

SKILLING INDIA – INITIATIVES TO CREATE GLOBAL WORKFORCE**R.ANITA¹,**

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ABSTRACT: Skilling is perceived by many as the last resort and meant for only those students who could not progress in a formal academic ladder. This mind set among the students and elders has increased the gap between industry demand and the qualified human resource from the institutions. With only 2.3 per cent of the total workforce in India having undergone formal skill training as compared to 68 per cent in the UK and 52 per cent in the US, the quantum of the challenge still becomes very high. After 'Digital India' and 'Make in India', the NaMo Government launched new programme, called 'Skill India' - a multi-skill programme in 2015 to fill this gap. According to a skill gap study conducted by National Skill Development Council(NSDC) in 2014, there is an additional net requirement of 119.2 million skilled manpower in 24 key sectors by 2022. India is one of the youngest nations in the world with a very large pool of young English-speaking people as more than 62% of its population are in the working age group (15-59 years), and is expected to increase in the next decade. By 2020, almost 60 per cent of India's population of 1.3 billion will be in the working age group of 15-59 years, if adequately skilled this demographic dividend could make India a global HR powerhouse. The main objective of this paper is to study the initiatives of the central and state Government to meet the challenges of skilling. Secondary data from various websites, newspaper articles and journals was taken for the study. ***Hence the paper highlights the policies of the government's direction and the initiatives the educational institutions need to take towards skilling so that the youth enhances its employability quotient and also improves the entrepreneurship skill while they undergo a formal study.***

Key words: *Initiatives, skilling, entrepreneurship, Policies, challenges*

1. Introduction

Skills and knowledge are driving forces of economic growth and social development for any country. Countries with higher levels and better standards of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities in domestic and international job markets. Today, India is one of the youngest nations in the world with more than 62% of its population in the working age group (15-59 years), and more than 54% of its total population below 25 years of age. It is estimated that the average age of the population in India by 2020 will be 29 years as against 40 years in USA, 46 years in Europe and 47 years in Japan. fact, during the next 20 years the labour force in the industrialized world is expected to decline by 4%, while in India it will increase by 32%. This poses a formidable challenge and a huge opportunity for India. To reap this demographic dividend which is expected to last for next 25 years, India needs to equip its workforce with employable skills and knowledge so that they can contribute substantively to

the economic growth of the country. The country need to create a pool of young people who are able to create jobs and not capable of creating jobs. But they must be in a position to face their counterparts in any part of the world by virtue of their hard work and their dexterity of hands through their skills.

Our country presently faces a dual challenge of paucity of highly trained workforce, as well as non-employability of large sections of the conventionally educated youth, who possess little or no job skills. The country, however, has a big challenge ahead as it is estimated that only 4.69% of the total workforce in India has undergone formal skill training as compared to 68% in UK, 75% in Germany, 52% in USA, 80% in Japan and 96% in South Korea. A skill gap study was conducted by NSDC during 2010-2014. The study indicates that there is an additional net incremental requirement of 109.73 million skilled manpower by 2022 in twenty-five key sectors. This workforce will need to be mapped through recognition of existing skills and then provided with necessary skilling, reskilling and upskilling to increase productivity and provide a livelihood pathway.

Hence this paper primarily focuses on the initiatives taken by the Government of India to skill India and what educational institutions need to do in line with the vision of the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015.

Research Methodology: Secondary data from the websites and e-journals taken for the study and the study is descriptive in nature.

II. Literature Review

After 'Digital India' and 'Make in India', the government launched programme called 'Skill India' in March 2015. Skill India and Make in India are complementary to each other. The key objective of Make in India is to promote manufacturing in 25 sectors of the economy, which will lead to job creation and consequently need for skilled manpower. Some of these sectors include automobiles, chemicals, IT, pharmaceuticals, textiles, ports, aviation, leather, tourism and hospitality, wellness, railways, auto components, design manufacturing, renewable energy, mining, bio-technology, and electronics.

Skill India is the government's answer to bridge this gap by providing training to all sections of workforce in order to optimise their productivity.

The first National Policy on Skill Development was notified in 2009. In the aftermath of this policy, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) was established in 2009 to promote private sector participation via innovative funding models. NSDC has tied up with more than 211 training providers, many of whom have started scaling up their operations, to offer short term training programmes. They also supported and incubated 37 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) which are intended to facilitate much needed participation and ownership of industry to ensure needs based training programmes.

National Skills Development Agency (NSDA) which was created in June 2013 has been working with State governments to rejuvenate and synergise skilling efforts in the States. Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (earlier Department of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship notified in July 2014) has been set up in November 2014 to give fresh impetus to the Skill India agenda and help create an appropriate ecosystem that facilitates imparting employable skills to its growing workforce over the next few decades. The National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) has been anchored at NSDA and efforts have been initiated to align all skilling and education outcomes with the competency based NSQF levels.

These efforts build on the legacy vocational training infrastructure of Industrial Training Institutes and Polytechnics which have now grown in number to approximately 12,000 and 3,200 respectively.

To make India a skilled country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched four initiatives as a part of which over 40 crore people will be trained in various skills by 2022. The initiatives launched today include National Skill Development Mission, National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) scheme and the Skill Loan scheme. The initiatives were launched to mark the first-ever World Youth Skills Day, where the government set a target of skilling 40.02 crore people by 2022. The Skill India logo was launched on 15th July 2015 with the tagline -- 'Kaushal Bharat, Kusal Bharat'.

National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015

The National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015 is the country's first integrated national policy for developing skills and promoting entrepreneurship on a large scale. National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 supersedes the policy of 2009. The primary objective of this policy is to meet the challenges of skilling at scale with speed, standard (quality) and sustainability. It aims to provide an umbrella framework to all skilling activities being carried out within the country, to align them to common standards and link skilling with demand centres. In addition to laying down the objectives and expected outcomes, the policy also identifies the overall institutional framework which will act as a vehicle to reach the expected outcomes.

Entrepreneurship based on innovation has immense growth potential. The Global Innovation Index 2014 ranks India 76 out of 7143 countries. Accelerating entrepreneurship especially that based on innovation is crucial for large-scale employment generation in India. The growth and prosperity of all economies remains highly dependent on entrepreneurial activity. The ideal entrepreneurial environment has five pillars: Access to funding, Entrepreneurial culture, Supportive regulatory and tax regimes, Educational systems that support entrepreneurial mind sets and a coordinated approach that links the public, private and voluntary sectors.

National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy 2015 attempts to address these concerns. It tries to bring the world of education and training closer to the world of work so as to enable them together build a Strong India. One national, 30 state, 50 Nodal and 3,000 college based E- Hubs will be set up to deliver support. These E-Hubs will, collectively, cover the entire nation.

III. Role of Education Institution In Skilling India

The current education system does not focus on training young people in employable skills that can provide them with employment opportunities, and hence a large section of India's labour force has either outdated or no skills. With the expected economic growth, this challenge is going to only increase further, since more than 75% of new job opportunities are expected to be skill-based. The government, thus, is committed in upgrading people's skills by providing vocational education and training them.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can act like the glue that links education and employers and takes them to new heights in a way that neither of them can achieve if working singularly. With a shared goal of tightening the level of communication among educators and employers, PPPs can efficiently implement public policies, funding systems and curriculum frameworks, and help bridge the employability gap. Also, government-run training institutes are often plagued by an

array of problems such as faculty shortage and obsolete curriculum due to which most students passing out of educational institutions remain unemployed. These challenges cannot be met alone by government initiatives, and for a strong link between industry and training institutes, private involvement can help by providing funds, better infrastructure and more exposure.

National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) notified on 27th December 2013 organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of Knowledge, Skills and Aptitude. These levels are defined in the terms of learning outcomes which the learner must possess regardless of whether they were acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning. It provides a nationally integrated education and competency based skill framework enabling a person to acquire desired competency levels, transit to the job market and at an opportune time return for acquiring additional skills to further upgrade their competencies. So far 1345 Qualifications from 28 Sector Skill Councils and 116 NCVT Qualifications have been aligned with NSQF.

Features of 'Skill India'

- The emphasis is to skill the youths in such a way that they get employment and also improve entrepreneurship.
- Provides training, support and guidance for all occupations that were of traditional type like carpenters, cobblers, welders, blacksmiths, masons, nurses, tailors, weavers etc.
- More emphasis will be given on new areas like real estate, construction, transportation, textile, gem industry, jewellery designing, banking, tourism and various other sectors, where skill development is inadequate or nil.
- The training programmes would be on the lines of international level.
- To create a hallmark called 'Rural India Skill', so as to standardise and certify the training process.
- Tailor-made, need-based programmes would be initiated for specific age groups which can be like language and communication skills, life and positive thinking skills, personality development skills, management skills, behavioural skills, including job and employability skills.
- The course methodology of 'Skill India' would be innovative, which would include games, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, practical experiences, case studies etc.

Such initiatives are a positive step towards skilling the untapped potential that can be utilised to make Skill India a reality which is a programme for the entire nation.

IV. Challenges In The Country

- One of the major challenges in the country today is public perception on skilling, which is viewed as the last option meant for those who have not been able to progress/opted out of the formal academic system.
- Most of the vocational training programmes are not aligned to the requirements of the industry.
- Skill development programmes of the Central Government over the years have been spread across more than 20 Ministries/Departments without any robust coordination and monitoring mechanism to ensure convergence.
- Many of the skill development initiatives often remain unaligned to demand, thus defeating its entire objective.
- The various grant based, free training programmes available today, though necessary, have their own limitations especially on quality and employability.
- Students undergoing training for free attach little value to training whereas training providers focus on increasing their numbers rather than quality of training

- There is multiplicity in assessment and certification systems existing in the country which leads to inconsistent outcomes and causes confusion to the employers.
- Further, despite concrete timelines mentioned in the NSQF notification, the process of alignment of courses/qualifications with NSQF has been rather tardy.
- The availability of good quality trainers is a major area of concern.
- There is a lack of focus on development of trainer training programmes and career progression pathways for trainers have also not been defined.
- Efforts in the skill landscape have been largely devoid of industry/employer linkages until the last few years. This has created gaps in terms of sectoral need and availability, competency required by employer and those possessed by a trainee etc. Placement of trainees has consequently suffered.
- One of the biggest challenges of skill development in our country is that 93% of the workforce is in informal/unorganised sector. Consequently, it is difficult to map existing skills in the unorganised sector and gauge the skilling requirement in the sector. On the other hand, the rate of job growth in informal sector is estimated to be twice that in formal sector.
- Women constitute almost half of the demographic dividend. The key challenge here is to increase their participation in the country's labour force, which is directly linked to economic growth of the country.
- Census data has revealed that there has been a continuous fall in labour force participation rate of women from 33.3% to 26.5% in rural areas, and from 17.8% to 15.5% in 6 urban areas between 2004 and 2011. Mainstreaming gender roles by skilling women in non-traditional roles and increasing gender sensitivity in the workplace will have a catalytic effect on productivity and be a smart economic decision.
- Job creation for skilled youth is also a major challenge before the nation.

Government Initiatives for improving the quality

- One Nation One Standard' should become the mantra to ensure that national standards and quality for skilling are globally aligned and Indian youth can aspire to secure local, national and international job opportunities.
- Quality of training can be measured by competency outcomes and employability of trainees. The following parameters have been identified for improving quality: • Quality assurance framework embedded in NSQF • Market relevant training programmes • Recognition of prior learning • Curriculum alignment • National Certification Framework • Employability skills • Placements.
- In partnership with experts, a world class entrepreneurship education curriculum will be developed. Through a blend of online and experiential learning, potential entrepreneurs will go through hands-on, student centric courses that help them acquire skills they need to start an enterprise. This curriculum will build on and adapt the best entrepreneurship education content available globally. This curriculum to be delivered to all aspiring entrepreneurs at no cost. Leveraging online learning, entrepreneurship courses can be taken as and when needed by students and business people alike through Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs).
- In addition, entrepreneurship education will be integrated into the mainstream curriculum in 3,000 colleges around India.
- These colleges will also be provided with additional support and re-training of existing faculty to deliver entrepreneurship courses to enrolled students from all tracks and courses. Students will be able to choose entrepreneurship courses to suit their needs, and Universities will be encouraged to award credits for entrepreneurship courses.
- Entrepreneurship education courses will also be delivered in approximately 325 industrial clusters across the nation.

- Through 50 nodal Entrepreneurship Hubs (E-Hubs) set up across all states, existing and potential entrepreneurs will be targeted for entrepreneurship education modules that suit their need.
- 25% schools will integrate skilling with formal education from class 9 onwards, over the next 5 years, to make skill development aspirational.

V. Suggestions

- While State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs) have been launched in almost all States, there is an imminent need for capacity building and empowerment of SSDMs in many States in order to upscale quality skill development.
- Providing seamless integration of skill training with formal education.
- Focus on an outcome-based approach towards quality skilling.
- Increase the capacity and quality of training infrastructure and trainers to ensure equitable and easy access to every citizen.
- Address human resource needs by aligning supply of skilled workers with sectoral requirements of industry.
- Establish an IT based information system for aggregating demand and supply of skilled workforce which can help in matching and connecting supply with demand.
- Promote national standards in the skilling space through active involvement of employers in setting occupational standards, helping develop curriculum, providing apprenticeship opportunities, participating in assessments, and providing gainful employment to skilled workforce with adequate compensation.
- Operationalize a well-defined quality assurance framework aligned with global standards to facilitate mobility of labour.
- Ensure that the skilling needs of the socially and geographically disadvantaged and marginalized groups (like the SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, differently abled persons etc.) are appropriately taken care of.
- Promote increased participation of women in the workforce through appropriate skilling and gender mainstreaming of training.
- Promote commitment and ownership of all stakeholders towards skill development and create an effective coordination mechanism.

VI. Conclusion

Skill India is a good initiative – providing skills to people, especially because India is one of the few countries all across the world whose working age population will be very high as per the World Bank. Skill development will enable the youths to get blue-collar jobs. Development of skills, at a young age, right at the school level, is very essential to channelize them for proper job opportunities. From the secondary data, a skill gap study conducted by National skill development corporation in 2014, too we can understand that there is an additional net requirement of 11.92 crore skilled manpower in twenty four key sectors by 2022. Hence there should be a balanced growth in all the sectors and all jobs should be given equal importance. Every job aspirant would be given training in soft skills to lead a proper and decent life. Skill development would reach the rural and remote areas also. For the economic and social development of the country, all the stakeholders in the country need to take measures to improve the physical and mental development of the youths of the country so that none of them remains unemployed and the country's unemployment problem also gets reduced. Hence corporate educational institutions, non-government organizations, Government, academic institutions, and society should help in the development of skills of the youths so that better results are achieved in the shortest time possible.

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