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Research Papers



HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA – NEED FOR EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

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Abstract

The system of higher education in India is still far away from achieving the goal of providing employment to the youth of the country. Today's graduates are confronting a quiet different employment challenges than that of earlier. Post independent India saw a massive expansion of higher education system. The rapid quantitative growth of the institutions did not succeed in maintaining quality. The system of higher education is unable to prepare our graduates in tune with the needs of job market. This resulted in a mismatch between the educational system and the needs of the job market. Hence there is an urgent need for vocationalization of higher education so as to train the youth in all sorts of skills required to suit the needs of the present day job market.

Keywords: Employment Challenges, Quantitative growth, vocationalization .

INTRODUCTION:

Indian education system in general and higher education in particular has not been proved too efficient to make youth of our country employable according to the need of job market. Higher education institutions must recognize that for many students the transition from education into employment is not a straightforward matter and in the past many students have been ill-equipped for this transition. During the 1990s, this issue has been exacerbated because of the considerable expansion in graduate numbers which has taken place within a relatively short period of time. Furthermore, the nature of graduate employment is changing; today it is only a minority of students who can hold any realistic expectation of employment in a position directly related to the discipline studied; this is particularly the case for those students whose focus remains within traditional academic disciplines. Whilst it is essential that the academic standards of particular disciplines or broader fields of study are not undermined it is also important to be realistic and to note that the academic knowledge gained will (for most students) never be utilized directly in any employment context. More and more, the academic qualification of the degree is merely a statement that the graduate has demonstrated the ability to perform to a particular level of academic competence and, perhaps more importantly, possesses the ability to learn.

Today's graduates are facing a quite different employment challenges than that of earlier. Higher education institutions have failed to provide them with the essential skills for employment. Even for those in work, the nature of employment is changing such that education is the first step in a continuing programme of lifelong learning - much of which will subsequently be conducted in a workplace setting.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT & HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Indian higher education system has undergone massive expansion in post independent period with national resolve to establishing several universities, technical institutions, research institutions and

professional and non professional colleges all over the country to generate and disseminate knowledge to the common citizen of India. The rapid growth in the sector both in terms of enrolment and number of institutions has thrown up now challenges of maintaining quality of higher education. In last decades the higher education sector in India has witnessed exponential growth both in terms of the number of institutions and the rate of employment. Despite of this progress made by our higher education sector we are unable to prepare our graduates in tune with needs of job market. Given the direct correlation between education, employment and empowerment, the biggest challenge confronting us is low employability of our graduate passing out of higher education institutions. There is a mismatch between the education system and the needs of the job market. Nothing can be more disruptive for our social cohesion and sustained economic progress than a large army of educated, unemployed youth who feel disempowered in every sense of the term.

India is expected to have the world's largest population in the next several years as it outgrows China. Unlike China population which is aging India enjoys a large "Demographic Dividend" the majority of its population is young. India's labor market has traditionally been characterized as highly hierarchical and segmented with 86% of total employment in the informal sector, including self employment. India has recently experienced rapid economic growth largely led by the service sector. Yet despite its rapid economic growth since the introduction of economic reforms in 1991 employment has grown slowly particularly in the private sector making the 1990s and 2000s a period of "jobless growth". This has had serious implications for youth as most new entrants in the labor markets including the majority of youth have ended up working in informal sector often for low wages without social security benefits and long term job security. Though education opportunities in primary and lower secondary education have expanded rapidly the majority of India youth particularly in rural areas, still have very limited education and training opportunities. The Indian government has recently made drastic changes in its policy and institutional setups for promoting skills development. It is of interest to understand now India's system of skills development has changed with different dynamics among the government, the private sector and training institutions.

VOCATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In institutions of higher education, Vocational Education needs to be introduced as a career choice, which leads the students to jobs. Building it on a continuum, at university the courses in colleges leading to multi-skilling should be offered. This will allow a career progression path for those who undertake vocational training at school level while ensuring that the learning experience is complete before the students hit the job market. At the college level special emphasis needs to be paid to the "Employability Skills" training and lifelong learning. The Vocational Education at university level will also open avenues for those completing their Diploma's from the technical institutes giving them also an opportunity to pursue a degree program in Vocational Training thus enhancing the job prospectus. University Grant Commission is also working in this direction to align higher education with the emerging needs of the economy so as to ensure that the graduates of higher education system have adequate knowledge and skills for employment and entrepreneurship. The higher education system has to incorporate the requirements of various industries in its curriculum in an innovative and flexible manner while developing a holistic and groomed graduate. As mentioned earlier, our graduates have not specific skills needed for getting better employment opportunities. Therefore it is need of hour to provide necessary skills soft as well as hard to make them employable with conformity of the job market. In this direction, UGC has recently introduced Bachelor of Vocational (B. Voc.) programme in universities and college under the National Skills Qualification Framework.

It is also contemporary to mention about organization set up prevailing in our country and engaged in dealing with skill development programmes and issues: They can be mentioned as below:

1. National Skill Development Corporation

The National Skill Development Corporation came into existence in 2009 to promote private sector participation via conducting short term careers. It provides funding to build scalable for profit vocational training initiatives. Its mandate is also to enable support systems such as quality assurance information system and training the trainer academics either directly or through partnerships. NSDC acts as a catalyst in Skill Development by providing funding to enterprise, companies and organizations

that provide skill development.

2. National Skill Development Mission

The aim of National Skill Development Mission is to rapidly scale up skill development efforts in India by creating an end to end, outcome focused implementation framework, which aligns demands of the employers for a well-trained skilled workforce with aspiration of Indian citizens for sustainable livelihoods.

CONCLUSION

Above analysis shows that presently India is going through a phase of demographic transition wherein its young population dominates the labor force of the country. The rise in the relative share of the working age population in the economy is treated as the demographic dividend. This description shows that the link between higher economic growth and favourable demographic conditions is not automatic and that it has to be established through sound institution, good policies and investment in skill development activities, healthcare and education which can be recouped in the long run through higher productivity.. Success depends upon availability of high quality trainer, quality infrastructure needed for imparting high quality training and effective state policies and their efficient implementation. It is possible only if our education system is geared up itself to support nations economic agenda by creating job ready and employable workforce through increased focus on imparting structural and technical skills this would be critical for achieving faster, sustainable and inclusive growth on the one hand and for providing decent employment opportunities to the growing young population and the needy sections of the society on the other. The vocationalization of higher education is also essential for reaping the benefit of “Demographic Dividend”.

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