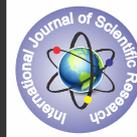


Skill Development is key to Economic Growth – Role of Higher Education in India



Education

KEYWORDS: Demographic Dividend, Economic growth, Skill Development, Skill mismatch, Soft Skills, Informal Sector.

Dr.Saroj jain

Principal Victoria college of education Bhopal

Sapna saxena raizada

Research scholar Departt.of education Barkatullahuniversity.Bhopal.

ABSTRACT

Indian education system in general and higher education in particular has not been proved too efficient to make youths of our country employable according to the need of job market. Despite the increase in number of institutions at primary, secondary and tertiary level our young educated people are not capable of being employed and getting better job opportunities. Reason being they have not acquired specified skills essential for requirement of the job market. India is one of the youngest nation in the world with more than 62% of the population of the people is in the working age group (15-59 years) and more than 54% of the total population is below 25 years of age. This poses the challenges and opportunity. To reap the demographic dividend which is expected to last next 25 years. For this ,India needs to equip it's workforce with employable skills and knowledge. So that youth can participate productively to make India a developed country. Paper points out that higher education does little to address the skills requirement of a youth raring to go into the world and make a mark. It also lays stress on the need to improve the employability of our graduates. Graduates now require the skills beyond the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity are now important for getting more and more jobs. The biggest challenges confronting us is low employability of our graduate passing out higher education state institutions. The argues on the supply side a huge skill gap has to be bridged while on the demand side, there is need for skill matching and the creation of opportunities. It also makes an attempt to critically examine the efforts being made by Govt. of India in this direction. It concludes with this remark that the education system will have to gear itself to support nation's economic agenda by creating job- ready and employable workforce.

Introduction:

Education is the single most important instrument for social and economics transformation. A well educated population, adequately equipped with knowledge and skills is not only essential for support the economic growth, but it is also a precondition for growth to be inclusive since it is the educated and skilled person who can stand to benefit most from the employment opportunities which growth will provide. In this connection, Hon'ble Prime Ministry States that today, the world and India need a skilled workforce. If we have to promote the development of our country then our mission has to be "Skill Development and Skilled India." Millions and Millions of Indian youth should acquire the skills which could contribute towards making India a modern country. I also want to create a pool of young people who are able to create jobs and ones who are not capable of creating jobs and do not have the opportunities, they must be in a position to face their counterparts in every corner of the world, while keeping their heads high by virtue of their hard work and their dexterity $\frac{1}{4}$ gLrdk5"ky $\frac{1}{2}$ of hands and win the hearts of people around the world through their skills. We want to go for the capacity building of such young people. Vision is absolutely relevant in present day context and prevailing circumstances India is on the cusp of the country of a demographic opportunity. It is today one of the youngest nation in the world with more than 62% of the people is in the working age group (15-59 years) and more than 54% of the total population below 25 years of age. The country's population pyramid is expected to "bulge" across the 15-59 age group over the next decade. It is further estimated that the average age of the population in India by 2020 will be 29 years, as against 40 years is USA, 46 years in Europe and 47 years in Japan. In fact, in next twenty years industrialized world will decline by 4% while India it will increase by 32%. This poses both challenges and opportunity. To reap the demographic dividend which is expected to last next 25 years, India needs to equip it's workforce with employable skills and knowledge so that the youth can participate productively to make India a developed economy. One Ex-minister of State for HRD and external affairs E. Ahmed also of the view that employability of graduates coming out of our educational system is be coming a matter of great concern. It is fact that only 25% of the general graduates across all streams have employable skills. A youth seeking job in the market today is expected to have no due skills about till he/she faces an interview. Higher education does little to address the skills requirements of a youth raring to go into the world and make a mark. To make it amply

clear as to how Higher Education has got to address the issue of skill development and employability, no better evidence than what planning commissions approach paper to the Twelfth Five year Plan says:-

"There is a need for a clear focus on improving the employability of graduates Indian Higher Education is organized in to "General" and "Professional" streams. General education which is an excellent foundation for successful knowledge based career often fails to equip graduates with necessary work skills due to it's poor quality. Graduates now require the skills beyond the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic (the 3Rs.). Skills such as critical thinking communication, collaboration and creativity (the 4CS) are now important for getting more and more jobs. Accordingly, there is need to focus on the 4cs. Special emphasis on verbal and written communication skills, specially in English would go long way in improving the employability of the large and growing mass of disempowered youth. In this direction the Vocational Education and training sector in the country is small and this limited capacity is under – utilized due to poor – quality and lack of social status. In India, young people who will soon be entering the labourmarket, constitute the largest segment of demographic structure. The majority of young people have limited access to education and training and most find work in the informal sector.

In recent years, India has rapidly expanded the capacity of educational institutions and enrolments, but dropout rates remain high and educational attainment remains low. While India has a well institutionalized system of vocational training, it has not sufficiently prepared its youth with the skills that today's industries require. Thus, to speed it's economic growth and take advantage of it's "demographic dividend", the county has recently embarked on drastic policy reforms to accelerate skills development. These reforms have led to important changes both in the national institutional framework and at institutional level.

Skill Development & Higher Education Institution:

Indian higher education system has undergone massive expansion in post independent period with national resolve to establishing several universities, technical institutions, research institutions and professional and non professional colleges all over the country to generate and disseminate knowledge to the common citizen of India.

The rapid growth in the sector both in terms of enrolment and number of institutions has thrown up now challenges of maintaining quality of higher education. In last decades the higher education sector in India has witnessed exponential growth both in terms of the number of institutions and the rate of employment, the recent UGC report states that in 1950-51, when there were only, 3,97,000 students enrolled in all disciplines in 750 colleges affiliated to 30 universities. Now the growth of higher education in India has been phenomenal in 2013, India had 727 universities over 35000 colleges and about 13000 stand alone institutions. Despite of this progress made by our higher education sector we are unable to prepare our graduates in tune with needs of job market. Given the direct correlation between education, employment and empowerment, the biggest challenge confronting us is low employability of our graduate passing out of higher education institutions. Various research studies conducted so far, have brought forth some startling facts. Some of them are being mentioned here-

1. An employability Survey on engineering graduates (2014) concludes that less than 20% engineers are employable for IT jobs and 7.5% are employable for core engineering jobs, even though more than 90% aspire for such jobs. The key reason behind such partly employability percentages is inadequate preparation in the domain area, the ability to apply basic principles of say, computer engineering or mechanical engineering to real world problems.

2. Another survey on graduates (2013) finds that as many as 47% graduate in India are not employable for any industry role most of the graduates (40% approximates) were found suitable for clerical/secretarial roles. Their lack of English language knowledge and cognitive skills were identified as the major abstract to their suitability in the job market.

3. A similar report on MBA's (2012) informs that employability of management graduates in functional domains remains below 10% whereas one third of management graduates lose out because of lack of English and cognitive skills at least half the students are not employable in functional domains for lack of knowledge and conceptual understanding of the domain.

Above facts reveal that the higher education sector as a whole, which affect employability of our educated youth and hence need to be addressed urgently. These findings have sparked serious concerns about the mismatch between the education system and the needs of the job market. Nothing can be more disruptive for our social cohesion and sustained economic progress than a large army of educated, unemployed youth who feel disempowered in every sense of the term.

Challenges Faced by World Youth:

1. Youth across the world face serious challenges regarding skills and jobs, challenges fundamentally different from those their parents faced. In the globalize economy competition has become intensified among firms and industries in the developing and developed countries alike, requiring their workers to have higher level of skills to engaged in innovation, improve the quality of products/ service and increased efficiency in their production processes or even to the point of improving the whole value chain process. Rapid technological changes demand a greater intensity of knowledge and skills in producing applying and diffusing technologies. In turn, all these have changed the nature contents and types of skills that industry demands .As a result on most countries recently moved to reform their education systems to upgrade skills of their workforce.

2. The challenges are greater for developing countries like India which have long suffered from a shortage of skilled labour. But today, developing country firms and producers have become increasingly involved in the global value chains, requiring them to meet global standards of quality and efficiency. This in turn requires higher levels of skills in the workforce.

3. Moreover many countries today need more skilled workers to compete in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as it is a viable strategy for bringing advanced technology to their domestic industries expanding their foreign trade and there by boosting industrial and economic development the availability of and even the stock of skilled workforce in a country is a key determinant of multinational firms considering investment.

4. Today most of developing countries are well aware that expending basic education is hardly sufficient in this globalize era. If their firms and industries are to compete in global economy and they are to promote sustainable development unless they work harder to upgrade their worker's skills.

5. Moreover, though basic education has expanded considerably in recent decades, graduates of basic education who are entering the labour market have increasingly found themselves inadequately equipped with the skills that industry demands.

6. Thus developing countries and all major international organization concerned with education have recently shifted from basic education and back to technical and vocational education and training & higher Education.

7. In globalize era, competition has intensified among firms and industries, requiring them to improve the efficiency and quality of their products and services. This forces them to hire fewer, but more skilled workers. Thus, the entry requirements for youth seeking work have become higher and tougher.

8. Technological change particularly the development of information and communication technology is occurring at un-preceded speed requiring more complex cognitive skills than ever.

9. Moreover the global economy is increasingly becoming "knowledge based" demanding higher intensity of knowledge and skills to do ones job.

10. Global labour markets are increasingly causalized and flexible. Firms are adopting more flexible employment practices. An increased preparation of workers especially new to labour market must know work as causes labour.

Vocationalization of Higher Education

In institutions of higher education, Vocational Education needs to be introduced as a career choice, which leads the students to jobs. Building it on a continuum, at university the courses in colleges leading to multi-skilling should be offered. This will allow a career progression path for those who undertake vocational training at school level while ensuring that the learning experience is complete before the students hits the job market. At the college level special emphasis needs to be paid to the "Employability Skills" training and lifelong learning. The Vocational Education at university level will also a pen avenues for those completing their Diploma's from the technical institutes giving them also an opportunity to pursue a degree program in Vocational Training thus enhancing the job prospectus. University Grant Commission is also working in this direction to align higher education with the emerging needs of the economy so as to ensure that the graduates of higher education system have adequate knowledge and skills for employment and entrepreneurship. The higher education system has to incorporate the requirements of various industries in its curriculum in an innovative and flexible manner while developing a holistic and groomed graduate. As mentioned earlier, our graduates have not specific skills needed for getting better employment opportunities. Therefore it is need of hour to provide necessary skills soft as well as hard to make them employable with conformity of the job market. In this direction, UGC has recently introduced Bachelor of Vacation (B.Voc.) programme in universities and college under the National Skills Qualification Frame work, which aims at -

1. To provided judicious mix of skills relating to a profession and appropriate content of general education.
2. To ensure that the students have adequate knowledge and skills, so they are work ready at each exit point of the programme.
3. To provide flexibility to the students by means of pre-defined entry and multiple exit point.
4. To integrate NSQF within the undergraduate level of high education in order to enhance employability to the graduates and meet industry requirements. Such graduates apart from meeting the needs of local and national industry are also expected to be equipped to become part of the global workforce.
5. To provide vertical mobility to students coming out of 10+2 with vocational subjects.

These Skill Development Components will focus on :-

1. To equip students with appropriate knowledge practice and attitude so as to become work ready. The skill development components should be relevant to the industries as per their requirement.
2. The curriculum should necessarily embed with it self National Occupational Standards a (NOS) of specific job roles with the industry sectors. This would enable the students to meet the learning outcomes specified in the NGOs.
3. The overall design of the skill development along with the job roles selected should be such that it leads to a comprehensive specialization in one or two domains.
4. In case NOS (National Occupational Standards) is not available for a specific area/job role, the university /college should get the curriculum for this developed in consultation with experts.
5. The curriculum should also focus on work relations skills in each of the three years.
6. Adequate attention needs to be in curriculum design to practical work, on the job training, development of students portfolios and project work.

In order to bridge the industry academia gap – NSDC has developed a unique model to integrate skill based trainings into the academic cycle of the Universities. These are based on National Occupational Standards set by industry through sector skill councils. The job roles offered are designed to be progressive in nature – from Level 5 – level 7 on National Skills Qualification framework. The key highlight of the model are as given below:

- Based on state skill gap report – identification of Sectors and job roles
- Development of implementation model and Integration into time table as per university norms
- Training of Trainers by Sector Skill Council
- Curriculum Alignment and Capacity Building workshops
- Student orientation sessions to take an informed choice of sector/job role based on career aspiration
- Standardised Training Delivery by NSDC Training Partners
- Internships and On- the – job Training
- Assessment and certification by Sector Skill Council
- Last Mile Employability and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for the students

NSDC is working with 21 Universities, UGC and AICTE catering to more than 1200 colleges and 400 community colleges across the country. Some of the organization include:

1. Savitri bai Phule University of Pune : 663 colleges and 57 auto-

- mous institutions
2. University of Delhi: 67 colleges including NCWEB and SOL
3. University Grants Commission: 150 community colleges and 127 colleges for B.Voc and Degree programmes
4. Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU): 155 learning resource centres and 204 community colleges
5. Centurion University: 4 colleges
6. Haryana and Punjab Universities
7. AICTE: 100 Community Colleges

NSDC is about to sign MoUs with 7 more universities to adopt this model.

NSDC funded training partners affiliated to respective SSCs are involved in imparting trainings to the students under these partnerships. The infrastructure is allocated by the respective colleges of the University. A project management team ensures monitoring and evaluation of ongoing trainings.

Academia recognise the benefits of this model for integration of industry recognized skills with regular studies and post assessment the students receive industry endorsed and recognized certificate.

Keeping above facts in mind, government of India has launched many programmes to cater the skill needs of the youths in conformability with industrial requirement. Recently announced Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy 2015 is a right step in this direction. Policy emphasis on:-

1. Make quality vocational training aspiration for youth through the simultaneous shift in the mind set by making skill training a matter of choice and in the mind set of employers that skilled manpower will lead to increased productivity and will involved a payment of premium.
2. Focus on an outcome – based approach towards quality skilling that result in increased employability of individual to avail job opportunities.
3. Increase the capacity and quality of training infrastructure and trainers to ensure equitable and easy access for every citizen.
4. Address the human resource needs by aligning supply and composition of skilled workers with requirements of the industry and the country's strategic priorities including flagship programmes.
5. Establish on IT based information system for aggregation demand and supply of skills to help align efforts towards bridging the existing and expected skill gaps.
6. Promote National standards in the skilling space through active involvement the employers in creating curriculum providing standards and paying skill premium to workers.
7. Operationalize a well-defined quality assurance framework aligned with global standards to facilitate mobility of labour.
8. Leverage modern technology to ensure scale, access and outreach in addition to ease of delivering contact and monitoring results.
9. Recognize the value of on the job training by making apprenticeships in actual work environments an internal part of all skill development trainings.
10. Ensuring that the skilling needs of the socially and geographically disadvantaged and marginalized groups like the SCs, STs, OBCs, Minorities, Women and differently abled persons are appropriately taken care of.
11. Promote commitment and ownership of all stakeholders towards skill development and create on effective coordination mechanism.

It is also contemporary to mention about organization set up prevailing in our country and engaged in dealing with skill development programmes and issues: They can be mentioned as below:

I. National Skill Development Corporation:

The National Skill Development Corporation came into existence in 2009 to promote private sector participation via conducting short term careers. It provides funding to build scalable for profit vocational training initiatives. Its mandate is also to enable support systems such as quality assurance information system and training the trainer academics either directly or through partnerships. NSDC acts as a catalyst in Skill Development by providing funding to enterprise, companies and organizations that provide skill development.

II-National Skill Development Agency

The National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) was notified through a gazette notification dated 6th June, 2013. NSDA is an autonomous body of GOI, which will coordinate and harmonize the skill development efforts of the Government and the private sector to achieve the skilling targets of the 12th Plan and beyond and Endeavour to bridge the social, regional, gender and economic divide:

1. by ensuring that the skilling needs of the disadvantaged and marginalized groups like SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, women and differently-abled persons are taken care of through the various skill development programmes and

2. by taking affirmative actions as part of advocacy by the NSDA. The Central Ministries and NSDC will continue to implement schemes in their remit. The NSDA will anchor the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) and facilitate the setting up of professional certifying bodies in addition to the existing ones.

The NSDA will discharge the following functions:

- Take all possible steps to meet skilling targets as envisaged in the 12th Five Year Plan and beyond;
- Coordinate and harmonize the approach to skill development among various Central Ministries/Departments, State Governments, the NSDC and the private sector;
- Anchor and operationalize the NSQF to ensure that quality and standards meet sector specific requirements;
- Be the nodal agency for State Skill Development Missions;
- Raise extra-budgetary resources for skill development from various sources such as international agencies, including multi-lateral agencies, and the private sector;
- Evaluate existing skill development schemes with a view to assessing their efficacy and suggest corrective action to make them more effective;
- Create and maintain a national data base related to skill development including development of a dynamic Labour Market Information System (LMIS);
- Take affirmative action for advocacy;
- Ensure that the skilling needs of the disadvantaged and the marginalized groups like SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, women and differently-abled persons are taken care of; and
- Discharge any other function as may be assigned to it by the Government of India.

III.National Skills Qualifications Framework

On 19th December 2013, the Cabinet Committee on Skill Development approved the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF), a quality assurance framework which organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. These levels are defined in terms of learning outcomes which the learner must possess regardless of whether they were acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning.

The NSQF was notified on 27th Dec 2013, and all other frameworks,

including the NVEQF (National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework) released by the Ministry of HRD, have ceased to exist, and have been superseded by the NSQF

Skill India Initiatives:

Government of India launched Skill India on the occasion of the first ever world youth skills day on 15th July 2015 through unveiling of National Skill Development Mission and National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015.

National Skill Development Mission:

The aim of National Skill Development Mission is to rapidly scale up skill development efforts in India by creating an end to end, outcome focused implementation framework, which aligns demands of the employers for a well-trained skilled workforce with aspiration of Indian citizens for sustainable livelihoods.

The Mission Seeks to:

- Create an end to end implementation framework for Skill development which provides opportunities for life long learning.
- Align employer/Industry demands and workforce productivity with trainees aspiration for sustainable livelihoods.
- Establish and enforce cross – sectoral, nationally and internationally acceptable standard for skill training.
- Build capacity for skill development in critical un-organized sectors (Such as the construction sector, where there are few opportunities for Skill training) and provide pathways for re-skilling and up-skilling workers in these identified sectors, to enable them to transition in to formal sector employment.
- Ensure sufficient high quality options for long term skilling, benchmarked to internationally acceptable qualification standards which will ultimately contribute to the creation of a highly skilled workforce.
- Develop a network of quality instructors /trainers in the skill development ecosystem by establishing high quality teacher to training institutions.
- Leverage existing public infrastructure and industry facilities for scaling up skill training and capacity building efforts.
- Offer a passage for overseas employment through specific programmes mapped to global job requirements and benchmarked to international standards.
- Enable pathways for transitioning between the vocational training system and the formal education system through a credit transfer system.
- Promote convergence and coordination between skill development efforts of all Central Ministries / Departments/ States /implementing agencies.
- Support weaker and disadvantaged sections of society through focused outreach programmes and targeted Skill Development Activities.
- Propagate aspirational value of skill among youth by creating social awareness on value of skill training.

Conclusion & Suggestions:

Above analysis shows that of presently India is going through a phase of demographic transition where in it's young population dominates the labour force of the country. The rise in the relative share of the working age population in the economy is treated as the demographic dividend. This description shows that the link between higher economic growth and favourable demographic conditions is not automatic and that it has to be established through sound institution, good policies and investment in skill development activities, healthcare and education which can be recouped in the long run through higher productivity. In this connection our PM Narendra Modi has also called for making India as Skill Capital of the world. Nation Skill Development Mission is a right step in this direction. Success depends upon availability of high quality trainer, quality infrastructure needed for imparting high quality training and effective state policies and their efficient implementation. It is possible only if our education system is geared up itself to support nations economic agenda by creating job ready and employable

workforce through increased focus on imparting structural and technical skills this would be critical for achieving faster, sustainable and inclusive growth on the one hand and for providing decent employment opportunities to the growing young population and the needy sections of the society on the other. The vocationalization of higher education is also essential for reaping the benefit of “Demographic Dividend”. But the public perception is not encouraging regarding the vocationalization of education system. As public views skilling to be the last resort meant for those who have not been able to progress in the formal academic system. Following are main factors, responsibilities for such type of attitude.

1. The social and traditional view that sees status as being inversely proportional to the degree to which one works with one's hands.
2. The tendency of the industry to treat skilled and unskilled persons at par—thereby depriving skilling of any meaningful economic in centre.
3. Vocational training programmes are up to date with neither current industry requirements nor employment linked.

Curriculum of vocational education should be designed in such away that it could be helpful in improving entrepreneurship. The majority of people have limited access to education and training and most find work in information sector. It is also important to note that while India has a well institutionalized system of vocational training. It has not sufficiently prepared it's youth with the skills that today's industries required. Thus to speed it's economic growth and take advantage of it's “Demographic Dividend”. We have to formulate effective policies to accelerate skills development. In this direction recently announced “National Policy on Skill Development” can prove it self very useful.

REFERENCES:-

1. Mehrotra, S., A. Gandhi and B.K. Sahoo (2013) “Estimating India's Skill gap on a Realistic Basis for 2022” Economic & Political Weekly Vol. XIVIII, No. 13.
2. National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) 2009 India year Book 2009 Delhi NCERT
3. World Bank (2007): Skill Development in India – The Vocational Education & Training System.
4. Aya Okada: Skills Development for youth in India: Challenges and opportunities.
5. Government of India. (2014). Annual Report 2013-14. Ministry of Labour & Employment.
6. “Skill Development and Training”, Planning Commission website, <http://planning.commission.nic.in>.