

## **Skill India: Education to Employability**

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### **Abstract**

India has its majority of the population working in the young demographic age segment and with these adding up to more than half of the population in the age category below 25 years, people in India need to be 'skilled' so that they can contribute to the growth of the economy. This is increasingly felt by the employers who find a huge gap between the type of skills taught by institutions and the ones needed by the industry. Education, can meet the need of the skill training for increasing the productive capacity of manpower. Skilled manpower as we call them as capital formation for any country can bridge this gap of education and employability through imbibing the soft skills required for the same. As we have been unable to do this in the past to bridge the gap between education and employability, a movement towards the same by the Government of India with its inclusive growth strategy under Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is already working towards having its various initiatives to enhancing skills of the graduates to become skilled and identify the employability skills and make them industry ready.

This paper examines the rise in the education and training in the skill development policy in India. It will also examine an evaluation of new introductions in the most recent skill development policy. It will discuss the initiatives taken by the government towards skill development. It will also study the significance of soft skills, soft skills essential for employability and the growing importance of including this as a part of the curriculum by educational institutions to increase employability.

**Keywords:** Soft Skills, Employability, National Skills Development Policy, Skill Development.

## **Introduction**

India with its biggest asset of a majority of young population in its demographic divide faces an obstacle of human development with a skill deficit. With an increasing economic growth there exists a need to develop and impart trainings on skill development for increasing employability. Education and skill development is required for training to foster youth and contribute to the asset formation for the country. Education is considered as the most important attribute to contribute to a country's economic growth and for a complete transformation. India as a country where there is a huge population also has the capacity to use the human capital to the advantage of the country. Adam Smith (1776) had also mentioned once "man educated at the expense of much labor and time ...may be compared to one of those expensive machines". Thus education imparted at higher learning institutions needs to incorporate the sections for skill development and specifically target skills required for employability, also mentioned as soft skills and impart requisite trainings for the same. The public and private institutions including the government has also realized the importance of increasing the initiatives and are taken up under the skill development policies.

## **Need and Importance of Research Problem**

High and increasing rates of unemployment and underemployment are a growing and serious concern. There have been many initiatives taken up by institutions and the government with their national skill development policy which address skill development on different paradigms in varied schemes through several measures. This paper has made an effort to integrate the growing importance of soft skills development for fresh graduates and the initiatives taken up by the government in its most recent skill development policy. The study interrogates the review plan in the most recent skill development policy. The report will study the role played by the central government.

## **Review of Literature**

### **A. Need for Employability Skills**

There are an increasing number of people with demographic proportion of India who lack skill sets on the supply side and on the demand side there is an increasing number of jobs which are created but not getting filled up due to lack of employability skills. Rising from 13.9 million people finding jobs in 2009-10 to increasing it to about 14.9 million people and currently about 26 million people in the working age group and 65% looking for jobs. As per the situation of skilled labor in the India Skills report 2015 37.22% were found employable. So there is an increasing demand for skilled workforce by 2022. The following studies also highlights the importance of skill development and need for employability skills.

"Employment, Employability and Higher Education in India *The Missing Links*" by Mona Khare (2014) has suggested that higher education in India for increasing the employability

index of India for job seekers suggests a broad outline for bridging the skill gap and the missing links. I. Padmini, (2012) in the paper titled "Education Vs Employability- the Need to Bridge the Skills Gap among the Engineering and Management Graduates in Andhra Pradesh" in the paper has discussed that the gap between the expectation of corporate from graduates regardless of the field of specialization has existed for quite some time now. The study reports regarding the employability skills which must be imparted through the medium of education to be able to bridge the gap that exists and contribute towards skill development of the human resource that the country possesses. M S Rao (2014) in the paper titled "Enhancing employability in engineering and management students through soft skills" illustrates that coordination among faculty students directors must be there for enhancing employability skills and stresses on training and placement officer for better employability. Nosheen Fatima Warraich, Kanwal Ameen, (2011) in the paper "Employability skills of LIS graduates in Pakistan: needs and expectations" investigated that the employers did complain about lack of skills such as communication, presentation and logical and practical skills. There were a lot of expectations regarding multidimensional skills.

Paulrajan, R. (2011) in the paper titled "Employability skills in Chennai retail market, India" studied the skills required for employability in the retail sector in organized grocery and vegetable retail sector. Rajnish Kumar Misra and Prachee Mishra (2011) in the paper titled "Employability Skills: The Conceptual Framework & Scale Development" has developed using 19 items six factor model a scale which could be used as a measure of employability skills among respondents who apply for jobs in various business organizations. RuchiHajela, (2012) in the paper "**Shortage of skilled workers: a paradox of the Indian economy**" studied the ironic situation of India where population explosion has created the highest rate of unemployment in spite of explosive economic growth. The paper discusses that this is basically because of lack of skills development and vocational training initiatives. There have been multiple initiatives taken up by the government as well but still the gap exists and it stays unresolved. Tushar Agarwal in the year 2012 in the article titled "Vocational education and training in India: challenges, status and labor market outcomes" has studied about the unemployment rate which was very high in the age group of 15-29 years which is primarily the age group of students .The study reports that although there has been a considerable increase in the training institutes in the country but due to disparity in the system the way it is covered has left the problem of unemployment rate unanswered. Wickramasinghe, V, & Perera, L. (2010) in the paper titled "Graduates', university lecturers' and employers' perceptions towards employability skills" has suggested that the employability skills as demonstrated by individuals are different in perception of employers and lecturers and different according to the gender as well. The findings suggested that there are differences in the priorities given for employability skills by the four groups – male graduates, female graduates, employers, and university lecturers. Further, the findings suggest that

employability skills are influenced by the gender of the graduates. Overall, the findings of the study could be used to assist universities, graduates, employers, and career advisers in applying strategic decisions in managing graduates for the youth employable.

#### B. Skills Development Policy

Skill India, an initiative launched by the Government of India identifies the skill development areas. Skill India policy launched in 2009 covers up and works on various areas such as creating opportunities for all and a special emphasis on youth and woman, enhancing the quality of skilled workforce to meet up the requirements of the industry and come up with various initiatives to launch skill development. (*Rao, T. V. (2004)*). There had been a Ministry for Human Resource Development but with the demand for skilled labor also came the need to have a policy for skill development initially in 2009 which later on took the stature of a complete ministry in 2015. Under the Policy of Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET), the central government is involved with development of the workforce under different ministries, departments and policies. (*Goel, V. P. (2009)*).

#### C. New Skill Development Policy

The National policy on skill development launched by the Prime Minister on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015 studies the importance of skill development through various initiatives and schemes launched by the government of India. The national policy has been formed under the Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and discusses skill development initiative for enhancing employability. The plan and policy focuses on areas such as various skill development activities as required by the industry. The main emphasis in the policy is on areas such as skill development at a large scale and with high quality standards. It will be an apex body for overall policies towards skill development across different industries. There are also mentioned a lot institutional tie ups to be able to achieve the required targets. There would be coherence and alignment with the industry standard in respect to skill development which is a direct measure for employability. (*Singh, M. 2012*)

### **Objectives**

1. To analyze the need and importance of soft skills for employability.
2. To discuss the initiatives taken up by the government towards the skill development under the skill development policy.
3. To identify the changes incorporated in the recent skill development policy

### **Methodology**

This study is based on secondary data analysis collected from various articles, literature reviews and websites of government under skill development. It is analytical in nature and involves

content analysis.

## **Discussion**

### **A. Soft Skills as Employability Skills**

The skills required by graduates to increase their chances for employability are mentioned as employability skills. There is a difference that exists between hard and soft skills. As recognized by the industry increasing amount of unemployment was resulting due to a lack of soft skills. Skill which are now required for employability are not only academic and technical skills but equally a combination of soft skills as well. In soft skills also particularly the skills which are related to problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, communication, negotiation, presentation and many more are referred to as soft skills required for employability, thereby, mentioned as one of the employability skills.

### **B. Government Initiatives**

The National Skill development mission in India has been initiated in 2009 and the vision of the initiative is to increase the capacity of skill development to 15 million annually. There would be high inclusivity in the scheme and methodical demand based planning as per the requirement of the industry and coherence and coordination as a policy measure would be enacted. National Vocational Qualification Framework had been created to test acquired skills required for employment, impart trainings and convert the acquisition of skills into diplomas and degrees. Partnerships had been forged and innovative deliveries for trainings created.

The objectives of National Policy on skill development were to create opportunities for employment for all regardless of social groups, develop a skilled workforce, develop innovative delivery mechanisms and to manage coordination between central and state ministries. The scope of the policy included skill development which was institution based including vocational schools, professional colleges, formal and non-formal training. The governance of the skill development initiative (SDI) was under the chairmanship of Prime Minister along with other ministers and the chairperson of NSDC along with 6 experts in the field of skill development all constituted members. Also a National Skills Development Coordination Board has been set up to manage the coordination for various activities. The National Skill Development Corporation and a reputed professional from skill development control and coordinate the workings of the corporation. The NSDC constitutes Sector skills councils for planning skills required as per different sectors and execution and training and delivery as per laid down in the policy. Skill development initiatives needs creativity in their approach and partnerships needs to be fostered as well. Equal access for skill development needs to be given irrespective of social groups. Quality and relevance of skill development are instrumental in maintaining the standards for quality trainings.

According to a survey there would be a sharp increase in the working population in the age group from 15-64 years to 64.8% .It was indicated as emergence of 800 million youth to be trained in the sector of skill development as compared to 600 million in China. Also many studies conducted

by the Confederation of Indian Industry and Boston Consulting Group have studied that the working population is expected to grow at 2.15% as compared to a 1.4% for the overall population in the period from 2007-2012. There is a significant demand for skilled labor from graduates and from people who are vocationally trained as well. One of the studies conducted by the Boston Consulting Group for PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry has indicated that there will be a shortage of working people while India with its demographic divide will be in a situation to take advantage of the opportunity and skill the manpower with the requisite skills. Many other studies also revealed that the young age group would increase leading to a capacity of youth to be trained well and equipped with the right set of skills for enhanced employability. According to reports the current capacity for skill development in the country is 3.1 million and India has a target to skill 500 million people by 2022. This is the trigger due to which government has taken a lot of initiatives under its umbrella for skill development and announced the same in the skill development policy of 2009. This is expected to bridge the gap of the skill deficit that exists in the country.

There are many initiatives undertaken in the policy towards a holistic soft skill development. Under the MSME, Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) and Entrepreneurship Development Program which works towards training on soft skills for employability.

#### C. Recent Developments in Government Initiatives

A study undertaken by the Boston Consulting Group has already revealed that while the world will be a deficit of 47 million working people, by 2020, India will have a surplus of 56 million people. Although due to the demographic divide the population would be in the age category primarily below 25 years but to take advantage of the current situation there needed to be an aggressive, encompassing skill development policy which can cover up the skill deficit for the same and contribute towards providing youth equipped with employability skills.

Skill India program has various paradigms, the emphasis in the field of soft skill development would be to encourage the youth to get employed and improve their skills for entrepreneurship. There would be a complete customization of programs for imbibing soft skills from the field of communication skills, negotiations skills, presentation techniques, team spirit and collaboration, positive thinking, critical thinking and decision making, personality development along with many management skills required for job and employability. The pedagogy of these programs would involve through series of case studies, discussions, debates, brainstorming, role plays, practical experiences, live case studies and many other innovative techniques.

Skill Development Initiatives as discussed in various categories are namely under skill development schemes, skill development trainings through schemes and initiatives by the central government.

An initiative by the government of India to develop the requisite skills required by the youth for employability is "Skill India". Skill India movement is initiated by our Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. This is for the first time that in 68 years a Ministry has been set up for Skill

Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) for propagating ‘Skill India’ nationwide. The flagship scheme under “Skill India” is PradhanMantriKaushalVikasYojana (PMKVY) and has witnessed many people in India getting skilled and ready for employability.

As per the allocation of business under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), key areas includes the following: An analysis of existing skills, coordination with all states for skill up gradation, skill development framework, market research and devising of training curriculum, industry-institute linkages, policies for soft skill development and entrepreneurship related development of skills.

The organization set up under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) for successful implementation of the work and business allocated, the organizations are:

**Directorate of General Training (DGT)**

Directorate General of Training is running a variety of training programs concentrating on students, trainers, and industry relevant related to skill development. Many Skill development initiatives (SDI's) are undertaken by DGT.

**National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**

The National Skill Corporation (NSDC) has been created for creating the support system required for skill development by creating training institutions, providing funds and enabling them for smooth functioning. NSDC has been functioning with a lot of private linkages and partnerships with the private sector, international associations, central ministries and state government for facilitating participation in various initiatives.

**National Skill Development Agency (NSDA)**

NSDA, an autonomous body now works with MSDE to impart skill development trainings across country. Various activities undertaken under NSDA are rationalization of skill development schemes of government of India and variety of skill innovation initiatives.

**National Skill Development Fund (NSDF)**

The national skill development fund was set up in 2009 to raise NSDF has released funds up to Rs. 2333 crores for skill development.

**The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD)**

The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) set up under the ministry of small scale and medium enterprises engages itself in training, research and publications for promoting entrepreneurship.

**Sector Skills Council (SSC)**

Sector Skills Council (SSC) they are involved with developing the competency framework on the basis of occupational standards to find out the skill gap and thereby conduct train the trainer programs and certify the trainees on the basis of curriculum aligned by them as required by the industry.

The National Policy on skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 was developed for the execution of the National skill development mission. The National skill development mission was

approved by the union cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2015 and our Hon'ble Prime Minister of India had launched the mission on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015 on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day. Mission Directorate under Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is supported by National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC), National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) and Directorate General of Training (DGT) to enable successful completion of the mission.

The objective of the national policy on skill development and entrepreneurship aims to link employability and skills required for employability and match the demand by the industry by creating appropriate opportunities and enhance employability and productivity.

The various schemes launched under the National policy on skill development and entrepreneurship are:

### **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKSY)**

This is the flagship scheme of the government under MSDE and the objective is to engage in industry relevant skills and enhance employability .Prior learning experience is also assessed and the complete training and assessment fees is paid by the government.Under this scheme 24 lakh Indian youth are expected to benefit and will be awarded a certificate after successful completion of the training. This will help them in securing a job for the future. The objective of the module is to encourage individuals to gain required skills for skill up gradation and employability.

The Key components of the scheme are short term training's where training center's imparting training on soft skills, entrepreneurship and digital literacy. **Recognition of Prior Learning(RPL), Special Projects , Kaushal and Rozgar Mela, Placement Guidelines and Monitoring Guidelines** and many more.

### **Udaan Scheme**

Udaan is an initiative for Jammu and Kashmir between the corporates and the ministry and implemented by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). This program covers up graduates and post graduates and aims to bridge employability to skill development.

### **Standard Training Assessment and Reward (STAR) Scheme**

National Skill Development Corporation in alliance with Sector Skills councils (SSC) is working through the STAR Scheme.

### **Vocalisation of Education in Higher Education**

This is a special initiative launched by NSDC to integrate trainings on skills to bridge the gap between students and employers.These skills are identified by the sector skills council and are progressive in nature. There are some key highlights of the model whereby identification of sectors as per sector skills council report regarding skill gap existing in various roles are created, integration and implementation along with the curriculum of universities is carried out , training of the trainers is done , curriculum alignment and capacity building workshops are held, Internships and on the job trainings executed ,informed choices as per career roles and aspirations

are made and employability and Entrepreneurship opportunities for students are created.

NSDC is already working with 21 universities approved by UGC and AICTE and catering to more than 1200 colleges across the country. Some of these include:

University of Delhi covering 67 colleges , University Grants Commission covering 150 community colleges and 127 colleges for Vocational and degree programs, Haryana and Punjab Universities, AICTE covering almost 100 community colleges and many more.

NSDC is in the process of signing the MOU with many more colleges and universities to integrate skills required for employability into the academic programs.

### **Vocalisation of Education in School Education**

A similar model for vocalization of education at the school education level is deemed important.The trainings conducted by the NSDC are based on the National occupational standards set up under the sector skills council.Sector Skills council facilitates the process by identifying the trades and occupations and overall coordination and implementation required for a program to be implemented.NSDC delivers the trainings through training partners who recruit teachers and place them in schools as per requirements and also organizes on the job trainings and guest lectures. This runs for classes from Class IX to Class XII as per the skill set given across by the sector skills council.Sector Skills councils gives across certifications and the stakeholders involved in the implementation are the State Governments, NSDC, Sector Skills Council and NSDC training partners.

### **Analysis**

The skill development policy as discussed in the literature above showcases that there is always a need to change, adapt and incorporate new and innovative ways of executing things and plans. There was a change required also as seen in the national skill development policy from 2009 to 2015. The question here arises as to what are the changes incorporated and how is the new skill development policy different from the previous one in 2009. The Government of India has always given a priority to skill development. In the new policy there are changes in the apex body completely. There is a new ministry set up under the Skill development policy 2015, for the first time since independence as before this different ministries were taking care of skill development. As there is a difference in the ministries, so there is a change in the approach as well. All kinds and categories of jobs are taken into consideration rather than only stressing upon the traditional jobs as was done in the policy 2009.

There is a difference in the approach as rather than just a project based emphasis , now the emphasis is laid out in the form of a movement where the target to achieve 500 million youth by 2022 for increasing employability .

## **Findings**

- There is a skill gap that exists between the employers and the workforce and there is gap that exists between demand and supply side for a skilled workforce which calls for employability skills to be incorporated.
- Government has realized the importance of skill development and has taken several initiatives in the field of developing skilled workforce that can move the economy to better utilization of its assets.
- National Skill Development Policy initiated in 2009 had fostered the development of skills pertaining to different sectors where conceptual framework had been developed and trainings were imparted to fulfill and bridge the gap.
- As per the readings and varied researches undertaken there was a series of studies indicating the need for development of Skill India as a movement as against a policy measure.
- There were significant differences undertaken under the ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship in the year 2015 as against the policy measure undertaken in the year 2009 whereby 500 million youth are to be trained and equipped by the year 2022.
- Several initiatives have been launched since its inception in 2009 by the central and state government and have contributed to bridging the gap between employers and employees.

## **Conclusion**

India has the most favorable aspect of demographics in its favor as majority of the population is less than 25 years of age. This can lead India to become the next superpower by converting its asset into the most favorable for the country.

The human resource of the country does not possess the right set of skills , both technical and soft skills as demonstrated by various studies and are much essential for enhancing employability ratio by including them as a part of the curriculum .The importance of soft skills required for employability have also acquired increasing amount of importance in the recent years and are deemed essential for employability.

Government under the skill development policy undertaken in 2009 has been able to address the concerns and issues related to skill development and have taken several initiatives to embed skill development as a part of the curriculum in educational institutions.

The initiatives taken by the government in the year 2015 where a complete ministry for skill development has been set up and various initiatives have been launched to foster the growth of skill development.

There were many similarities as the National Skill Development Corporation had been set up in 2009 which continued into 2015 along with sector skills councils for mapping skill gaps in various areas.

The primary change has been seen under different policies to create a demand for skill development across the country through the government policies namely Pradhan Mantri Kaushal

Vikas Yojana(PMKVY), 'Udaan' Scheme for Jammu and Kashmir Skill Development, Standard Training Assessment and Reward (STAR) Scheme and vocalization of education at school and higher level undertaken by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Also majority of the jobs were taken into consideration for skill development rather than only the traditional jobs as laid out in the policy in 2009.

Entrepreneurship has been fostered towards achieving the goal of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to realize the dream of Make in India to connect the supply of skilled resources with the demands.Global partnerships have been formed primarily to be able to achieve the objectives by 2022.

Certification programs in alignment with National skill Qualification framework to be awarded to skilled manpower to recognize the skill competencies for quality and uniformity has been incorporated.

Government initiatives towards skills development have witnessed many changes and fostered the development of the youth and Industry alongside with its innovative schemes for skill development and has contributed towards the capital formation of human resources.

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