

## **DRIVING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND AHEAD: NEP PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract:**

NEP adopts a learner-centric approach besides concentrating on vocational education. India is taking pride in achieving the demographic dividend by 2030. The educational policy overhaul aims at reducing the distinction between curricular and co-curricular aspects. The integration of vocational education into the conventional system of education has been one of the crucial aspects of NEP. This paper aims at studying the skill and employability aspects of NEP. The students were provided with flexibility to achieve their goals and sharpen their skills for employability. A UNICEF report (2019) estimates that at least 47% of Indian youth do not have the education and skills necessary for employment in 2030. The reason for low employability is the gap between demand and supply. This gap needs to be filled by the Government policy intervention. NEP has lot of scope in Indian education arena to bridge the gap between Industry and Academia. The young minds are curious to learn and this is the base for introducing the vocational training at early stages. The collaboration with Industry during internship enabling the students with the required skills needed for their future.

**Key Words:** NEP, Knowledge, Skills, Education, Vocational, Demographic Dividend

### **Introduction:**

India's higher education system is the world's third-largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States even then it fails in producing skilled youth because of low accessibility. Despite India's growing economy, our education system still relies heavily on traditional methods of teaching, in which the emphasis is on scoring marks or taking good grades rather than practical skills that make them employable. Employer-academic institution interaction is inadequate. The education system focuses mostly on theory and lacks adequate life skills and career guidance to help students succeed. The employability in India is affected by the skill gaps in various sectors, revising the skill training becomes significant. There is an estimation by the NCSDE that there is a skill deficit of 29 million by 2030.

In India 62.5% of population are in the age group of 15-59 years, which will achieve Peak in 2036 when it will reach around 65%. There is a fifty year window period of 2005 to 2055 in which India has greatest economic dividend.

India's Higher Education system is stricken by rote learning, lack of employability, and skill development because of its low quality. public sector universities in India lack the necessary infrastructure. Besides students are unable to pursue skills such as Interpersonal skills (including Verbal/Oral Communication Skills & Listening skills), Written Communication Skills, Collaboration, and teamwork, Work ethics and decision-making, Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills, Problem solving, Organizational Skills, Negotiation & Leadership skills. There are lot of gaps in education system which needs to be answered to achieve the aspiring demographic dividend.

There is no parity in the Gross Enrolment Ratio(GER) among different sections of society. GER for males (26.3%), females (25.4%), SC (21.8%) and ST (15.9%). The unequal distribution of college density (number of colleges per lakh eligible population) varies from 7 in Bihar to 59 in Telangana as compared to All India's average of 28. moreover, most premier universities and colleges are centered in metropolitan and urban cities, thereby leading to the regional disparity in access to skillful higher education.

Faculty shortages and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well-qualified teachers and a very adequate number of teachers who try to imbibe analytical and research skills into children have been posing challenges to quality education for many years. Shortage of faculty leads to Ad-hoc expansion even in the premier institutions. The ratio of students to teaching staff is an indicator of how resources for education are allocated. The Pupil-to-

teacher ratio though has been stable in the country (42:1), nevertheless, it needs to be improved to make it comparable to the other countries in addition to this problem the quality of teachers who are sometimes appointed politically or are not trained adequately is another huge challenge. Faculty not getting upgraded frequently concerning the technology and demands of the globe. Moreover the students need to get best education and skills from experienced professionals who ideally have experience in both academics and corporations. If students are aiming for online training, they should find a provider who is an expert in the field and whose training programs incorporate adequate use-cases and exercises.

Industries in India face problems to find suitable employees as the education provided is not suitable for directly working in the industry and hence have to spend large amounts on providing training for employees. Because of out-dated, unsuitable curriculum that is mostly theoretical in nature and has a low scope for creativity that is not making any coherence between education and demand of Industry and curriculum that is the main reason for the low employability of graduates in India. The enrolment in skill institutes like ITIs, and polytechnics, remains low as compared to their enrolment capacity. This is due to the low awareness level among youths about the skill development programs.

Indian education also face the challenges of over-centralization, lack of training, bureaucratic structures, and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. The burden of administrative functions of universities has significantly increased and the core focus on academics and research is weakened and hence unsuccessful in providing skilled education. Poor fund allocation in research, Low levels of Ph.D. enrolment, fewer opportunities for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, Low levels of industry engagement, Low quality of research work and lack of proper funding is affecting the research ecosystem in India. The significance of vocational education and training is the best part of NEP in encouraging employment. The vocational skills are included in the School, College and University curriculum. Educational institutions are to provide two types of VET qualifications namely VET certificate and VET diploma. There has to enough monitoring and regulatory approach to ensure cooperation between various levels of education.

The Country's working age propoulation which is estimated as 900 million people (67% of the total population) in the working age group of 15-64 in India going to add up by 100 million people by 2030 is regarded as the greatest advantage accruing to the economy.

Despite being the advantageous nation, India has the increasing literacy rate it is lagging behind in vocational education. People remains unemployed due to low and under skilled. Addressing the skills gaps of the increased workforce to be addressed as it is imperative to India due to its labour-intensity technology when compared to other countries. Skilling and reskilling needs a collaborative effort among the Government, Industry and Academia to safeguard the prerequisites of the economy.

The Incremental Human resource requirement in the 24 sectors identified by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship elucidates the need for IHRR of 30.6 million in Building, construction and Real estate, Retail sector 10.7 million, Logistics, Transportation and Warehousing 8.2 million and Textile& clothing 6.7. Tourism, Hospitality and Travel requires 4.9 and one of the emerging industries Beauty and Wellness expects 8.2 million people.

Table 1: Sector-wise Incremental Training Need

Sector	Incremental Human Resource Requirement and Training need
Agriculture	24.5
Animal husbandry	18
Fertilizer	1
Textile Handloom and Handicraft	60
Automotive, Auto components and Capital Goods	41

Gems & Jewellery	35
Food Processing	33.7
Leather	25
Pharmaceuticals	14
Chemicals and Petrochemicals	12
Steel	7.5
Rubber Manufacturing	6.7
Road Transport & Highways	62.2
Ports & Maritime	25
Aviation and Aerospace	14.2
Railways	0.12
Power	15.2
Oil & Gas	7.3
Renewable Energy	6
Coal & Mining	2.6
Construction	320
Furniture & Fittings	52.6
Paints and coatings	9
Electronics and IT-ITES	69
Telecom	38.6
Retail	107
Beauty & Wellness	82
Media & Entertainment	13
Tourism & Hospitality	49
Banking, Financial Services and Insurance	12
Logistics	42.9
Health Care	32
Security	31
Media & Entertainment	13
Total	1282.12

(Source: Annual Report of Skill India, 2021-22 (2022), MSDE Publication, GOI)

The sector-wise requirement of the skills, assess the demand for skills. The incremental human resource requirement of 103 million during 2017-22 across the identified 24 sectors has led to the conclusion of Incremental Human Resource Requirement and Training need in 34 sectors as given in the above table. Construction combined with its allied sectors has the major requirement of 32 million people where as the second position is occupied by the Retail sector 10.7 million, the Electronics and IT\_ITes needs 6.9 million, Road Transport and Highways has the estimation of 6.22 million and Textile, handloom and Handicraft is 6 million.

### Government Initiatives in Vocational Education:

In order to upgrade and update the skills of serving industrial workers, the Advanced Vocational Training Scheme (AVTS) is in operation since 1977. Under the scheme, training in selected skill areas is being imparted through short-term modular courses of one to six weeks' duration. Tailor-made courses suiting to the specific requirements of industrial establishments are also offered. Over 3.5 lakh industrial workers / technicians have made use of the training facilities at the NSTIs (erstwhile ATIs). With financial assistance from World Bank, training facilities in additional areas were created.

The Advanced Vocational Training Scheme which is conducted from 1977 where in the training is imparted through short-term modular courses upto six weeks to suit the specific requirements of the Industry. The Training Facilities at NSTIs catered to the needs of 3.5 lakh industrial workers. The World Bank also assisted additional areas financially.

National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development provides a common reference framework for linking various vocational qualifications and setting common principles and guidelines for a nationally recognized qualification system and standards. NVEQF will be implemented in schools, polytechnics, engineering colleges, and other colleges across the country. The NVEQF is initiated to effectively bridge the skill gap and provide trained manpower to various emerging sectors in India and to prepare the youth in vocational skills.

Establishment of New Polytechnics: Under the scheme, it is proposed to establish 1000 Polytechnics in the country where in 300 Polytechnics to be set up through Public-Private Partnership by the State Governments/Union Territories. These 300 polytechnics will be selected in consultation with State Governments/Union Territories, various industry organizations such as CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, and Ph.D. Chamber of Commerce, etc.

E-education platform SWAYAM stands for Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds. Under the program, there are 32 Direct To Home (DTH) channels operationalized for telecasting education content free of charge. For more information visit the linked page.

UcchatarAavishkarAbhiyaan: To promote industry-specific need-based research Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP). IMPRINT India is a joint initiative of IITs and IISc to address major science and technology challenges in India. It aims to boost original scientific and technological research in 10 fields: (1) Health care technology, (2) Energy security, (3) Rural-urban housing design, (4) Nanotechnology, (5) Water/river system, (6) Advanced materials, (7) Computer science and ICT, (8) Manufacturing technology, (9) Advanced security and (10) Environment/climate change. Under the SamagraShiksha, pre-vocational Education (PVE), is introduced.

#### **Suggestions:**

- 1) The New Education Policy stipulates that School education from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, must have Skill development in key areas.
- 2) The Curriculum should be enriched with emerging areas like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Robotics, Cloud Computing etc. in the higher education.
- 3) The future of Work should be given importance in education system not the traditional system of education.
- 4) The Skill based courses should be given importance. The Practical approach for skill development in both organised and unorganised sector should be improved.
- 5) Innovation through Multi-disciplinary approach should be imbibed in all the levels of education for diffusion of knowledge in all the sectors of the economy.
- 6) The Road map for integrating the multi-disciplinary instead of water-tight compartments of streams of education should be laid down.
- 7) The forecasting of the future trends in population and demographic dividend on both supply and demand side should be taken into account for the Public Policy for Skill development.

#### **Conclusion:**

NEP emphasizes a holistic approach in which it advocates a creative and multidisciplinary curriculum that includes the Humanities, Science, Mathematics, Arts, and culture along with required life skills. The Government initiatives when combined with NEP initiatives would bring a big leap in education and skills training.

The Educational institutions in the country should collaborate to ensure the dual training model. The students can take up the professional courses with global certification in important technological fields. This also creates the paths better Trainers, Faculty and Master Trainers and the movement across Industry and Academia.

Skill development for the growing population is crucial for achieving the goals of the nation especially “Atmanirbhar Bharat. The NEP 2020 has covered the elements of skill enhancement, entrepreneurship skills and vocational education to leverage the demographic dividend in the right manner to achieve the wheels of development.

With the way forward, the Industry 4.0 the NEP ensures the restructuring and revamping the curriculum and swift changes for the match between demand and supply of the manpower needs. The skill-based model curriculum has the potential to achieve the imminent demographic dividend in terms of employment and business expertise.

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