill Development Mission etc. in its concept, 2016 report by Labor Bureau states 58% of graduates and 62% of post graduates mention ‘non-availability of jobs matching their skill and education’ as the reason for their unemployment. Projections from Bloomberg Economic article puts India’s GDP to grow from \$2.7 trillion in 2019 to \$5 trillion by 2025 and \$8.4 trillion by 2030.

Skill initiatives and skill training will lead to employment generation and support the growth of entrepreneurship. (Dr. Jeyamani, 2019) In the paper titled “‘Skill India’ Provides Employment and Empowerment” the author provides the positive effects of skill development on employment generation in the country. India has able to improve its Ease of doing business index rank, issued by World Bank, from 142 out of 190 economies in 2014-2015 to 63<sup>rd</sup> rank in 2019-2020. This is a rare feat for any large country and now India is ranked the best country in South Asian region on account of the only BRICS nation to achieve this. India is one of the fastest growing and sustainable economies with a consistent if not higher rate of 7% (2020, IMF). This has invited very large influx of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country. India ranks in top 10 FDI destinations globally and has emerged as an attractive destination for business and investment. Since the launch of Make in India initiative, there has been a growth of 37% in overall FDI inflow and growth of 46% in FDI equity inflow.

These two phenomena will further boost the economic growth of the country.

#### IV PRESENT SCENARIO

Youth plays a crucial role in achieving economic prosperity of the country. The working age population (16 to 59 years) which was 58% in 2001 will rise to 64 % in 2021 (India, 2014) and by 2026 merely 13% of the population will age over 60 years. (Dr Sharma & Sethi, 2015). India is known as the youngest nations with over 50% of population under 30 years. It is estimated that by 2025, India will have the 25% of the total global workforce. This is a blessing for our nation only if this demographic dividend is harnessed, empowered and further developed to ensure the nation’s global competitiveness and economic progress which can be enjoyed until 2040 (Comission, 2013). This can be done in form of skill development initiatives – a step towards aatm-nirbhar (self-sufficient) India. Skill based education is purpose driven, more effective and inherently flexible which gives the students to bridge the gap of understanding. They are assessed for their competency all

the while ownership of learning remains in their hands. Experience acquired by students also plays a tangible role in grooming future leaders and the vibrant traditions also get conserved as a bonus effect. Advancement of the current pandemic has made importing services, products and skills more and more challenging. This has put up a demand on local products which has helped the people to recognize the importance of a skill-driven society. Various successful schemes that were implemented or under way are as follows

**(a) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**

- The flagship scheme of the ministry of skills development and entrepreneurship, PMKVY enables a large number of Indian youths to take up industry relevant skill training that can help secure a better livelihood. This is implemented through the national skill development corporation. Individuals with experience or skills after learning will also be assessed and certified under the recognition of prior education. Under this scheme, training and assessment fees are fully paid by the govt. Skill development centres across the country provide short- term training, special projects, skills and employment fairs, placement guidelines and monitoring guidelines to the youth.

**(b) SANKALP- Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Program**

- This programme is designed to operationalize the submission under the national mission. This scheme has a six years implementation schedule. At present, the first tranche has been approved for implementation. This scheme aims to create convergence among all skill training activities, improve quality of skill development program through building a pool of quality trainers and assessors, model curriculum and content, establish robust monitoring and evaluation system for skill training programs.

**(c) EDP- Entrepreneurship Development Program**

**(d) DDU – GKY Deen Dayal Upadhaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana**

**(e) National career service**

**(f) Ayushman Bharat yojana**

**(g) Make in India** initiative along with upgradation of existing institutions through World Bank and Government of India funding and upgradation of training institutes under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

**(h) AICTE-UKIERI:** All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) along with Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS), United Kingdom, on the joint operation of the activities under UK India Education and Research Initiative. In its third phase, the focus is on leadership and faculty development, better integration of skills in education system, e-partnership and research incubation and enhancing mobility.

**(i) Skill Knowledge Providers (SKPs):** SKPs are industries or specialized training centres. Under this initiative, Council has signed MoU with various organization to use their skill training centre for giving vocational training to students admitted under National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) Program.

**(j) Employability Enhancement Training Programme (EETP):** For enhancement of employability options and implementation of current schemes AICTE has signed memorandum with several tech giants like LinkedIn, Monster.com etc.

**(k) National Employability Enhancement Mission (NEEM):** With this scheme, the objective is offer on the job practical training to the employ of a company. This is open for all 16 to 40-year-old individuals irrespective of their educational qualifications.

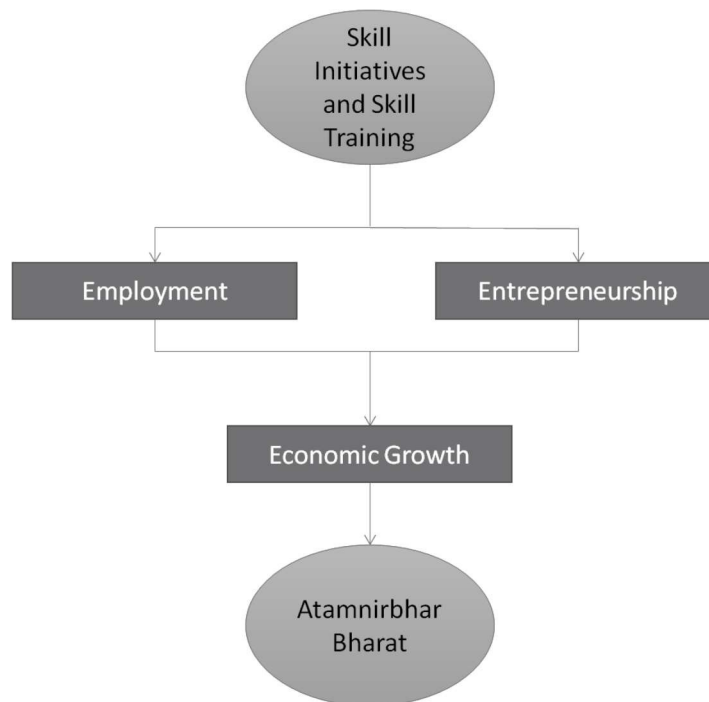
Other than this, job fairs with the name “Rozgar Mela” under NSDC flags are also organized which are 1-2 days long event in which both job seekers and employers meet to fulfill employment demands in private sector. Another flagship scheme of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), “Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra” (PMKK) are centers of skill training with focus on industry skills and regular capex are opened in every district of the country. Government of India also plans to open “India International Skill Centres” (IISC) in order to realize India as the skill capital of the world. A network is to be setup in place which will give overseas opportunities to skilled labour of the country. To stimulate effect on a more fundamental, the government of India has come up with the New Education Policy (NEP) which brings the focus on holistic learning. This new overhaul is in line with 2030 objective of sustainable development. This will be done by structuring a multidisciplinary curriculum along with soft skill development, vocational skills and hands-on experience of various subjects

## V PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The institutionalized existing structure of vocational training in India is still not sufficient to train millions of youths that will enter the labor market. We must also have capability to re-skill the workforce from time to time for which government as well as private players and other stakeholders can be involved. Involvement of private sector is more important than government intervention as private institute are more agile, can provide customized courses and can diversify into not only grey-collar but also blue and white -collar jobs. India is in top position to enjoy the demographic features in this century. The low human development index of India emphasizes that 80% of the workforce in India (rural and urban) doesn't possess any identifiable and marketable skills but skill development will increase the probability of landing a job

and will ensure survivability over time. In developing countries, majority of population is below poverty line while there are a large number of youths. In India, 2.3% of the workforce has formal skill training as compared to developed countries like UK, US, Germany, Japan the percentage is more than 50%. This also shows that for being a developed nation, a capable work-force is the need of the hour for India. Self-dependence of our country is dependent on its economic growth while this itself is supported by capable and skilled workforce employed in

various services. Skill initiatives and skill training will lead to employment generation and support the growth of entrepreneurship. These two phenomena will further boost the economic growth of the country.



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