



EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Education and Skill development are critical for individual and societal progress. This paper explores the interconnectedness of education and skill development, highlighting their importance for the youth and in the modern economy. It examines the theoretical frameworks, current practices, and future direction in these fields. Both education and skill development play vital roles in personal and professional growth. Education equips individuals with a broad knowledge base, encourages critical thinking and fosters intellectual curiosity. It provides the building blocks for a well-rounded individual and opens up opportunities for higher education, research, and intellectual pursuits. On the other hand, skill development allows individuals to specialize in particular areas, gain practical expertise, and succeed in specific professions. It enhances employability, boosts confidence, and equips individuals with the tools they need to excel in their chosen field.

Keywords: *Education, Skill Development, career, youth, Employability*

Introduction

Education and skill development are fundamental pillars of personal and professional growth. As the global economy evolves, the need for a skilled workforce becomes increasingly vital. In today's rapidly changing world, the terms "education" and "Skill development" are often used interchangeably, leading to confusion about their true meanings and implications. While both concepts are crucial for personal and professional growth. It is essential to recognize the fundamental differences between them. Education refers to the process of acquiring knowledge, typically through formal institutions, while skill development focuses on the practical application of that knowledge in specific areas. Understanding these distinctions can help individuals make informed decision about their learning journeys and career paths.

Education encompasses a wide range of formal learning experiences, such as attending schools, colleges, or universities. It involves the acquisition of theoretical knowledge across various subjects. Which can include mathematics, science, literature, history and more. Education aims to provide individuals with a holistic understanding of the world, foster critical thinking, and encourage intellectual growth. It typically follows a structured curriculum designed to impart knowledge and develop analytical and problem-solving skills. Moreover, education often includes examinations and certifications to evaluate a person's comprehension of the material.

On the other hand, skill development focusses on practical, hand-on training in specific areas that can be applied directly to real-world situations. Skills are the abilities acquired through practice, experience and training. While education provides foundational knowledge, skill development aims to transform that knowledge into actionable capabilities. These skills can be technical or non-technical, ranging from computer programming and plumbing to leadership and communication. Skill development often occurs through vocational training, apprenticeships, on-the-job experiences, or specialized courses.

Skill development, however, focuses on enhancing specific competencies needed for particular roles or industries. Its primary objective is to ensure individuals possess the practical skills necessary to perform tasks effectively. Skill development programs are often tailored to the demands of the job market, aiming to bridge the gap between the knowledge gained through education

and the skills needed to excel in specific profession. These programs place a strong emphasis on practical exercise, simulations and real-life scenarios to help individuals develop hands-on exercises.

Both education and skill development play vital roles in personal and professional growth. Education equips individuals with a broad knowledge base, encourages critical thinking and fosters intellectual curiosity. It provides the building blocks for a well-rounded individual and opens up opportunities for higher education, research, and intellectual pursuits. On the other hand, skill development allows individuals to specialize in particular areas, gain practical expertise, and succeed in specific professions. It enhances employability, boosts confidence, and equips individuals with the tools they need to excel in their chosen field.

History of Skill Development in India

In India, the concept of Skill Development was introduced post-independence in 1956 with the first Industrial Policy which had an initial focus on formal Technical and Vocational Training Education and Training (TVET) sector with dedicated institutions for technical and vocational education. In 1961, the Apprenticeship Act was framed for providing practical training to technically qualified persons in various trades and promoting new skilled manpower. The Indian Education Commission (Kothari Commission) was appointed in 1964 to overhaul the Indian Education Sector by providing policies and guidelines for the development of education in India. The National Labor Policy was framed in 1966. In 1968, the first National Policy on Education was framed. The first Industrial training Institute (ITI) was set up in 1969 by the Ministry of Labor & Employment (MoLE), Government of India. New National Policy of Education was framed in 1986. The All-India Council of Technical Education (AITCE) was formed in 1987, as the official regulator and funder for polytechnics and technical colleges. The National Policy of Education was modified in 1992. 1990s witnessed the opening up of the economy with substantial growth in IT industry and service sector and relative slowdown in manufacturing and engineering sector. It was felt that a considerable amount of employment for skilled and semi-skilled category workers was to be explored outside the traditional trades. With this objective, the National Development Corporation (NSDC) was established in 2008. This paradigm shift resulted in framing of the first National Policy on Skill Development in 2009 and effort was made to enhance the private partnership to expand the capacity of skill training sector. The National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) was established in 2013 and a vision was casted for a National Qualification Framework (NQF). In 2014, the Apprenticeship Act was amended to include non-engineering as optional trades and ministry of Skill Development and entrepreneurship (MSDE) was established. In 2015, the Skill India Mission was launched, the National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was framed and the Training and apprenticeship Division was moved from MoLE to MSDE.

What is Skill Development?

Skill is generally construed as one's ability, competence, proficiency and talent to execute a given job/task successfully. One may either possess it naturally or develops gradually over time. It may be soft skills that signify one's personal traits & attributes like people skill, communicating skill, leadership skills etc. or hard skills that is honed with education/training and experience. An employer wants both hard skills and soft skills in his workforce so that the required work can be done effectively and efficiently in his organization. Hence, the employer tests these skills during the recruitment process to find out the right candidates and later tries to enhance their skills through training & development. In recent years it is being witnessed that the students passing out of their academic are ill-equipped with required skills to match the expectation of the industry. The need of the hour is skill development to bridge the skill gap and prepare the prospective workforce to be industry fit. Adapting skills and attitudes has always been and will always be inevitable & critical for any success. One needs to know his/her natural strengths over that the initial impetus is provided by academic qualification. Subsequently, he/she needs to understand the impact of technology and accordingly upgrade himself/herself. Simultaneously, he/she also needs to invest on behavioral readiness & development so as to achieve behavioral excellence alongside honing technical expertise.

The dictionary definition of skills explains the term as the ability to utilize one's knowledge for execution. Skills development aims at building marketable skills in students. This helps them to develop the core competencies which in turn makes them more employable for the job market. In the present times, skills are the biggest pre-requisite for job-seekers. In fact, the need for inculcating and honing skills is a need of the hour not just in India. But also, across the entire world.

The need for skill development for youth

The dynamic world around us has transformed at a fast speed after the pandemic. With the growing dominance of technology, communication, and globalization, the global markets have seen a major change in the nature and scope of work (job/employment). All in all, this means that 21st century skills for students are a passport to a successful career pathway in the upcoming years.

As per a leading journal, every year almost 28 million youth gets added to India's workforce. Despite a huge segment of the young population, our country still battles with a massive rate of unemployment. In the year 2021, India's unemployment rate was 5.98 %. In December 2022, the total employability rate was 8.3 %. While the same was 7.8 % as of March 23. There is a close relationship between one's skillsets and employability and most traditional/online schools acknowledge the importance of skill development for students in their high-quality educational designs.

The recent National Policy of Education 2020 envisions an educational ecosystem that can prepare our youth for the future of the global job market. NEP 2020 preempts a major takeover of unskilled jobs by artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data etc. the policy suggests building multidisciplinary abilities in students through the integration of computer science, mathematics and data science in education. On lines of this futuristic vision, top traditional/online schools have already introduced courses/subjects like Computer Education and Environmental Education, etc. to develop digital skillsets and design thinking abilities in students. In the upcoming years, our system will see more of these changes to promote education for skilling.

Initiatives to Improve Education and Skill Development in India

The Indian government has recognized the importance of education and skill development in enhancing employability and has taken several initiatives to address the challenges. These initiatives include the Skill India Promotion Scheme, aims to train youth, and the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, which promotes apprenticeships in various industries. Other organizations such as the National Skill Development Corporation and the Confederation of Indian industry have also launched various initiatives to improve the quality of education and skills development programs in India. These initiatives focus on bringing the skills gap, developing industry-relevant skills, and aligning training programs with the needs of the job market.

Conclusion

The present era has witnessed rapid technological advancement, the covid19 pandemic has also intensified the disruption in the world of work. At the same time the skill gap between the industry expectation and the availability of skill has also widened which calls for skill development of the present and prospective workforce. To match the pace of change, many new and different skills are required to remain competent and future ready. Skill gaps are a pressing and critical issue. The need to resolve the skill gaps is evident across industries and is more relevant than ever before. Skill building is the best way to close those gaps compared to hiring, contracting or redeploying employees. The most important skills to develop is social and emotional in nature: for example, empathy leadership, and adaptability. For success with skill transformations, programmatic efforts are needed to support skill building so that the workplace can adapt to change in their current role or upgrade to newer ones.

The strength of India is its Youth population. These demographic advantages can be capitalized only when the exiting workforce is re-skilled and upskilled through lifelong learning initiatives, and new entrants in workforce are prepared with twenty-first century skill-sets. As India marches towards becoming a 'knowledge economy' it is extremely important to focus on advancement of skills that are relevant to the emerging economic development program. The skill development programs must also be framed innovatively and needs to evolve to match the need of the industry and global market.

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