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Bridging Skill Gap in India: A Roadmap for Atmanirbhar Bharat

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ABSTRACT: India has a literacy rate of approximately 70%, which is lower than that of some of the world's least developed countries, and just 20% of its citizens are employable. The fundamental problem in India has been that the higher education and industrial sectors have operated in isolation from one another. On the one hand, the industry requires competence, while on the other hand, there is a surplus of graduates with no industry-specific talents. Our country's youth and job-seekers confront several challenges in finding desired and acceptable work prospects that match their educational qualifications. It's paradoxical that higher educational institutions/academic institutions around the country teach millions of young people each year, yet the industry frequently complains about the lack of required skills among them for a suitable employment. Academics and business, on the other hand, blame the government for inadequate policy execution and, in certain cases, a lack of government measures to bring higher education up to global standards. However, in order to cope up and revamp this union government has launched various skill development based programmes and New Education Policy, 2020. Employability and skilling have become two of the most significant obstacles for development, given the annual increase in the number of graduates and working population. It would be pleasant to see the Government as well as the private sector step forward and work exclusively with the academicians to create and develop a shared model for jobs and curriculum to address the industrial needs so that India can fully utilise the demographic dividend that it possesses and fulfil Prime Minister vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

KEYWORDS: Skill Gap, Demographic Dividend, Employability, New Education Policy, Atmanirbhar Bharat

I. INTRODUCTION

Skills and knowledge are the driving forces behind every country's economic and social progress. Countries with greater and better skill levels are better able to adapt to the challenges and possibilities of the workplace. India is dealing with a number of skill development challenges that are impeding its development and economic success. India has the potential to become a global sourcing centre for skilled labour. With more than 62 percent of its population in the working age range (15-59 years) and more than 54 percent of its overall population under the age of 25, India is now one of the world's youngest countries. India's population is expected to be 32 years old by 2022, compared to 42 years in USA, 48 years in Europe and 49 years in Japan. In reality, the labour force in the industrialised world is predicted to shrink by 4% over the next 20 years, while it will rise by 32% in India. For India, this is both a severe task and a big opportunity. India has to prepare its people with employable skills in order to reap this demographic dividend, which is anticipated to endure for the next 25 years, India has to equip its workforce with applicable skills and knowledge so that they can make a significant contribution to the country's economic progress.

India is going through a demographic transition, which may be the country's largest opportunity or worst worry, depending on how it uses its massive workforce. Every year, India adds 12 million people to the workforce, but only a small percentage of them have any formal skill training. In India today, just 4% of the workforce is skilled, compared to 42% in the United States, 76% in Germany, 80% in Japan, and 96% in South Korea.

Our labour preparedness is among the lowest in the world, and much of the existing training infrastructure is unsuitable for industrial demands. This massive young population would be a demographic liability rather than a demographic dividend if we didn't reach out to more people with excellent learning opportunities, revamped our current infrastructure, and executed plans more effectively by better using monetary and resource assistance. Only a significant fraction of India's workforce now gets formal skill training. As a result, numerous sectors of the country's economy are

experiencing a lack of trained workers and are experiencing low productivity as a result of poor labour quality. At the same time, a big portion of the country's youth are seeking for economic and livelihood opportunities.

There is a huge skill gap in the country, and there is a scarcity of competent/ skilled human resources. On the one hand, failing to give job opportunities to the youth population when they join the labour market might result in a "demographic calamity" rather than a "demographic dividend." The Indian government is fully aware of the dual problems of producing jobs while also bridging the skills gap. To close the skill gap in India, the Indian government has launched a number of skill development programmes. Our country is confronted with a twin issue on both the demand and supply sides, with a shortage of highly skilled workers on the one hand and young unemployment on the other. The Indian sector has a huge issue as a result of a skilled manpower shortage that is growing by the day. Industry expansion is being hampered by a scarcity of competent/ skilled workers in a variety of fields.

One of the difficulties in tackling unemployment is a lack of formal education, which is worsened by the skills gap, or the difference between the skills required by businesses and the skill set of job-seekers. India's unemployment problem is a big concern; every year, after completing their schooling, youth/ graduates enter the labour market but stay jobless or unemployed. Unemployment is high owing to a lack of competency and cognitive and non-cognitive skills training, as well as a failure to find work. The existing educational system does not devote enough attention to skills and industrial demands.

The scarcity of skilled workers across several business sectors is hindering the expansion of Indian enterprises. According to NASSCOM, the Indian workforce grows by about 3 million graduates and postgraduates each year. However, the fast developing IT and ITES industries regard just 25% of these technical graduates and 10-15% of other graduates to be employable. This shows a widening skill gap, which is impeding India's economic progress. The skill gap appears to be startling in certain fields: 75 percent of IT graduates, 55 percent of manufacturing graduates, 55 percent of healthcare graduates, and 50 percent of banking and insurance graduates are judged "unemployable". 95 percent of engineers in the country are unsuitable for software development jobs, 78 percent of new IT hires require training to become employable, and 40 percent of the country's 16 million IT/BFSI workers will require reskilling in the next five years due to rapidly changing technologies and job roles. According to recent research, just 10% of MBA graduates in the country are employable, while only 17 percent of engineering graduates are. Imagine the magnitude of the issue we will confront in 2026, when 64.8 percent of India's population will be between the ages of 15 and 64.

II. SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

On July 15, 2015, Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Skill India Mission, which seeks to train over 40 crore people in India in various skills by 2022, under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. The mission aims to provide vocational training and certification to Indian youth in order to improve their economic and social status. In India, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is accountable of coordinating skill development efforts. It has backed a number of organisations, including the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), which strives to encourage skill development in the country by building institutes around the country, which attempts to integrate the activities of the government and the business sector and help in skill development. National Skill Development Mission, National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), and other programmes are part of this campaign.

III. SKILL GAP IN INDIA REMAINS A BIG PROBLEM

The skill gap is the discrepancy between what employers' demand and what their employees have. Employability skill gaps are a major issue for both individuals and employers in today's fast-paced environment. This is due to the acceptance of digitalization and the advancement of technology. Reduced skill gaps can contribute to professional advancement, increased efficiency, and improved productivity, increase the chances of promotion and increases the employee retention (BW People.in). Fundamentally, skill development refers to the time spent on improving one's competence and staying future-ready, as well as any agilities pursued as a hobby and the capacity to accomplish a task with better rates of success at the appropriate moment. It's crucial since one's abilities influence their capacity to carry out their intentions successfully.

India has a literacy rate of approximately 70%, which is lower than that of some of the world's least developed countries, and just 20% of its citizens are employable. According to a poll, just 25% of the Indian workforce has participated in a skill development programme, despite the fact that India requires a larger number of trained

workers. According to the World Trade Organization, if India concentrates on skill development and training, its GDP may rise by 3% to 5% by 2035. India has a pressing need to train and skill its young in order to advance the country's overall growth.

The skill gap in India continues to be a key impediment to the economy's growth potential. Because the workforce lacks the skills to propel enterprises ahead, this makes it difficult for firms to develop or sustain competitiveness. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), India will have a skill shortage of 29 million people by 2030. According to Accenture, if the skill gap in India is not addressed, it would result in a loss of \$1.97 trillion in gross domestic product promised by intelligent technology investment over the next ten years.

The skill gap in India is ascribed to a variety of causes, but analysts point to the educational system's failure as a main source of the problem. They claim that Indian schools do not give kids the skills they need to succeed in today's work economy. While the essential concepts and principles are covered in the college curriculum, there is a disconnect in the teaching and learning technique. With 15 million young people entering the workforce each year, corporate India and research institutions appear to concur that 65-75 percent are unemployed. Research has it that the problem of the skill gap in India boils down to the low levels of youth employability across the country.

IV. EMPLOYABILITY GAP

The skill gap is the difference between an employee's abilities and the organization's expectations. In today's climate, the skill gap is a major concern for both individuals and employers. This chasm has arisen as a result of the introduction of new technologies and digitalization. The difference may also suggest the need to change recruitment techniques, create a career development platform, and offer incentives to increase employee involvement. Working to close the skill gap can result in expert improvement, more marketing opportunities for the involved individual, increased productivity, and increased worker retention. Students employability profiles show a lack of misaligned ideals and adequacy of effective communication between businesses and higher education institutions, which may be identified as a gap.

V. BRIDGING INDIA'S SKILL GAP CAN GIVE US AN 'ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT'

India may become a 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and global centre for skilled manpower by bridging the employability skill gap via different training and skill development programmes and initiatives. Lack of skilled and trained people is one of the primary barriers to overcoming the employability gap. It is important to give training and skill development programmes to both educated and unskilled populations in order to decrease unemployment.

PM Narendra Modi came up with the term "Atmanirbhar Bharat" in May, 2020, to shift India's narrative from survival to strength. In the current context, this implies we need to focus more on employment, which will increase the demand for qualified workers even more. Building a self-reliant operational model will need imparting abilities to match the demands of post-pandemic methods of functioning. Even before the present crisis, changing technologies had a significant impact on the kind of occupations and the skills needed to do them. The Covid-19 pandemic has heightened the importance of this question. This dynamic encompasses more than simply remote working and process digitization. It's about how professionals can improve their skills and colleges should rethink how they teach students to meet industry demands.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Skill development is a vital tool to empower people, to safeguard their future and for the overall development of an individual. It is an important aspect that enhances employability in today's globalisation. Skills are as essential as one's academic status. Education and skills should now go hand in hand. They are the roots behind the economic growth and community development of a country. In this context, the acquisition of education and skills can lead to industrial advancement, economic diversification, innovation, technological evolution and overall development of the country. Bridging the gap between government, business, and academics is one way to address the problem of insufficiency in skills and job preparedness among young. The second possibility is that, in addition to technical knowledge, academics should provide training in soft/interpersonal skills, leadership capability, attitude, communication skills, and so on. Universities, on the other hand, recognise the requirements of the corporate sector and incorporate them into their academic programme. Furthermore, such programmes should be instilled in schools beginning at the basic level. Universities and academic institutions can't operate in silos if they want to be competitive in today's market. They must interact with industry and put their learning into perspective. They must become more open, collaborative, organised, and strategic in their approach. Working with industry to co-create curriculum will be

required to produce contextual learning in the form of business challenges, case studies, simulated project tools, and infrastructure for hands-on learning and mentorship. The scenario for skill development provides a proving ground for public-private partnerships in delivering training and guaranteeing worker employability. Academia should incorporate workplace exposure in the curriculum through internships, real projects, and business contacts, and give credit to students for doing so. These programmes allow students to stay up with the demands of the industry. It would be pleasant to see the government and industry collaborate solely with academics to build and develop a common model for jobs and curriculum that addresses industrial requirements, allowing India to fully exploit its demographic dividend.

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