



Skilling India

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This article is based on "**Holistic skilling**" which was published in The Hindu Business Line on 01/07/2021. It talks about the challenges pertaining to the skill development in India.

The success of any endeavour is an interplay of capital, collaboration, regulatory mechanisms and, most importantly, the scientific and technological know-how, put simply, skills.

In India, **many initiatives** have been undertaken in the skills sector by governments in the last decade. However, outcomes are still elusive. According to the **UNDP's Human Development Report-2020**, only 21.1 per cent of the labour force was skilled in the period 2010-2019 in India.

This dismal result is due to lack of cohesion within policy actions, absence of holistic approach and working in silos. Therefore, if India wants to reap the demographic advantage, it needs to fix the challenges pertaining to skill development in India.

Issues in Skill Development

- **Piecemeal Approach:** The piecemeal approach to skilling can be seen in this year's Budget which has allocated ₹3,000 crore to realign the **National Apprenticeship Training scheme** but has restricted it to only engineering stream and not to other science and arts streams.
- **Overburdened Responsibility: Phase III of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana**, launched to impart skills development to over 8 lakh persons in 2020-21.
However, it suffers from excessive reliance on the District Skills Development Committees, chaired by District Collectors, who would not be able to prioritise this role, given their other assignments.

- **Discontinuity in Policy Process:** The National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), created in 2013 for resolving the inter-ministerial and inter-departmental issues and eliminating duplicates of efforts of the Centre.
 - However, it has been now subsumed as part of the National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT).
 - This reflects not only discontinuity in the policy process, but also some obfuscation among policy makers.
- **Humongous Number of New Entrants:** According to a 2019 study by the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC), 7 crore additional people in the working-age of 15-59 years are expected to enter the labour force by 2023.

Given the sheer magnitude of youth to be skilled, it is paramount that the policy efforts are adequate in all respects.
- **Employers' Unwillingness:** India's joblessness issue is not only a skills problem, it is representative of the lack of appetite of industrialists and SMEs for recruiting.

Due to limited access to credit because of Banks' NPAs, investment rate has declined and thus has a negative impact on job creation.

Way Forward

- **Ending Separation Between Education & Skills:** There is a need to end the artificial separation of the education system into formal and vocational shall end with such enabling frameworks allowing seamless integration.
 - In this context, the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisaged a right policy as it emphasises on integration of vocational and formal education both at school and higher education levels.
 - The NEP also proposed a pilot 'hub-n-spoke' model with the conceptual framework of ITI becoming a 'Hub' for providing VET related training and exposure to students of adjoining 5-7 schools.
- **Skills survey:** Surveys can be conducted to find the exact skill requirements from the employers.

Analysis of such surveys would help in designing course structures of the training programs and thus standardized course curriculum or training delivery systems can be developed.
- **Enhanced Expenditure on Education and Training:** In the long run, Skill India will also not be enough if government expenditures in education remain low and if, therefore, the ground isn't prepared for proper training.

In this case, the proposal of NEP to enhance public expenditure on education to 6% of GDP is a step in the right direction.
- **Imbibing International Success Models:** India needs to learn from technical and vocational training/education models in China, Germany, Japan, Brazil, and Singapore, who had similar challenges in the past, along with learning from its own experiences to adopt a comprehensive model that can bridge the skill gaps and ensure employability of youths.

Conclusion

To make **Bharat Atmanirbhar**, all the skilling efforts need to be brought under one platform to eliminate silos and duplications. A sturdy institutional framework with practical and real pathways to change course between mainstream and vocational programmes needs to be put in place.

Drishti Mains Question

To make Bharat Atmanirbhar, all the skilling efforts need to be brought under one platform to eliminate silos and duplications. Discuss.