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RESEARCH ARTICLE

VIBRANT PROGRESS TOWARDS SKILL BASED EDUCATION.

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Abstract

The country today is teeming with fresh graduates who are unfit for employment because of lack of requisite skills. The Indian education system puts maximum emphasis on bookish knowledge. Hence, graduates struggles to apply this knowledge in the real life scenario. It will be observed that the curricula do not cover components of employable skills nor is there any option to introduce students to different vocations. There is a huge gap between the numbers of those who are educated and those who are gainfully employed. A person may be knowledgeable but not skilled enough for a particular job. Education does not help young people land a job. The lack of employability as an outcome of the education system has given rise to the need for skill based education. It is necessary to quickly address the root cause of skill deficit by promoting a learning culture and a curriculum that emphasizes on enhancing productivity, efficiency and performance. It is also necessary to work towards a holistic view of education that connects with employment and employability. Integration of skill development and education is essential that should be introduced from an early age of 6-7 years onwards in an incremental manner. This paper addresses on issues like the major employable skills that the industry is seeking, and opportunities available to explore quality skill development and training.

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Introduction:-

India is one of the few countries in the world where the working age population will be far in excess of those dependent on them and, as per the World Bank, this will continue for at least three decades till 2040. More than 50 per cent of its population is below the age of 25 and more than 65 per cent are aged below 35. It is the quality of education that decides the quality of human resources of the country. The country today is teeming with fresh graduates who are unfit for employment because of lack of requisite skills. There is a huge gap between the numbers of those who are educated and those who are gainfully employed. A person may be knowledgeable but not skilled enough for a particular job. Education does not help young people land a job. The lack of employability as an outcome of the education system has given rise to the need for skill based education. To achieve skill based learning, it is necessary to work towards a holistic view of education that connects with employment and employability. This paper addresses on issues like the major employable skills that the industry is seeking, and opportunities available to explore quality skill development and training.

Factors that prevent Skill Development:-

The Indian education system puts maximum emphasis on bookish knowledge. Hence, graduates struggles to apply this knowledge in the real life scenario. It will be observed that the curricula do not cover components of employable skills nor is there any option to introduce students to different vocations. In India there are different boards that follow different systems/curriculum. The option of vocation education is limited to certain boards, which do not cater to the larger target audience.

Need for Skill Based Education:-

Education sector in India is well developed and mature today. The nation's educational infrastructure offers a well established system of primary, secondary and higher education. Simply urging young people to get an education is not enough. Our education system must focus equally on knowledge and skills. This will induce a shift from 'telling what I know' to 'showing what I can do'. Skills are dynamic; students need to learn, unlearn and re-learn in order to upgrade as knowledge and technology changes and transforms the workplace requirement. Further, the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 68th Round Report on Status of Education and Vocational Training clearly indicates that a large number of people surveyed by NSSO are yet to be formally trained in vocational skills. Table 1 shows the magnitude of this aspect.

Table 1:- Status of Vocational Training Received/Being Received Per 1000 Population

Category of person	Receiving formal vocational training	Received vocational training						Did not receive vocational training	Total
		Formal	Non formal				All		
			Hereditary	Self-learning	Learning on the job	Others			
Rural									
Male	8	16	48	18	42	3	127	864	1000
Female	3	9	24	13	14	4	64	931	1000
Person	5	13	37	15	28	4	96	897	1000
Urban									
Male	19	50	22	28	82	5	186	794	1000
Female	13	33	9	12	16	6	76	911	1000
Person	16	42	16	20	50	5	133	850	1000
Rural + Urban									
Male	11	26	40	21	55	4	146	842	1000
Female	6	16	20	13	15	4	68	68	1000
Person	9	22	30	17	35	4	107	107	1000

Source: NSSO, Status of Education and Vocational Training in India, NSS 68th Round p. 44

Evolving Skill Training from a Young Age:-

Integration of skill development and education is essential for skilling to take wings. The employable skills should be introduced from an early age of 6-7 years onwards in an incremental manner. **Primary school:** Communication skills, attitude, adaptability and IT skills, **Middle school:** Above skills plus self-management, teamwork, creativity, **Secondary education:** Above skills plus stress management, self-motivation, **Upper secondary:** Above skills plus initiative, interpersonal sensitivity and **Higher education:** Above skills plus commercial awareness, problem solving, lifelong learning.

Existing Scenario to explore Skill Development and Training:-

- **B. Voc Degree** (Bachelor of Vocational Education) introduced by the UGC: This degree will be a judicious mix of skills relating to a particular profession and appropriate content of general education and will suggest a symbiotic link with industries. Hence, this will open up opportunities for millions of students to pursue a graduation in various vocations apart from the regular main stream subjects. The B. Voc programme gives an opportunity to the student to choose a vocation of his/her choice, rather than be pushed into main stream education for which he/she has no interest and does not add any value for further progression. Also, the focus of the vocational courses is to gain hands-on experience from the industry through the Skill Knowledge partner during the training period, which makes the students industry ready. Thus, these students stand a better chance in terms of employability.

- **Role of Employment Exchanges:** Currently, employment exchanges have become just repositories of lists of unemployed persons. Various states are considering to convert the current Employment Exchanges into District Career Guidance and Counseling Centres, in which capacity, the exchanges can play a crucial role in skill development. These exchanges are leveraging technology to increase their reach to the stakeholders. They are changing to provide guidance to individuals and mentoring aspiring individuals on entrepreneurship and self-employment. An example is the Karnataka State Employment Exchange initiative.
- **Community Colleges:** Community colleges are aimed at supplementing mainstream education by providing alternate pathways to professional growth. Offerings could include vocational courses that enhance employability of students. In order to facilitate offering of nationally standardized skill related programmes, the Government of India (Ministry of Human Resource Development) has already notified the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework that provide for multiple pathways, both within vocational education and between general and vocational education, to link one level of learning to another higher level and enable learners to progress to higher levels from any starting point in the education and / or skill system. The model scheme on community colleges as conceptualized by MHRD has been shared with UGC and AICTE for funding them to make them functional from the current academic session 2013-14. UGC would fund the community colleges hosted in a college while AICTE would fund the polytechnics hosting the community college.
- **Vocational Education offered at the Senior Secondary Level:** There is evidence to prove that vocational programs in school curricula can help push up attendance rates and encourage deeper participation from students. Vocational education is currently offered at the senior secondary level (Classes XI-XII). However, only about 3 per cent students in Classes XI and XII opt for vocational education. Overall, about 6,800 schools enroll 4,00,000 students in vocational education schemes, utilizing less than 40 per cent of their total student capacity. Vocational education is just not motivating enough for learners and of course the stigma attached to Vocational education is yet to be addressed.
- **Role of Private Sector in Skill Development Initiatives:** The private sector has a much larger role in the education scenario of the country. A majority of the skill development programmes of various Central Ministries and State Missions are delivered by the private sector. Apart from primary education sector, private colleges, universities and institutes are contributing substantially to higher education. Industrial Training Institutes and Industrial Training Centers are the primary faculties for Vocational Training. 6,906 such institutes and centers are operating across the country imparting industrial training courses.
- **Role of PSUs in Skill Development:** NSDA is engaged with PSUs to facilitate skill development in a variety of ways • Making available their spare/underutilized space and equipment for skill development • Donating their obsolete equipment to training institutions to facilitate hands-on training • Taking on a large number of trade apprentices so that these young men and women get real on-the-job training • PSUs of each sector coming together to create at least one iconic national training centre for the training in skills needed for their sector.
- **The Government of Tamil Nadu** has brought out Tamil Nadu vision 2023 policy document for the holistic development of Tamil Nadu. In the vision 2023 document under its Thrust on Skill Development emphasize as "The single most important resource for the success of Vision 2023 would be the availability of trained, knowledgeable and skilled manpower in Tamil Nadu. Without a body of sufficiently skilled and balanced workforce, no economy can hope to develop to its potential. Vision 2023, under its Education and Skills Mission, aims to establish a robust human resources pipeline by the following measures:
 - Providing universal access, equity, quality at primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary level
 - Increasing the enrolment in higher education (including vocational education) to over 50% Skill and train 20 million people with focus on employability.
- **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship:** The Ministry is responsible for co-ordination of all skill development efforts across the country, removal of disconnect between demand and supply of skilled manpower, building the vocational and technical training framework, skill up-gradation, building of new skills, and innovative thinking not only for existing jobs but also jobs that are to be created. The Ministry aims to Skill on a large Scale with Speed and high Standards in order to achieve its vision of a 'Skilled India'. It is aided in these initiatives by its functional arms – National Skill Development Agency, National Skill Development Corporation,

National Skill Development Fund and 33 Sector Skill Councils as well as 187 training partners registered with NSDC. The Ministry also intends to work with the existing network of skill development centres, universities and other alliances in the field.

Conclusion:-

Education should enable one to earn one's livelihood and to live a life of dignity. Skill-based education, if taken seriously, can provide this empowerment to huge, unemployed labour force and help India emerge as key contributor to a global skills based economy. It is necessary to quickly address the root cause of skill deficit by promoting a learning culture and a curriculum that emphasizes on enhancing productivity, efficiency and performance. It is necessary to provide aspirants with entrepreneurial orientation along with required skill-based training for self-employment and entrepreneurship development. Institutions should focus on instilling in students a range of transferrable skills.

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