

# **A Study of Technical Skill development Programmes after COVID-19 Pandemic Situation in India**

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## **Abstract:-**

Many employers also test the prior learning of hard skills before recruiting employees and impart trainings to its employees to refresh their hard skills to do the existing job more efficiently or equip them with additional hard skills required to take up future jobs. However, both hard skills & soft skills are required in every job though the degree may vary with level / position. Hard skills are required for performing technical tasks in a job and Soft skills are required for working in team and creating a congenial work environment. More of hard skills are required at operational level and as one moves higher up in his career, he requires more of soft skills to think critically, set goals, formulate strategy / action plan, organize, collaborate, connect, communicate, manage team, solve problems, get things done, analyze information and review for continual improvement. Most employers look for candidates with hybrid skills i.e. combination of both soft skills and hard skills. However, employers may prefer candidates with better soft skills if the technical skills are equal. Today there is a paradoxical situation where on the one hand young men and women entering the labour market are looking for jobs; on the other hand industries are complaining of unavailability of appropriately skilled manpower. Enormous skills gap exists between what industries demand based on the rapid economic growth and the skills that young people acquire through education and training.

## **Introduction: -**

The formative years of a student are spent acquiring knowledge mostly through books in schools and colleges. And, although this knowledge helps the students develop their personalities, it fails to arm them with practical skills that give them a better chance at the job market.

90% of employment opportunities need the youth to be skilled in some vocation. But, the lack of skills leads to a failure in the youth to secure the job of their dreams.

Today, there is a greater demand for skilled workers. So, it becomes important that the pedagogy emphasizes skill development for students that prepare them for their future careers.

Let's try and understand why skill development is a necessary part of international school and high school education and how it helps students.

### **Importance of Skill Development: -**

It is important to empower students with skill-based training as the development of our economy depends upon them. Here's why skill development in school is important:

- The skill development process helps students think beyond grades. It helps them tap into their capabilities, develop real-life skills, and prepare themselves to be successful in the careers of their choice.
- Skill-based learning improves employability and helps the youth earn more. Furthermore, it improves the economy of a country and promotes its financial growth.
- Skill-based learning helps students develop problem-solving strategies and effective communication techniques.
- Learning skill development promotes the leadership skills of students as it helps them become more altruistic. They learn to use their skills to organize and inspire their teams, which, in turn, creates in them leadership qualities.
- It also helps students develop creativity, critical thinking, and analytical thinking as skill-based learning focuses on the evaluation and application of facts to real-life problems.

### **Importance of Skill Development Curriculum in School**

Skill development helps build a strong foundation for students at the school level. It helps build self-esteem, confidence, and leadership skills. It develops problem-solving skills and collaboration.

It helps students become independent thinkers and encourages them to plan for their future. As schools in India are primarily academic-centric, introducing skill development through the curriculum is essential.

It helps students explore and learn things outside of their textbooks. It also gives them the freedom to think independently and make choices at an early age.

It builds team spirit, creativity, inquisitiveness, trustworthiness, assertiveness, and sympathy in students. All of this goes on to create a solid foundation for a successful academic and professional future.

Education and skill development go hand in hand in preparing students for the pressures and demands of today's challenging world. Skill development benefits students in the following way:

- It builds confidence in them to participate in collaborative ventures.
- It helps them take responsibility for their actions.
- Students learn to make their own decisions and understand how their decisions can have repercussions, too.
- They learn to tackle issues and situations on their own.
- Skill development helps high school students develop readiness to face challenging situations in their future.

### **Skill Development in Higher Education**

Today, there is a large chunk of the unemployed population consisting of highly educated youth who fail to find employment because of a lack of skills, and skilled individuals who lack eligibility because of a lack of knowledge.

And, therefore, the need to provide skill-based learning in higher education to help students receive vocational training besides academics to improve their chances of better employment and a successful career.

Because of this need, vocational education is being considered as part of a structured program at the university level.

This will provide multiple opportunities to students who will acquire skills related to particular professions along with general education.

This will help students pursue graduation in a variety of vocations besides the mainstream subjects, such as science, arts, commerce, medicine, engineering, etc.

Students will get the freedom to select the vocation of their choice and make a career in it. Moreover, thanks to the skill development programs, students will get practical experiences in vocational training that will give them better chances at employability.

### **Skill Development Program: How They Help the Youth?**

The government of India has several plans for skill development to improve employment opportunities for the youth.

These programs not only provide the vocational training required to improve job prospects but also help develop personalities, enhance work proficiency, and improve communication skills, time management, and negotiation skills.

The skill development programs also help the youth identify their interests and talents. It helps them develop flexibility, reliability, productivity, and efficiency.

All of this goes on to improve their chances of successful careers and widen their career opportunities.

## **Skill Development in India**

The government of India launched an initiative in the year 2015 called Skill India. It aimed to train 40 crore Indians in a variety of industrial jobs. Its goal: Empower the youth with schemes and training courses by the year 2022.

The benefits of this initiative are:

- Better job opportunities, better-paying jobs, and a higher standard of living for the youth.
- Development in every sector of the economy and every sector experiencing equal growth.
- Trained individuals entering the workforce, which will lead to better and faster results and a boost to the Indian economy.

Various courses are offered as part of this initiative, such as management and development programs, entrepreneurship development programs, skill development programs, promotion of small enterprises, cluster development, lending schemes, etc.

## **Review of literature: -**

**Sandhya Rani (2018)**, conducted a study entitled “Skill Development Training Programmes for Reducing Gender Inequality in India”. The main objectives of the study were to highlight the importance of skills for the development of country, focus on gender inequalities in possessing skills in rural and urban India among women and study the programmes providing skill Training for both women and men. The paper was totally relied on secondary data. The data required was collected from the necessary published and unpublished information and from the internet sources wherever necessary. The findings of the study indicated that “the initiatives involving both the States and the Centre, often with private partnership will lead to the establishment of credible, trustworthy and reliable training, testing and certification edifice linked to global standards and responsive to the needs of the ultimate consumers of skill. With an estimated 58.6 million new jobs in the International Economy inviting skilled personnel for quality jobs beckoning the Indian Youth, the government and Private Sector will act in a concentrated manner so that these opportunities materialize and operate as an employability guarantee. Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development of any country. They have become even more important given the increasing pace of globalisation and technological changes provide both challenges that is taking place in the world. As India

moves progressively towards becoming a 'knowledge economy' it becomes increasingly important that the XI Five Year Plan should focus on advancement of skills and these skills have to be relevant to the emerging economic development.”

**Pandey (2017)**, conducted a study entitled “Improvising Skill Development & Employability Potential through Higher Education, Research & Innovations in India”. The main objectives of the study were to look in to the current policies supporting skills development programme, identify the gaps between government and private programs that need to be filled is duly intended during the study with a aim to collect lessons learned from past policy interventions, how higher education institutes can contribute in successful skill development of the country which is the flagship programme of the government. The study was mainly descriptive in nature based on secondary data & information was collected from the concerned sources as per the need of research. The relevant books document of various ministry departments & organizations, articles, paper & website were also used in the study. The findings of the study indicated that “the Private sector plays a major role is overcoming the gaps in Government policies. However, their motive is to expand and scale up their very own enterprises. Thus, their process of skill development may vary. There is a lack of innovation in Skill development programmes. Almost all courses and curriculums are catering to industrial needs. It is the time when at one side employment opportunities are being created in industries, on the other hand Climate and environment is severely getting affected by fast industrialization, besides other factors. Therefore, skill development programs must be framed innovatively such that there is environment protection, optimal utilization of bio-waste and earning of livelihood can happen, all at same time. There appears a lack of trained trainers to impart necessary formal skill. Going by the different figures mentioned in article, target to create skilled workforce of 500 million by 2022 is large and no. Of certified trainers is very low. There is a strong need of trained trainers at different levels who can serve full time in a institute to provide full attention to the registered candidates. There are plenty of Government Schemes but most of them are in collaboration with private sources, or indirectly benefitting enterprises. More than 20 Ministries/Departments run 70 plus schemes for skill development in the country. However, there are gaps in the capacity and quality of training infrastructure as well as outputs, insufficient focus on workforce aspirations, lack of certification and common standards and a pointed lack of focus on the unorganized sector. Government intervention in skills development can make its impact on grounds like external benefits to skills that are not captured in market practices, Market imperfections that distort the benefits and costs of skills development, weak private training capacity and inequitable access to good quality skills training.”

**Saini (2016)**, conducted a study entitled “Skill development in India: need, challenges and ways forward”. The main objectives of the study were to study the present skill capacity of India, study the challenges faced by skill development system in India and suggest possible solutions or ways forward. The study was mainly descriptive in nature, based on secondary data and information was collected from the concerned sources as per need of the research. The relevant books, documents of various ministries/departments and

organizations, articles, papers and web-sites were used in the study. The findings of the study indicated that “India’s transition to one of the largest and fastest growing global economies during the last decade has been a remarkable phenomenon. In order to sustain its growth trajectory, an efficient and continuous system of skill development for its workforce is critically imperative for India. In order to capitalize the demographic dividend, India will need to empower its workers with the right type of skills. The drop-out rates of educational institution were estimated to be 50% in the age group of 5-14 years and 86% after 15 years of age and in contrast to this the participation rate of the workforce rises rapidly after 14 years of age and it results in a semi- literate workforce which finds it difficult to absorb higher form of skills. 38% of Indian workforce is illiterate, 25% has education below primary or up to primary level and remaining 36% has an education level of middle and higher level. 80% of Indian workforce does not possess any marketable skills. Only about 2% have received formal vocational training and 8% non-formal vocational training, thereby implying that very few new entrants to the work force have any marketable skills as compared to developed economies such as Korea (96%), Germany (75%), Japan (80%) and United Kingdom (68%). In-nutshell, it can be said that despite making considerable progress in terms of literacy, high incidence of illiteracy cripples the Indian workforce even today. The above facts are a stark reminder that India’s demographic dividend can rapidly convert into a demographic nightmare if skills are not provided to both new and existing workforce. There is a need for increasing capacity and capability of skill development programs. In this direction, both the Government and its partner agencies have undertaken various measures/ initiatives for the effective implementation of the skill development system in the economy. But still India faces a number of unresolved issues and challenges that need immediate attention of the policy makers.”

## **Research Methodology and Analysis:-**

The sudden onset of the COVID-19 global health crisis disrupted work patterns in companies worldwide. One of the work areas most affected has been employee learning and development. The mandate to move employees to working from home has made it impossible to provide in-person, classroom-based skills training.

To gain insights into the impacts of this abrupt halt to in-person training, Simplilearn conducted a survey regarding the effects that the pandemic is having on employee training programs. Simplilearn asked professionals around the globe in the Learning & Development and Human Resources functions a series of questions on issues related to current and future employee training plans as a result of the pandemic.

While Simplilearn received survey responses from across the globe, the majority of responses came from representatives of companies located in India (39%) and the United States (41%).

Judging by the survey results, the effects of the pandemic look to be wide-ranging and long-lasting. Many companies have had to implement or expand online business models to compensate for lockdown-related restrictions on doing business in person. This has created an increased demand for digital skills training.

At the same time, lockdown-related restrictions have impacted how companies deliver skills training. The survey results confirm that as work-from-home policies were implemented to slow the spread of COVID-19, organizations that had previously offered physical classroom skills training to their employees have moved those programs online. Moreover, the results indicate this shift has had little or no effect on the quality of employee skills training.

Key findings from the survey include:

- **Skills training had been a priority for companies before COVID-19.**

93% of respondents said their companies offered skills training to their employees before the crisis.

- **Classroom training had been part of most pre-COVID training.**

70% of respondents said that their training programs were either classroom-only or a combination of classroom and online components.

- **Classroom programs have moved online.**

86% of respondents whose organizations offered physical classroom skills training to their employees prior to the pandemic have moved those training sessions to online platforms.

- **Online programs are equally or more effective than in-person classroom training.**

82% of respondents whose organizations have moved employee skills training sessions online said the online sessions are at least as effective as classroom sessions. 13% rated the online training as more effective than classroom training.

- **Online training doesn't have to mean online-only.**

56% of respondents who use online training include a live online classroom component. Only 44% use self-paced video courses with no live component.

- **The move to online training looks like it will stick.**

40% of respondents said their organizations anticipate making a permanent move to online training, compared to 18% who plan to revert back to physical classrooms (42% said ‘not sure’).

- **Digital skills training is important to most companies.**

Functional training offered to employees within the organizations who responded includes Digital Operations (66%), Technology/Software (64%), Digital Marketing (53%), and Artificial Intelligence/Data Science (45%).

- **The COVID crisis has shifted the digital skills that companies find important.**

Functional training prioritized as a result of the pandemic includes Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (44%), Digital Marketing (42%), Cloud Computing (42%), and Cyber Security (40%).

- **The new structure of work will continue after lockdowns for many companies.**

77% of respondents said their organizations are now considering permanent expansion of “work from home” flexibility for their employees.

- **The move to online business models impacts training plans.**

76% of respondents said that -- as a result of the abrupt switch to digital-first business environments -- they expect their organizations to grow their employee skills development programs.

- **These training plans have yet to be reflected in training budgets.**

Asked about employee skills training budgets before and during the pandemic, 8% said their budgets had increased, 34% said budgets had decreased, and 58% said they had stayed the same.

## **Conclusion: -**

Furthermore, skill development initiatives could help reduce or overcome current skills challenges. These challenges are:

**1.Mismatch between skills and job requirements** – One issue that may arise nowadays is that employees' skills during training may not match the job requirement. This could result in a shortage of skills in specific industries and a surplus of employees with skills that aren't in high demand, thus leading to unemployment.

**2.Limited role of social partners** – There is a lack of active engagement of employers' and workers' organisations in many low-income and middle-income countries. Unfortunately, these organisations must ensure that relevant and adequate training is provided.

**3.Training of poor quality and relevance** – In some countries, training may be of poor quality and relevance due to poor quality control, a shortage of or underqualified instructors, poor working conditions for trainers, and obsolete qualifications, curriculum, training materials, and techniques.

**4.Training opportunities are scarce** – In countries with poor literacy and educational levels, a dominating informal economy, political unrest, and considerable distances, access to training are often limited. Women and minority groups may even encounter additional difficulties to get access to exercise to improve their skills.

**5.Lack of coordination in the system** – National and regional governments, businesses, employees, and non-governmental organisations are involved in skill development. However, their activities often overlap in developing countries and are poorly coordinated. The inability to link the supply and demand of skills reduces the beneficial effect on employment and productivity.

### **Conclusion:-**

It is also vital for countries to have a National Skill Development Policy rather than simply creating or upgrading skills development programmes. Firstly, it can help a country to have a shared vision of the skills system it wishes to establish. The policy will also help convey a set of fundamental adjustments that must be implemented so that the system's aims for skill development are coordinated. Additionally, bringing together diverse government organisations and education and training providers can help promote a more holistic approach to human resource planning. A national policy can also help to outline the importance of skills development to employment and other larger developmental goals. Finally, it encourages skills development and promotions.

Hence, it can be safely said that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for skills development initiatives. From helping people find jobs that fit their competency levels to supporting the overall economy, these initiatives could be essential in a world post-COVID-19. It can also help to reduce or overcome current skills challenges. Finally, governments should also have a National Skill Development Policy for numerous reasons, such as outlining the importance of skills development.

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