

'SCAM INDIA TO SKILL INDIA': CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Ms. Ekta

Assistant Professor

St. Xavier's College, Jaipur

Abstract

Knowledge and Skills are the motivating forces of growth of the economy and the development of any society. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of the world of work. As the proportion of working age group of 15-59 years will be increasing steadily, India has the advantage of 'demographic dividend'. Reaping the benefit of demographic dividend appropriate skill development efforts are imperative. Skills development is an activity that focuses on all sectors of the economy. From manufacturing to services and agriculture, skilled labor is a basic necessity to stimulate the growth of any economy. The contemporary focus on skill building or skill development in India is derived from the changing demographic profiles in India is vis-à-vis China, Western Europe, and North America. These changing demographic profiles indicate that India has a unique 20 to 25 year window of opportunity called 'demographic dividend'. Alongside this window of opportunity for India, the global economy is expected to witness a skilled manpower shortage to the extent of around 56 million by 2020. Thus, the 'demographic dividend' in India needs to be exploited not only to expand the production possibility frontier, but also to meet the skilled manpower requirements of in India and abroad. (Planning Commission). Skill Development Initiatives necessitate substantial amount of extension of capacity, novel delivery approaches and Public Private Partnerships. This paper lays emphasis on the skill development need in India, the various initiatives undertaken and the challenges faced in this direction.

Key words: Skill development, Demographic dividend, Growth and Development, Manpower

Introduction

Knowledge and Skills are the motivating forces of growth of the economy and the development of any society. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of the world of work. As the proportion of working age group of 15-59 years will be increasing steadily, India has the advantage of 'demographic dividend'. Reaping the benefit of demographic dividend appropriate skill development efforts are imperative. Skills development is an activity that focuses on all sectors of the

economy. From manufacturing to services and agriculture, skilled labor is a basic necessity to stimulate the growth of any economy. The contemporary focus on skill building or skill development in India is derived from the changing demographic profiles in India vis-à-vis China, Western Europe, and North America. These changing demographic profile points toward that India has a unique 20 to 25 year window of opportunity called 'demographic dividend'. Alongside this window of opportunity for India, the global economy is expected to witness a skilled manpower shortage to the extent of around 56 million by 2020. Thus, the 'demographic dividend' in India needs to be exploited not only to expand the production possibility frontier, but also to meet the skilled manpower requirements of in India and abroad. (Planning Commission)

In spite of India's estimated demographic dividend and its excess labor supply, there is a severe shortage of skilled workers, due to their limited access to education and skills training. Indian youth is divided into two main parts. A small portion is from well-off middle classes who find good quality education and training and rewarding jobs in the organized sector. On the other side, the majority of the youth is from economically and socially disadvantaged groups. They get very limited education and little access to vocational training and work in the unorganized sector. So, they enter in the labor market without satisfactory vocational skills, leading to uneven, informal, low-wage employment, such as casual labor and various forms of self-employment. In our country, the massiveness of employment is in rural areas and in the unorganized sector, and almost all manufacturing firms are in the informal sector. So, youths should acquire education, training, and skills if they are to find decent jobs and experience any social mobility. There are different types of skills and have their own importance. Technical and vocational skills can improve quality of product, minimize the wastage and promote innovation. Business skills can improve professional health and safety and encourage a better working environment. Core work skills can improve functional literacy and numeracy; while empowerment related skills such as conciliation, communication, problem solving and confidence building can increase bargaining power and improve decision making. For economy, advancing skills can decrease labor shortages in high growth sectors, promote foreign direct investment, improve global competitiveness and stimulate innovation and economic growth.

Review of Literature

Vandana Saini (2015) has stated that as more and more India moves towards the Knowledge economy, it becomes increasingly important for it to focus on the advancement of the skills and these skills have to be relevant to the emerging economic environment. For transforming its demographic dividend, an efficient skill development system is the need of the hour. Therefore, to achieve its ambitious Skilling target, it is essential to have holistic solutions to the challenges instead of piecemeal interventions. According to Parmar and Jain (2013) to find productive employment, particularly in the informal sector, it is important to get skill sets with strong labor market linkages. There is a major need to review the activities on skill development under various institutes/ministries and increase their coordination. Dilip Chenoy (2012) has described that; unlike many

developed countries, where skill development initiatives have been largely led by the government, the private sector in India has the opportunity to play an important role in the country being able to make job-ready and industry-ready professionals in large numbers. It is very important to focus along the entire value chain of skill development, mobilization to placement, including post-placement support, and making this system scalable and sustainable. According to Aya Okada (2012) to promote industrial development and achieve sustainable growth, India should increase its investment in education and training for youth. In particular, to move further into a knowledge-based economy and move up the value chain, it is essential for India to improve the quality of education at every level. The focus of India's skills development system does not correspond to either the level of skills demanded by industry or the overall levels of education of most young people.

Objective of the Study

1. To study the initiatives taken in India for skill development.
2. To find the various challenges faced by skill development system in India.
3. To suggest possible solutions or ways forward.

Research Methodology

This study principally is descriptive in nature. It is based on secondary data and information which is collected from the concerned sources as per the need of the research. The relevant books, documents of various ministries/departments and organizations, articles, papers and websites are used in this study.

Initiatives

As per Report by FICCI following are the initiatives in this direction.

Initiatives of Government

Government of India has considered skill development as a national priority. For creating an institutional base for skill development at national level, "Coordinated Action on Skill Development" has developed.

There is Three – Tier institutional structure:

- (a) P.M.'s National Council
- (b) National Skill Development Coordination Board
- (c) National Skill Development Corporation

Seventeen Ministries of the Government of India, ranging from the Ministry of Labor and Employment to that of Human Resource Development and Food Processing Industries are presently engaged in undertaking

different training initiatives with the combined target of skilling 500 million people by 2022. National Skill Development Policy, Modular Employable Skills (MES), up gradation of existing institutions, National Council for Vocational Training shows their efforts in this direction.

Industry Initiatives

The private sector has taken various initiatives on its own and in collaboration with the government and international entities, to upgrade in-house training facilities and also to provide training to potential employees to make them job ready. Many large corporations like Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Group, Hero Group, Maruti, ITC, Infrastructure Leasing & Finance Services Ltd. Etc., have established training facilities that offer world class training programs that create an environment of e-learning and innovation.

Moreover, the private sector, particularly key industry associations such as the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), have played key roles in increasing public awareness about skills development--organizing workshops and seminars and lobbying the government to promote institutional reforms.

International Collaborations

The Government is fostering several international collaborations with developed and industrialized countries like the UK, Germany, and Australia and so on. For example: Skill sonic, World Class Skill Center.

Problems

Despite various skills development initiatives in India there are some issues:

- **Regional Imbalance in Opportunities:** There is no appropriate infrastructure and facilities, mainly in rural, border, hilly and difficult areas. It creates problems in providing training in these areas.
- **Lack of coordination:** There is the problem of synchronization among the different ministries, public agencies, and educational institutions. This results in duplication of efforts and gaps without effective changes.
- **Less preference for vocational training:** There is a traditional and cultural bias against non-white collar occupations. Youths prefer white-collar jobs for their career development. They look at Vocational training as a second-choice option. Even parents want their children to prepare for a government job. So, they mainly prefer General-education.
- **Low level of Inclusion:** All the sections of society are not equally focused. Disadvantaged and the marginalized groups like SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, women and differently able persons, as well as

those living in difficult geographical areas, are not properly taken care of.

- **Obsolescence:** Technology is changing at a rapid pace; mainly the development of information and communication technology (ICT). It necessitates workers to have more, and more versatile, cognitive skills than ever and many skills which are taught in curriculum are outdated. So, the people are not capable to find jobs according to their aspirations.
- **Less participation of Private sector:** The private sector is not involved effectively in curriculum development and policy framing associated with educational and vocational training. Mainly private sector institutes are situated in urban areas, consequently rural population remains lags behind to get appropriate skill training.
- **Mismatch between demand and supply:** Many skill development programs do not keep in mind the requirements of the final users — the industry or the employer. The focus on the supply side results in a quantity, quality and qualification mismatch. This causes disappointments to both the person. Our skill development system is supply-driven rather than demand driven.
- **Infrastructure Challenge:** Basic infrastructure is a prerequisite for the proper implementation of the skill a development program. Many skill development institutions don't have proper infrastructural facilities.
- **Problem of Finance:** People don't get adequate and timely finance for the participation in skill and training development programs.
- **Development of Trainers:** Development of trainer is one of the major issues of the skill development agenda and the Successful implementation of skill development projects depends upon their efficiency.

Suggestions

Taking into consideration the problems, we can make some recommendations:

- **Provision of Vocational Education at school level:** Vocational Education in schools should be enhanced. This will help the students to get skills, both life management skills and industry-specific skills through schools.
- **Focus on technique to improve the scale:** Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can play important role in increasing the scale and maximizing the impact.
- **Provision of a National Skill Exchange system:** Unlike employment exchange ICT-enabled market information system will help both employers and employees to provide database concerned with demand and availability of skilled manpower.
- **Finance Facility:** There should be institutional financing facilities for poor and needy persons for the attainment of skills. The government should come up with various schemes for making it bankable.
- **Reforming employment exchanges as career guidance centers:** Employment Exchanges should

be restructured as career guidance centers to make candidates aware regarding availability of jobs, apprenticeships training and skill development program.

- **Vocational Training for Women:** The educational performance of women is generally better than that of men. There should be no gender-discrimination. Equal opportunities should be provided for men and women to skill development and employment.
- **Comprehensive approach:** Rural, Border, Hilly and Difficult Areas must be equally focused as other areas. Various mobile training centers should be arranged to reach out to remote and difficult areas. Persons with disabilities, school dropouts, organized and unorganized Sector must also be approached.
- **Matching supply to current demand:** The skill development initiatives should be dynamic and innovative according to the changing demands of employment and technique. It will help in meeting the requirements of a new market economy. Special emphasis should be laid on the relevance and quality of training.
- **Review of policy performance:** There should be a constant assessment of skill systems and policies to monitor and improve their success and relevance.
- **Customized and short term courses:** Due to rapid changes in skills in the current labor market, specially customized, shorter and relevant courses should be framed to acquaint the candidates into the workplace.

Conclusion

As per the approach paper to the 12th five year plan the quality of employment in organized sector is generally high, though the scope of the additional employment generation in this sector is rather limited. Significant employment generation is taking place in the tertiary sector, particularly, in services industries. Self-employment and small business continue to play a vital role in this regard. (Planning Commission) It is, therefore, essential to encourage main employment in agriculture, labor intensive manufacturing and services sectors, small and medium enterprises. For achieving the target of Skilling 500 million workforces by 2022, special emphasis should be laid on 'scale' and 'speed'. Skilling, re-Skilling and up-Skilling is very important. The private sector should work in better coordination with the public sector. There is need to discover a way to maximize the synergies between the Digital India and Skilled India. We must utilize technology to make skill programs that are accessible by skill seekers across the country through digital means, including web browsers, mobiles, and tablets. Technical expertise, combined with innovation, can pave the path for India toward being a developed nation. Skill Development Initiatives necessitate substantial amount of extension of capacity, novel delivery approaches and Public Private Partnerships. Development of skills and training system provides a return to the individual, the employer and the economy as a whole. So, all stakeholders, the Government both at the Centre and States, the enterprise-public and private, and the direct beneficiary- the

individual, should show their involvement and support from all the dimensions.

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