

Education for Skilling Youth: A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

Recent government initiatives in India strongly underscore the need for skill development also referred to as 'skilling', at different educational levels. Education can greatly aid nation building process as it develops the mental and physical qualities of people thereby increasing their skills, knowledge and attitudes required for utilizing the natural resources needed for economic development of the nation and for their own self-employment. Present paper attempts to focus the role of education in present day scenario not only as a mean to individual empowerment of youth by development of intellectual venture but also as a mean to empower them for development of skills needed to adjust in fast changing world of work. Prime Minister of India has also emphasized skilling 150 million people by 2022 to make India the 'skills capital of the world' which reflects crucial role of education for skill development.

Keywords: Education, Skill Development, Youth

1. Introduction

The need for skill development is being emphasized with renewed vigour in recent times by government policy makers based on the embedded rationale that an educated and appropriately skilled workforce is instrumental for sustainable livelihood. Moreover, India's population, long considered a curse, has turned into a desirable demographic dividend as it means skilled, educated or employed people. India's 1.21 billion people have a median age of 32 which is ten years lower than most other nations in the world. As the largest contributor to the global workforce, the age of its working population surpasses 950 million. This unique demographic advantage if educated for vocational and social efficiency will contribute to India emerging as the world's largest economy. But the need for quality frameworks of education for skilling youths would include all elements of the skill development value chain and a periodic quality assessment of training providers or educational institutions to a plan to consistently for improvement of performance as well as achievement.

2. Objective of the Study

Objective of this paper is development of a theoretical insight on the role of education in development of economic and social skills among youths.

3. Methods and Materials

This paper is based on secondary data and Information that has been sourced from various books, educational journals, government publications, newspapers etc. and research is descriptive in nature.

4. Results & Discussion

4.1 Education and Skilling Youths

Skill is sometimes seen as representing only lower-order attributes (e.g. keyboard skills), but most often as including also higher-order attributes (like thinking skills). The National Skill Qualification Framework launched in 2013 is a quality assurance framework system to organize qualifications in

levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. The emphasis is on learning outcomes which are imperative for learners regardless of whether they are acquired through formal, informal or non-formal learning. Other government efforts for skilling through education includes,

- The National Literacy Mission Authority policy manifesto that focuses on the need to integrate literacy with vocational training and innovative income-generating programmes with the assistance of NGOs, State Resource Centres, Jan Shikshan Sansthan and other local bodies.
- The Saakshar Bharat Scheme launched in 2009 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India that states that Jan Shikshan Sansthan, set up under the scheme of assistance to voluntary agencies for Adult Education and Skill Development has been institutionally networked with adult education centres and other district implementation agencies for furtherance of its objective to equip non-literates and neo-literates with vocational skills to improve their living and earning conditions.

The 2012 report of National Skill Development Corporation highlights its mandate to 'enhance, support and coordinate private sector initiatives for skill development' targeting school drop-outs and workers. The objective is that India's demographic advantage of the world's youngest workforce of 63.8 million people needs to be optimally leveraged to enhance productivity and employability, since the shortcomings of the nation's skill development are critical constraints to rapid industrial growth.

4.2 Education for All (EFA) and Development-

There is an important body of development literature that has long documented the positive impact of basic education on various facets of social and economic development. It is well-established that education is an important catalyst for achieving all development goals. It has been recognized that, within the MDG framework, there is "an interconnectedness of all

development goals with key inter-linkages between education, health, poverty reduction, and gender equality, where improvement in one area has a positive effect on the others". Education has positive effects on health, poverty reduction and elimination of hunger, as well as on gender equality.

If education, learning and skills are to be seen as both enablers and drivers of inclusive and sustainable development, it is important to review the experience of education within the framework of the international development agenda. The more comprehensive international education agenda is that of the six 'Education for All' (EFA) goals adopted in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action.

- EFA that encompasses – within its vision of basic learning – early childhood care and education, youth and adult literacy, vocational skills development, as well as concern for the improvement of the quality and relevance of basic learning.
- EFA goals like Early Child Care and Education, Life skills and Literacy. In the perspective of lifelong learning, it is evident that exclusion from the learning process starts early. There is strong evidence that nutrition and cognitive stimulation in the early years of a child's life is critical in forming the ability to learn later in life. This is particular relevant with regard to developing skills like creativity, flexibility and problems solving, skills that are coming more in demand in the knowledge economy.

In many countries too many children are learning far too little, and children leave school without having obtained fundamental learning skills. In this way many children and youth are excluded because they do not acquire basic skills like literacy and numeracy which are critical for further formal learning and for vocational skill development.

4.3 Non-Formal Education for Skilling Purpose

The majority in developing countries is often deprived of basic facilities and services such as literacy, numeracy, health education, and community improvement. To meet the strategic objective of improvement in quality of life and poverty alleviation has contributed in manifestation of non-formal education across countries. It is difficult for formal educational systems alone to respond to the societal challenges and therefore needs reinforcement by non-formal educational practices. There is increasing agreement among scholars that non-formal education offers a solution to the deficiencies of formal education and contributes to the varied needs of developing countries. With the underlying idea that eradication of illiteracy alone may not be the panacea to poverty eradication, the focus of the government is increasingly on their vocational education and skill training needs. Hence, Inculcation of functional skills become imperative for development one of the chief aims of non-formal education.

In India, the ambit of new initiatives in non-formal education is being increased to include larger numbers of disadvantaged and excluded groups to address the social and gender imbalance. This places the importance of catering to the educational needs of these groups through a well-planned, systematic strategy through institutional arrangements. There has been a concerted impetus of the government and policy-makers on incorporating skill-development with education in order to synergize the need for generating employment opportunities to the youth and fill the competency requirement of the industry. Empowerment

and socio-economic transformation of the disadvantaged is crucial for national development. The lack of empowerment includes both 'returns scarcity' which refers to the deficiency in level of financial returns and 'capacity scarcity' which refers to the paucity of opportunity to utilize one's capacity. It is through basic literacy and skills that an increase in efficiency, employability and entrepreneurial abilities can be achieved to overcome aspirational barriers. Amartya Sen (1999) interprets development as removal of unfreedoms which are obstacles to freedom and trade barriers, in terms of 'capability deprivation' and underscores the imperative of development of capabilities for poverty-alleviation, social development as well as well-being of the individual. To overcome capability deprivation non-formal education serves as a boon.

4.4 Multi-Dimensional Education

Polyvalent or multi-dimensional education is arguably as important as specialized skills for the urban unorganized workers in order to provide wider employment opportunities. The polyvalent approach aims to provide knowledge and impart skills in an integrated manner, based on the underlying idea that the needs of workers require specifically tailored programmes relating employable skills with functional literacy. This is based on the basic premise that a worker should have access to education and training programmes which should be varied and flexible in duration, content and form throughout his/her life without any terminal point. Such education experiences should therefore be functional, integrated and designed to meet each individual's specific needs and expected learning outcomes, develop self-reliance and the ability to generate additional income for improvement in the overall quality of life. It is the combination of literacy and skill-based inputs that make polyvalent adult education centre different from other formal adult educational institutions. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), a Scheme of People's Education is an example of a polyvalent institute in the non-formal education sector under the aegis of Directorate of Adult Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Started as the Scheme of Shramik Vidyapeeth launched in Worli, Mumbai in 1967 and renamed as Jan Shikshan Sansthan in 2000, currently there are 271 sanctioned JSS across 28 states and Union territories in India in 2013 out of which 252 are functioning JSS. The threefold-objective is to provide employment-based non-formal education to target groups, to provide polyvalent education linking literacy with vocational skill training, and to facilitate services to other similar organizations.

4.5 Present Status of Higher Education and Vocational Training for Skill Development

Education, including all aspects higher education and college education falls under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The University and Higher Education arm is responsible for all college education (Arts, Science, Commerce, etc.), while engineering education, polytechnics, etc., fall under the category of Technical Education. The University Grants Commission (UGC) provides funds in the form of grants and also coordinates as well as sets standards for teaching, examination and research in universities. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is the regulatory body for Technical Education in India. Moreover, Higher Education in India comprises Architectural colleges,

Medical colleges, Teacher Training colleges, Others (Law, Management, etc.) apart from education directly delivered by Universities, Institutions of National Repute (such as National Institutes of Technology), and Research Institutions.

Vocational Training in India is being offered by the DGET under the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The DGET is the apex organization for development and coordination at national level for the programmes relating to Vocational Training. The DGET undertakes Vocational Training through several schemes. The schemes available are:

- Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS) – ITI/ITC training
- Apprenticeship Training Scheme
- Craftsmen Instructor Training Scheme
- Advance Vocational Training Scheme
- Women Training
- Research and Staff Training
- Instructional Material Development
- Hi-Tech Training
- North Eastern States
- Modular Employable Skills (MES)
- Centre of Excellence and World Bank Assistance
- Upgradation of ITIs through Public Private Partnership (PPP).

Vocational Training is primarily imparted through Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) and Industrial Training Centres (ITC).

4.6 Coverage of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has been set up under Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode as a Section-25 Company under the Ministry of Finance to provide viability gap funding and coordinate private sector initiatives. The Prime Minister's National Council on Skill Development has been formulated to coordinate action on skill development. The National Skill Development Policy is aimed at empowering all individuals through improved skills, knowledge and internationally recognised qualifications to enable them to access decent employment, to promote inclusive national growth and to ensure India's competitiveness in the global market. The coverage of the National Skill Development Policy is as follows:

- Institution-based skill development including ITIs/ITCs/vocational schools/technical schools/polytechnics/ professional colleges, etc.
- Learning initiatives of sectoral skill development organised by different ministries/departments.
- Formal and informal apprenticeships and other types of training by enterprises.
- Training for self-employment/entrepreneurial development.
- Adult learning, retraining of retired or retiring employees and lifelong learning.
- Non-formal training including training by civil society organizations.
- E-learning, web-based learning and distance learning.

4.7 Educational Institutions` Upgradation for Skilling

The government is upgrading existing educational institutions through a combination of own funding, multilateral assistance, and PPP.

- a. Upgradation of 500 Government ITIs

- 100 domestically funded and 400 World Bank assisted initiatives to upgrade 500 ITI in all
- Closer involvement of industry by forming an Institute Management Committee (IMC) headed by an industry representative.
- IMC given financial and academic powers to help run the institute.

- b. Upgradation of 1,396 Government ITIs through Public Partnership (PPP)

- 300 ITIs to be taken up every year from 2007-08 till 2010-11 and remaining in 2011-12.
- For each ITI to be taken up under the Scheme, an Industry Partner is associated to lead the process of upgradation.
- An Institute Management Committee (IMC), headed by the Industry Partner, is constituted and registered as a Society.
- A Memorandum of Agreement is signed among the Central Government, the State Government, the State Government and the Industry Partner defining the roles and responsibilities of all the parties.

An interest free loan up to Rs. 2.5 crore is given by the Central Government directly to the IMC on the basis of Institute Development Plan (IDP) prepared by it. The loan is repayable by the IMC in 30 years, with a moratorium of 10 years and thereafter in equal annual instalments over a period of 20 years. Under this scheme the IMC has been given financial and academic autonomy to manage the affairs of the ITI. The IMC is allowed to determine up to 20% of the admission in the ITI. The Industry Partner may provide financial assistance as well as machinery and equipments to the ITI. It shall arrange to provide training to instructors and on the job training to trainees. State Governments remain the owner of the ITIs and continue to regulate admissions.

4.8 Education, Skilling, Working

Many countries have placed work-based learning for youth and adults at the centre of their approach to vocational skills. Internship and apprenticeship are going through a worldwide upswing. The key challenge remains to ensure that the life-long characteristics of workplace learning are reflected in education and skills strategies and policies. These include development of new approaches for recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning and enabling flexible access to skills development and qualifications.

In addition to the recent focus on the assessment of learning outcomes among children and youth, there is also evidence of increasing attention paid to the measurement of skills levels and the efficient matching of these skills with those required by the world of work.

4.9 Determinants in Ensuring Quality in Educating For Skill Development

Quality of Education for Skill Development is driven and determined by the following dimensions at the level of each/individual institute/centre:

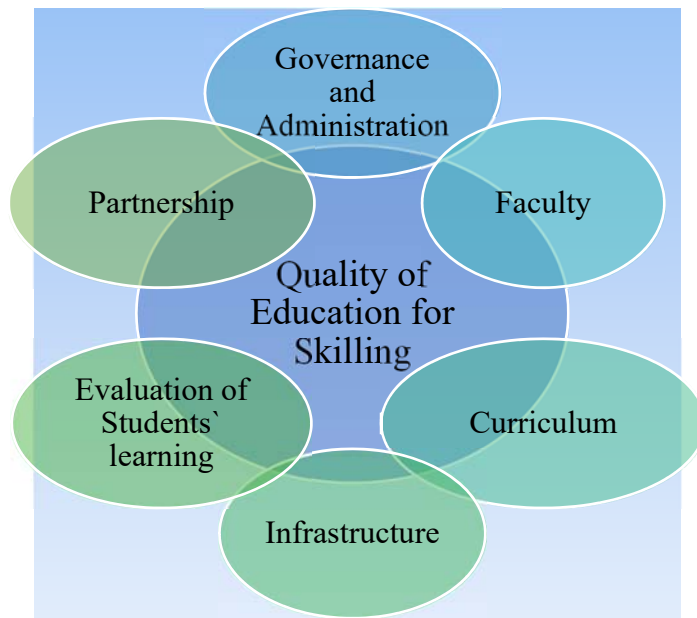


Fig 1: Determinants of quality in skill training (Source- IMAcS analysis)

Strong governance and administration, adequate and appropriate faculty, curriculum design and development (standardized curriculum which can be easily replicated and offered at multiple locations to aid scale up), relevant infrastructure, a defined process for evaluation of student learning from in-gate to out-gate, employment as well as employability and rewarding partnerships are pre-conditions for successful implementation of education for skilling. Moreover, Education and Training Delivery (through recorded/interactive teaching input), Assessment and Certification (through e-testing, computer based tests, supporting current theory and practical tests) and Placement linkages (employer and student views on demand, centralized placement systems) plays significant role in determining quality of skill education.

5. Challenges

Skills associated with the use of new digital media in our everyday lives are evolving and becoming more complex. Beyond minimalistic definitions of literacy and numeracy skills, educational development must address the issue of adequate literacy, information and media literacy required in the information and digital age and appropriate means of assessing these skills levels. In many countries, a key challenge is about opening up for women who are traditionally marginalized in the labor market and for the huge numbers of young people who lack foundations skills or have completed basic education and yet have few prospects of decent work.

6. Suggestion and Conclusion

The skill development community must squarely address the question of financial affordability as well as physical accessibility. Changes must be introduced at the level of the education system through curriculum reform, technology adoption and policy adoption. The effectiveness of imparting skill training in employment-oriented courses to the target population segment on a nation-wide scale depends on a multi-pronged participatory approach by the government, non-

government agencies, and other organizations to support the efforts of educational organizations. The fast pace of change in the contemporary workplace environment continuously challenges the advancement of educational programmes. A growing body of evidence suggests that the formation of skills is a life-cycle process that exhibits dynamic complementarities. Learners having access vocational learning and can only attain the level of skills that will enable them to make informed choices with regard to the life of work.

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