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## The Changing Landscape of Employability in India- Skill Development: A Review

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With liberalization that opened up India to foreign investment and business in 1991 to the subsequent economic reforms that have been a key Government agenda, India has made substantial economic strides in recent years. We all realize that a growing economy needs a constant supply of diversified skilled manpower. But our emphasis on degree rather than skill has been a stumbling block in the way of economic growth. On one hand, India has a large number of educated unemployed, and on the other, industry is desperately short of skilled professionals. The situation is made even more challenging with a near exodus of youth from rural areas to towns and cities in search of employment. As the employability gap gets wider with each passing day, one of the biggest challenges HR managers face, today, is finding candidates with the right skill sets. The answer lies in vocational training and skill development. Vocational training and skill development needs to be a strong component of the curriculum of all educational institutions. Being qualified is one thing, being job ready quite another. In the wake of the changing economic environment, it is necessary to focus on inculcating and advancing the skill sets of the young population of the country.

*A very interesting dimension is added to this challenge when you consider the rapidly changing technology into play. Today, the youth is not only looking at getting skilled adequately for initial and continuous employment but also to stay technologically abreast with the ever dynamic business requirements. The way business is being done is rapidly turning on its head every 3-4 years. No skill is permanent, no knowledge is final.*

*Actually now the most important skill required staying afloat, is the skill to learn and unlearn at the rapid pace. This is more relevant in the employability scene than any other challenge in our country today.*

**Changing Reality:** It has taken India seven decades to realize the importance of skilling. Vocational training and skill development have not been given due importance by the mainstream education system thus far. Reports indicate that only around 10% of the Indian workforce receives any kind of skill training. But things are changing fast now. The altered demographic profile of the country, with nearly 60% of the population under 25 years of age, the rising aspirations of our youth seeking satisfying, decently paid jobs, the growing requirements of industry for an efficient, well-trained workforce, have contributed to a focus on skill development.

**Government's efforts:** If India aspires to be a global player, it has to align its growth with the need of industry-ready workforce. There is a new emphasis on promoting vocational training and skill development in collaboration with various stakeholders. A separate ministry of skill development & entrepreneurship has been instituted to streamline skill development initiatives. The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), with an ambitious plan outlay, has been set up.

## **Skill India Mission**

### **Objectives of 'Skill India'**

The main goal is to create opportunities, space and scope for the development of the talents of the Indian youth and to develop more of those sectors which have already been put under skill development for the last so many years and also to identify new sectors for skill development. The new program aims at providing training and skill development to 400 million youth of our country by 2022, covering each and every village. Various schemes are also proposed to achieve this objective.

### **Features of 'Skill India'**

The main focus is to skill the youth in such a way so that they get employment and also improve entrepreneurship. The mission aims to provide training, support and guidance for all occupations that were of traditional nature 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 currently. The training programs would be on the

lines of international standards so that the youth of our country not only meets the domestic demand but also of other countries like the US, Japan, China, Germany, Russia and those in West Asia. Other remarkable features of the 'Skill India' program would be to create a hallmark called 'Rural India Skill', so as to standardize and certify the training process. Tailor-made, need-based programs would be instigated for specific age groups which can be like language and communication skills, life and positive thinking skills, personality development skills, management skills, behavioral 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.

### **Advantages of Skill India**

The idea is to raise confidence, improve productivity and give direction through proper skill development. Skill development will enable the youths to get relevant jobs. Development of skills, at a young age, right at the school level, is very essential to channelize them for proper job opportunities. There should be a balanced growth in all the sectors and all jobs should be treated with equal importance. Every job aspirant would be given training in soft skills to lead a proper and civilized life. Skill development would reach the rural and remote areas also.

**Industry Role:** But the government alone cannot handle the gigantic task. If India is to achieve her target of being home to a skilled workforce of 40 crores by 2022, vocational and skill development companies, as stakeholders in the economy, ought to be actively involved in imparting skill and training to people. The way forward lies in taking initiatives to achieve this ambitious target in the right scale and speed. Corporate educational institutions, non-government organizations, academic institutions and the society at large would help in the development of skills of the youth so that better results are achieved in the shortest possible time.

**The way forward:** Private players with good credentials and proven track record could be encouraged to enter the skill development sector. If the government can do this successfully and rope in reputed players, our dream of a *Skilled India* can fast become a reality. The provision of fiscal incentives to the private sector for setting up vocational and skill development institutions is encouraging private organizations to give the government full support in this mission. The

biggest challenge in India lies in finding out how to make skilling programs relevant? Skill and vocational training focus can show the way.

### **Conclusion**

Shape of 'Skill India' and its impact can be envisaged with high hopes and the impact will be known by the time gradually. It 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, few years down the line, going by its ever increasing growth of population, as per World Bank. It is also high time now that measures are taken to improve the physical and mental development of the youth of the country so that none of them remains unoccupied thereby addressing the country's unemployment challenge. It is time to open up avenues by which the youth accepts responsibility and no one remains idle because an idle youth is an obstruction for the economy. Employability of the growing young demography is an important factor in the economic development of the country and the crisis of skill development has to be turned into opportunity to growth. The economy should concentrate on job creation and social security schemes. With this new approach towards skill development, India can definitely move forward towards its targeted results.

*The youth today not only needs continuous skill upgrade and attitudinal transformation to accept the challenges of the new age business landscape but also continuous technological upgrades to ensure he is on the cutting edge of requirements that businesses demand. The internet & continuous education in the online mode is the key. Another initiative which the reputed business and technical institutions shall have to undertake is a comprehensive program on continuous refresher & upgrades.*

*In fact College & Professional education should only focus on the first 5 years of a professional career needs. Every 5 years the institutions should organize a 7 day, REVISIT program to upgrade the candidates with the latest knowledge, skills and technology as relevant to the broad function.*

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