

Towards Enhancing Employability of Young Indians

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Abstract

This paper analyses the needs, strategies, opportunities, and challenges of developing employability of young Indians (i.e. those in the age group of 14-35 years). Capacity building programmes are strategically essential for enhancing their marketable vocational skills and developing personality. They form about 65% of the total population. Scope of enhancing their employability through existing formal system of imparting technical, professional and management education at the graduate and post-graduate level is limited. Therefore, there is a need for creating more infrastructure and academic facilities to impart vocational skill training. The need for creating the cadre of employable young workforce is not only to meet the human resource requirement of the country, but also meet the increasing global demands for employing low-cost but rich Indian talents in the near future. There is a felt need for doubling the existing training capacity to increase the formally trained workforce by 150 percent. The paper discusses various strategic actions involving government and private institutions through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to realise the mission of creating a human capital with 200 million graduates and 500 million skilled people in India by 2022. A SWOT analysis of Odisha, an economically poor state with low human development index, is made to understand the importance of enhancing employability for economic development. Strategic initiatives of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and National Council on Vocational Training (NCVT) of India through PPP projects, various issues and challenges faced by the key stakeholders in the process of implementation of skill development programmes have been discussed in detail. A model defining road map for success of enhancing employability of young Indians is suggested with short-term and long-term measures. Creation of employment opportunities and employable workforce should go hand in hand. Otherwise, it can create more problems of unemployment. The skill development alone cannot ensure employability of a person unless other competencies such as communication, interpersonal relations and positive attitude towards work and people are developed as per the requirement of different employers. Therefore, vocationalisation of mainstream education needs to be emphasized rather than vocational education. To achieve this,

there is need for a hybrid model with a new mindset, a new skillset and a new DNA of employable human capital.

Keywords: Employability, Skill Development, Young Indians, Vocationalisation of Education, Public-Private-Partnership

Introduction

India has the distinction of being one of the top 10 movers of economic growth in the world. It is the world's second most populous nation with total population of over 1.21 billion (as per Census of India, 2011). It is poised as a unique nation due to its demographic dividend with significantly high percentage of people in the age from 14 to 35 years, who are termed as 'Young Indians' in this paper. Employment of these young people will boost the rate of economic growth of India. But many of them are not gainfully employed not only due to lack of employment opportunities but also due to lack of their employable skills. Even after progressing so well on the path of economic growth, India has 53.7 percent multi-dimensionally poor population today. Its economic growth has also shown declining trend, with sub-five percent for 2012-13 and 2013-14. It ranks poorly on global human development index, mainly due to poor education, poor employability, poor health, and high gender inequality. India ranks 135 among 187 countries with the Human Development Index (UNDP's HD Report, 2014) and ranks 101 among 136 countries on Gender Inequality Index (The Global Gender Gap Report 2013), whereas, its neighbouring country, Sri Lanka ranks 73 HDI rank and 75 GII rank with only 5.3 per cent poor population. China, being one of the top 10 countries in terms of GDP growth, has been ranked at 91 on the 2014 HDI and at 37

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on GII (2013) with only 12.5 percent poor people.

India's growing economy, to be sustainable, needs to enhance the employability of young Indians, while being inclusive of development of other sections of the population. About 90 percent of this potential workforce are outside the coverage of formal training. They need to be trained to develop relevant technical skills to meet the requirements of manufacturing, services and agriculture sectors in India. The services sector which depends more on human skills contributes to around 50 percent of the GDP in Asian Countries as compared to 70 percent in developed countries. Therefore, Indian economic growth can be improved by enhancing the contribution of the services sector which can happen by engaging more skilled young people. In this context, enhancement of employability of young Indians, especially through skill development, assumes top priority in both public and private domains of development agenda today. The new Union Government has also set skill development as one of its priority agenda. The 12th Five Year Plan of India emphasizes on skill training in the formal sectors with trust on labour intensive manufacturing sector (textile, garments, leather, food processing, footwear, gems and jewelry, electronics assembly, etc), retail, housing, and tourism. Skill development for job creation for young people needs to be strengthened in agriculture and allied sectors. Moreover, India's low-cost but talented young workforce has an added advantage of global competitiveness in a knowledge-based society. Such Indian workforce will have more employment opportunities in future, as the economic wealth of the developed western countries of the northern hemisphere is moving to the fast-developing countries in the southern hemisphere of the globe. But a good employment opportunity cannot guarantee good employment of people unless they possess required employable skills. Most of the young Indians going for overseas jobs are not adequately skilled and therefore suffer from poor wage and hazards of unsustainable employment. Therefore, there is a need for enhancing employable skills, appropriate attitude and behaviour of the target young people.

Scope of Developing Employable Workforce

The employability and productivity of a person is determined by his or her educational attainment and skill level to perform an assigned job. But that person

should be eligible to be employable. If we take the age of a person as the criterion, the minimum age is 14 years, as recommended by International Labour Organization (ILO) in its Convention 138. The young Indians, who are eligible but not employable due to lack of productive skills or educational qualification, can be targeted for the purpose of skill development. About 65 percent of India's total population is below the age of 35 years and most of them do not possess employable skills. The existing skill development capacity in India is about 3.5 million people. But, about 12.8 million young people in India enter the labour market every year. About 5 percent of them, in the age group of 20-24 years, possess vocational skills acquired through formal means against 60 to 96 percent of young workforce with required skills in industrialised countries. Therefore, many young Indians are forced to join employment market without adequate employable skills. The task of skilling a huge potential workforce becomes more challenging with 2.5 million vocational training seats, available in the country. Very few seats are available for vocational training for school drop-outs (about 63 percent). About 70 percent of them live in rural and tribal areas having no or very poor access to facilities for skill up-gradation for improving their employability.

Though unorganised sector provides employment to 93 percent of the national workforce, most of the skilled people join organised sector. An analysis of available statistical data on employment in India during last 3 decades indicates that the employment in organised sector is declining, primarily due to decline in rate of employment in public sector. There have been some improvements in the employment in private sector. Number of workforce in self-employment has also increased. But the rate of increase is not enough to off-set the rate of decline in the public sector employment (National Employment Statistics, Government of India). The incremental human resource requirement in 20 sectors of employment by 2022 in India is estimated by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), to be 240 to 250 million.

There is a great need for bridging the skill gaps and address to the issue of demand - supply skill mismatch, especially in unorganised sectors. In such situation, scope for enhancing employable skill development can be viewed in two ways:

- a) Those school or college drop-outs who have no opportunity to rejoin the formal education can go for Vocational Skill Development through various spe-

cially designed government and non - governmental schemes and programmes as envisaged by creation of institutions like NSDC in India; and

- b) Those school or college pass - outs without marketable skills can be encouraged to join both formal and non-formal education systems in the Government and Private sectors, where they can acquire professional and technical education imparting employable skills.

The task of skill development of such huge target group is not easy. Moreover, there has to be a balanced growth in both skilling and employment sectors. For planning and execution of suitable programmes for this purpose, government, public and private sector companies, academic institutions, financial institutions, NGOs, and civil societies need to work in strategic partnership. Such efforts cannot be automatic or accidental. There is need for creating a new breed of institutions with DNA of collective working behaviour, a new mindset, a new skillset and new system of operation. Besides a new institutional framework, there is need for making a detailed labour market analysis to understand its present capacity and dynamism to contain the increasing demands of the employable target population.

In order to realise the vision, as envisaged by Dr. C.K. Prahalad in 2007, of creating a human capital with 200 million graduates and 500 million skilled people by 2022, both government and private training institutions need to work together for enhancing employability through skill development. The skill development would create entrepreneurial opportunities which is estimated for a projected USD 100 billion “skilling Industry” (Saikia & Martinez, 2011) in India.

Strategic Initiatives

In pursuance of the above vision and scope for enhancing employability through skill development, Government of India has established the Prime Minister’s National Council on Skill Development and the National Skill Development Coordination Board for setting principles and strategies and coordinating the efforts of the Government for skill development. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is also set up to stimulate and co-ordinate private sector initiatives in the skill development sector. NSDC has set a target for itself of developing skills and requisite capabilities in around

150 million persons by 2022. The national importance of creation of NSDC is very much felt, as expressed by Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, as Finance Minister, in his Budget Speech (2008-09):

“...There is a compelling need to launch a world class skill development programme in Mission mode that will address the challenge of imparting the skills required by a growing economy. Both the structure and the leadership of the Mission must be such that the programme can be scaled up quickly to cover the whole country”.

The entire range of functions relating to curriculum development for skill development programmes, examination and certification are being coordinated by the National Council on Vocational Training (NCVT), a body under the Ministry of Labour. NCVT also provides affiliation to ITIs/ ITCs. Priority is set to target those people above the age of 14 years who can learn employable skills in order to get gainful employment (Report of DGE&T, 2010).

NGOs and civil society organisations can take giant strides forward and reset their visionary lens for curbing the myopic policy and action deficiencies. Employability cannot be ensured through existing formal higher education and skill development system. The existing formal system of education and training at the under graduate and post-graduate level is very much limited to serve the purpose of creating 500 million employable skilled workforce. Moreover, high rate of dropouts at the school and intermediate level education and low enrolment at the undergraduate and post-graduate level make the task further difficult. Therefore, there is need for creating facilities and infrastructure for skill development of those young people who are unable to enter into the formal higher education system.

The new system needs to be evolved where the Government develops policy and standards and facilitates financing, monitoring and evaluation of the new initiatives. The current formal education system needs to adopt new subjects, embedding vocationalisation and non-formal skill development training without compromising core academic values and freedoms. There is need for strategic and legitimate diversity in education and training curricula on vocational skill development. Many private players are now attracted to supplement the government initiatives for skill development to enhance employability in a collective endeavor. In the context of NSDC, a Public-

Private-Partnership (PPP) model of skill development has taken firm roots.

Some of the government initiatives for skill development have started seeing the light of the day at the state level. However, it is evident that all states need to make a detailed assessment and mapping of their existing skill profiles of potentially employable people, their skill development needs, existing training infrastructure and availability of funds. Accordingly suitable programmes need to be designed for each state. Some states have already started this mapping activities. Besides the government initiatives, there has been influx of multiple private institutions in the skill development fields in recent years. However, there are duplications in the work areas of function of the private and government sector initiatives. The task of skill development is huge and arduous for all concerned central or state level agencies and NSDC. They have many challenges to face.

In achieving the objective of enhancing employability through skill development, there is a great need for involvement of both government and private educational institutions, NGOs, civil society organisations, industries and financial institutions.

Role of Educational and Financial Institutions

Role of educational institutions, run by both Government, Private or NGOs, is very crucial in regards to imparting employable skills to the target young Indians. They can conduct raining needs assessment, labour market analysis, capacity assessment of the Training Institutions, raw materials besides curriculum design and conducting suitable training programmes. Like bare-foot doctors, a cadre of bare-foot managers should be created by the institutions offering management courses such as BBA, MBA and PGDM. They can be employed by the grass root level organisations to manage small business and social development projects.

In the recent years, a number of private educational institutions have been involved in skill development. The private coaching or training institutions involved in skill development at different locations include B-ABLE, CREDAI, NIIT, APTECH, Learning, EDUCOMP, TIME, IMS, FIITJEE, EMPOWER, AISECT, CRISP, IndiaCan, Centum Learning, IIJT, 24 x 7 Learning, Global Talent

Track, India Skills, MindLogix, Career Launcher, Jetking, Everonn, Pratham, GTT,CEM Consulting, Aspire, and IL&FS CDI. These institutions provide variety of supports for curriculum design, content development, imparting technical or soft skill training, testing and evaluation etc.. They develop varied designs of curricula, pedagogical tools, models and approaches for implementation of skill training projects. Some of them are playing very active roles in implementation of NSDC supported projects under the PPP model.

The number of target population for training and demand for variety of training options are also increasing day by day. Corresponding to the increasing demands, the number of training institutions has not increased. If we analyze the current population pyramid of India and nature of demographic changes, it is expected that about 500 million children will move out of class 12 in next 10 years. With a projected increase of gross enrollment ratio(GER) of students in the age group of 18 to 24 for college education from 15 percent to 30 percent, about 150 million of the target 500 million youths will be able to receive college education in the formal education system and remaining 350 million youths will be left out. There is a great need for involving the private training institutes, colleges, or NGOs to provide required skill development training on suitable trades to such a huge target population.

Another challenging role before the training institutions is to ensure higher quality of training to satisfy labour market demands. The 'Zero defect; Zero effect' mantra, as emphasized by the current prime minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi in his maiden Independence day speech on 15th August 2014, calls for high quality of our products with zero defects and with zero effect on the environment. The global market can be attracted towards India by its quality of products with their special brand value, especially when the western world is tilting towards the fast developing economies. It can be possible when our manufacturing industry employ suitably skilled manpower.

The training institutions also face the challenges when their students do not get employment, even after two years of completion of training. It is mainly due to mismatch between the types and quality of skills acquired through training and the demands in the employment market. The ineffectiveness of the public training system is due to duplication of efforts and lack of coordination between

central and state authorities (i.e. NCVT and SCVTs), lack of incentives for good performance and no involvement of industry.

These private institutions would require financial supports for running the training programmes. There is need for huge investment in undertaking skill development projects on a large scale. Besides funding supports from NSDC or any central or state Government departments/agencies, more funding will be required to undertake skill development programmes at a large scale, especially for the states like Odisha. Such states with huge poor rural and tribal population cannot expect the trainees to pay for the training and hence will depend on funding from outside. In this context, financial institutions, banks, industry can come forward with appropriate revenue model to support the skill development training and finance entrepreneurial initiatives after the training.

The economic growth of any state does not guarantee its human development. It is not necessarily true that there is less need for skill development in economically developed states and *vice versa*. For example, state of Kerala is not known for high economic growth as compared to that of Gujarat. But it ranks higher than Gujarat on human development index (HDI). The state of Odisha has 93 percent rural poor population with low HDI. Due to limited scope of this paper and non-availability of adequate data, detailed analysis of the need for enhancing employability and skill development in all states could not be made. However, an attempt is made to analyse the case of Odisha.

Employment and Skill Development Scenario: A Case of Odisha

Though the state of Odisha is gifted with plethora of natural resources, it has remained one of the poor states in India in terms of economic and human development. A SWOT analysis in this regard is presented in the box 1, Exhibit 1. This state has a dubious distinction of having undiversified, slow growing economy (3-4%) in spite of its strength of having natural resources such as long stretch of beautiful coastline, surface water resources (11%), forests (11 %) and minerals- chromites (98%), bauxite (51%), coal (24%). Even the most mineral-rich districts like Keonjhar and Koraput feature in the list of 150 most backward districts of the country. However, Odisha has rich potential to be one of the high performing states in

the country in terms of skill development. What is needed is an enlighten mindset with a skill-set and political will for an orientation of its people and systems for skill development and use its natural resources in a sustainable manner for inclusive growth (PWC-CII, 2009).

There is a bright ray of hopes and optimism. A number of initiatives of the Government of Odisha in the recent past have created many employment opportunities. The projects for which Government of Odisha has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with various agencies have target to create a demand for 60,000 skilled manpower by 2015 in the state. A skill gap analysis for Odisha reveals that there is a huge gap between the availability of skilled manpower and employment opportunities across the sectors in the state with an investment outlay of nearly Rs. 350,000 crore. By 2015, there will be an additional requirement of 60,000 skilled people for metal and manufacturing sector. Employment can be generated for about 1.25 lakh young Indians in mineral and mining, chemical and fertilizer, power, IT & ITeS, tourism, retail, health care and port operations sectors; 30,000 in power sector and 10,000 in organised retail sector (PWC-CII, 2009).

The Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mechanism has to be adopted in true sense of the term in order to see some results in the skill development in the state. A few of such initiatives have already been undertaken by the government, private academic institutions as well as the industry such as Larsen and Toubro Ltd., Accenture India etc. as part of their corporate social responsibilities (CSR) initiatives through PPP Model projects (Business Standard, August 2011). Some private universities such as Centurian University and NGOs like Human Development Foundation (HDF) have been involved in such initiatives with or without the support from NSDC. For example, the Skill Odisha Initiative (SOI), created in February 2010 by HDF, is a consortium of training Institutes, academic institutions, ITCs and NGOs which aims at building capacity, competency standards, course curricula, learning materials and assessment standards in the state besides providing hard skills, training of trainers and supporting small training institutes. Such initiatives provided considerable support to socio-economic development and to improve the quality of life of people, for the purpose of inclusive growth. Moreover, the Government is proactive and supportive. Resource is not a constraint. There are funding opportunities available to address the issue of

skill gap. In this context, the need of the hour is to build a conducive environment. Concerted efforts need to be made by all the key players – skill development organisations, industry, Government, academic institutions and media.

In an underdeveloped state like Odisha, several skill development projects have been undertaken by the NGOs, academic institutions and industries to enhance employability of young people at the district level. These projects emphasized on some viable trades such as handicraft, handloom, tourism & hospitality, manufacturing, masonry, carpentry, retail and security services. For example in the district of Jajpur, 17 skill development projects have been implemented during February 2011 and February 2014 (Table 1, Exhibit 1) by the academic institutions, NGOs and industries, enhancing employable skills of 3600 on the trades such as Bar Bending, Steel Framing, CNC Operator, Diamond cutting & polishing, Front Office Management, Hospitality Services/Hotel Management, Industrial Helper/Assistant, Retail Management, Security Guard, Sewing Machine Operator, Spinning and Polishing. Thus, there are not only employment opportunities, but also need for enhancing employability through skill development. It can be achieved through active involvement of both government and private educational institutions, NGOs, civil society organisations, industries and financial institutions.

It is a challenging task for the training institutions to establish linkages with financial institutions. Besides direct funding mechanism, some innovative revenue models have been developed by the training institutions. For example, Centrum Learning works on a captive model which helps in skilling large workforce in the sectors like retail, insurance for the benefit of their own business. Similarly, Indian Institute of Job-oriented Training (IIJT) has been able to raise equity funds of Rs. 100 crore for skill development purpose. Some others have followed franchise model focusing on building the right curriculum which are delivered through its franchisee partners at diverse locations.

However, keeping in view the large scale of operation of the programmes, there is need for involving financial institutions and industries in supporting skill development initiatives of the private institutions. The government has to play a key role in strengthening the training institutions by providing more autonomy, providing information about the training programmes and removing the bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Issues and Challenges

While analysing the strategic initiatives of the government for enhancing employability through skill development, it is important to understand what are the main issues and challenges to be faced by the key stakeholders. A few important issues and challenges are discussed below:

Box 1: SWOC of Odisha

Strengths: Rich natural resource endowment(aquaculture, forests, marine, metals, minerals and water) and rich cultural heritage – tribal heritage.

Weaknesses: Low employable skills, lack of employment opportunities, undeveloped and stagnant agriculture(<1%) due to primitive agricultural practices and low agricultural productivity, slow growth in manufacturing and service sectors, poor infrastructure, lack of good roads, rails, ports, and airports, undeveloped markets, small economic base, frequent natural disasters

Opportunities:Excellent base for textiles, handloom and handicrafts, excellent tourism opportunities(ecotourism & religious), rich potential for industrialisation–Steel, Aluminum, presence of knowledge industry – good IT skill base.

Challenges: Poverty declining at a very slow rate; overwhelmingly rural and regional phenomenon (93% of the poor live in rural areas), about half of the rural poor are 40% or more below poverty line, 4 out of 5 poor persons are farmers or agricultural labourers, Developing core poverty groups :ST (75%), SC (59%), small & marginal farmers (60%), casual wage labourers (75%). Social Indicators for the core poverty group are significantly worse, and changing the negative attitude of people towards development with a deep sense of apathy.

Need of Skill Development Training for the Informal Sector

Informal sector engages about 93 percent of the workforce in India. But there is a huge gap in skill demand and supply. It is mainly due to lack of importance for skills

Table 1: Skill Development Projects in the District Jajpur, Odisha (Implementation period: Feb.2011-Feb.2014)

| Trade | Agencies | Number of Beneficiaries |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Bar Bending, Steel Framing | Larsen and Toubro Ltd. | 200 |
| CNC Operator | Jagannath Institute for Technology and Management | 200 |
| Diamond cutting & polishing | Federation of Indian Women Enterprises | 200 |
| Front Office Management | Federation of Indian Women Enterprises | 200 |
| Hospitality Services/ Hotel Management | Jagruti Foundation | 200 |
| Industrial Helper/Assistant | Jagannath Institute for Technology and Management | 200 |
| | Srei SAHAJ E-village | 200 |
| Retail Management | Jagannath Institute for Technology and Management | 200 |
| Security Guard | Federation of Indian Women Enterprises | 200 |
| | Srei SAHAJ E-village | 200 |
| Sewing Machine Operator | Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited | 200 |
| | Jagannath Institute for Technology and Management | 200 |
| | Technopak Advisors Pvt. | 200 |
| Spinning and Polishing | Federation of Indian Women Enterprises | 200 |
| Welder | Federation of Indian Women Enterprises | 200 |
| | Jagannath Institute for Technology and Management | 200 |
| | Srei SAHAJ E-village | 200 |
| Total Target(No. of Persons for skill development) | | 3600 |

training, lack of access to capital, ineffective mechanism for evaluation of quality of training and bureaucratic bottlenecks. Moreover, the challenge lies in public training institutions. About 10 percent of the ITI graduates enters self-employment. Running a small business in informal sector requires a person to be multi-skilled. ITIs as well as NGOs running traditional skill training or apprenticeships are unable to provide such supports due to many deficiencies. Therefore, government can provide policy framework for developing innovative training curricula and promote public-private partnerships for competency based skills testing.

Active Participation of Industry, Educational & Financial Institutions

There is no doubt that skill development is very important. The quality of training imparted by the training institutions is not good enough for ensuring employability and productivity. There is need for accessing capital and other resources. But, it cannot yield much fruits unless it is accompanied by a package which includes access to credit, markets and technology. This is main challenging

issue associated with skill development. This issue is not unique to India – as shown by Johanson and Van Adams (2004) in their study on Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Africa. Role of industry and financial institutions is very important in supporting the skill development programmes run by the private educational institutions and NGOs. Besides the Government funding through NSDC or any central or state Government Ministry/Department, industries and financial institutions must come forward to providing financial assistance or loans for running skill training cum production or apprenticeship programmes. This is a very challenging task to ensure active partnership and involvement of training institutions, industry and financial institutions.

Equation of Quality, Cost and Scale of Skill Training

During last two decades it is seen that many workers with technical/vocational qualifications did not get suitable employment because they could not meet the required level of quality of skill in the labour market. Even some of those who found employment after the training at ITIs/

and attitude of the trainees while imparting quality skill training as per the market demands.

Creating More Job opportunities for Skilled Manpower

While enhancing labour productivity and employability through skill development and vocational training it is also very important and challenging to generate enough jobs for a growing labour force. In the last decade India has already faced the challenge of jobless growth.

Technical Skill Education and Wages

The relative supply of workers with technical/vocational skills has declined throughout this period. Their relative wages have also come down since the early 1990s. If in-house training to unskilled or semi-skilled workers yields positive impacts on productivity, employers share the profits with the workers in the form of higher wages. It is also possible that people see little labour market benefits from undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses and opt for other more attractive educational options. This shows that skill acquisition and wages are important determinants of job prospects. This issue needs to be studied while implementing the skill development programmes in future.

Performance in Education has Improved, But Not Enough

The quality and labour market relevance is crucial. Since 1995, India has been making marginal improvement in terms of quality and quantity of workforce with some education, as compared to China, Mexico, South Africa, and Russia. The challenge before India is to provide more education and skills that are relevant for the employment sector.

Suggested Road Map to Success

India is undergoing a very fast transition from agriculture driven economy to a business driven economy which requires a variety of technical and soft skills. As discussed above, there is a huge gap between required and available employable skilled people. In order to bridge this gap there is need for both short term and long

term plans with a well-directed road map to success. It calls for participation of government, industry, financial institutions, private academic institutions, NGOs and civil society organisations. While the government must facilitate setting up of skill training institutions, the industry must come forward to support skill development programmes to enhance employability of young Indians.

A Road-map is suggested in Fig. 1. It emphasizes multiple routes to promote employability, upgrading the entrepreneurial abilities and attitudes along with skill development of the target young Indians. It calls for vocationalising general education and broadening support base to the private training institutions for success. The concern for employability of young Indians varies according to their varied socio-economic and educational background, individual talents, interests and attitudes. The target population can be divided in to two categories: a) those who have dropped out from schools before completing 10th Class and b) Those who have passed 10th Class. Out of school dropouts, a few may like to join their family business or agriculture while others may go for self-employment or wage – employment. Counseling support should be provided to them so that they can choose a suitable career path in line with their talents, attitudes and interests. Similarly, out of those who pass 10th class, a few may like to discontinue their studies due to poverty or any other reasons. Those who continue to pursue higher education should be targeted for career counseling support. They can be directed towards such career options in general, technical or professional streams enhancing employability.

*The above road map is suggested by the author for comments of the readers so that it can be further improved.

They can be directed towards such career options in general, technical or professional streams enhancing employability. Accordingly, both short and long term actions need to be planned for developing their employable skills.

Some of the strategic actions suggested in this model are explained below:

Mapping of Skill Development Needs and Existing Training Resources

India is a vast and populous country. Its economic, geographical, cultural, social and demographic diversities

cannot be ignored while undertaking any development programme at the national level. Some states of India are progressive in terms of economic growth, but regressive in terms of human development; and the vice versa is also possible. Therefore, fixing priority for skill development programmes on the basis of economic growth parameters may not be realistic. The Needs for skill development and nature of employment of people in different parts of the country are different. The raw materials availability and training infrastructure are also not uniform. The available natural and man-made resources are not well distributed across the states or regions. Therefore, it is suggested that state-wise mapping of skill availability and deficiencies in potential workforce be done before undertaking any skill development programme at a large scale.

Improving the Existing System for Skill Development

The market relevance of existing training curricula and pedagogy needs to be studied and accordingly the vocational education system should be changed.

Strengthening Existing General Secondary Education

In order to meet the demands of the prospective employers for young Indians with well-rounded skills, the general education system needs to be strengthened for yielding higher returns.

Developing Skilled Manpower for the Informal Sector

There is growing needs for developing trained workforce for the informal sector. Therefore, necessary policy framework needs to be developed by the Government to stimulate innovative ideas from both public and private sectors on how to develop such workforce to improve productivity of the informal sector.

Involving Prospective Employers in Decision-Making

In order to create a healthy employment market for the skilled young Indians, prospective employers should be involved in decision making process of the training

institutions and designing training course curricula as per industry requirement.

Giving Greater Autonomy to Training Institutions

The institutions involved in the skill development programmes must have autonomy for deciding on training programs, hiring or firing of teachers, and generating revenues by selling goods and services. This would include the development of short-courses on demand and the greater use of public sector resources (equipment and materials) for use by employers, NGOs, and the private sector for training. Piloting this intervention and then studying its effectiveness will give a good idea of whether institutions can respond positively to incentives. Later, this can be successfully expanded in the medium term. However, the institutions have limited capacity to manage and take decisions on their own, and they will need to be supported to develop this capacity. Unnecessary regulatory barriers should be removed in order to ensure better convergence and participation of vigorous non-government sector.

Financing of Institutions

The training institutions working for enhancing the employability of young Indians through skill development should be provided necessary financial supports based on input or output criteria. The financial resource base also needs to be broadened.

Professional Evaluation Agencies

Evaluation of nature, impacts and quality of training should be done by competent professional agencies. They face challenges to ensure how effectively the results of evaluation are fed back into policymaking.

Single Coordination Mechanism

A single independent coordination agency for vocational training should be created in order to ensure faster decision making about curriculum development, overseeing financing of training, supervising skills testing, certification and accreditation. Existing agencies such as DGET, NCVT and SCVTs may be transformed

for this purpose.

Developing of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) should be developed through extensive consultations with employers for establishing course entry pre-requisites and assessment requirements.

Conclusion

Human development is inseparable component for a sustainable and inclusive growth. India has great human potentiality for enhancing employability through skill development. Initiatives taken by the Government by creating special institutions like NSDC are not very old. The projects being implemented through PPP model are yet to show concrete results. Therefore, there should not be scope for complacency. When government mechanism fails, PPP model should not be used as the only successful model or as panacea. This hybrid model, to be successful, needs a new mindset, a new skillset and a new DNA in its system. A massive movement is required to create awareness at the grassroots level to realize this fact and transform the potential human resource to productive workforce. Role of industry, academic institutions, NGOs, civil society organisations, and financial institutions is very important. Creation of employment and efforts for enhancing employability should be undertaken simultaneously. Otherwise, it would lead to another problem of unemployment of employable people. An index like the HDI needs to be created to measure the quality and number of employable people developed belonging to different socio-economic strata of Indian society. The outstanding issues of regional imbalance, rural-urban divides, 'Haves'-and 'Have-nots' need to be integrated with employable skill development initiatives in order to achieve an inclusive growth in a sustainable manner.

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