INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM- ADDRESSING THE SKILL GAP

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education, vocational training and lifelong learning are central pillars of employability, employment of workers and sustainable enterprise development

- International labour organization

Many western reformers have viewed formal education as a benevolent instrument of social change and social uplift- the principle and ideal technique for developing the underdeveloped. Education is stepping stone for high flying career. Historically, Indian education has been elitist. Traditional Hindu education was tailored to the need of Brahmin boys who were taught to read and write by a Brahmin teacher. Under the British rule from 1700s till 1947, India's education policies reinforced the pre-existing elitist tendencies, tying entrance and advancement in government service to academic education.The current learning environment has unfortunately failed to recognize that there are important landmarks and stages of development that take place within each child, and that sometimes the way children are taught can interfere with these phases.

The shortage of appropriately skilled labour across many industries is emerging as a significant and complex challenge to India's growth and future. According to NASSCOM, each year over 3 million graduates and post-graduates are added to the Indian workforce. However, of these only 25 percent of technical graduates and 10-15 percent of other graduates are considered employable by the rapidly growing IT and ITES segments. Hence, what we have today is a growing skills gap reflecting the slim availability of high-quality college education in India and the galloping pace of the country's service-driven economy, which is growing faster than most countries in the world.

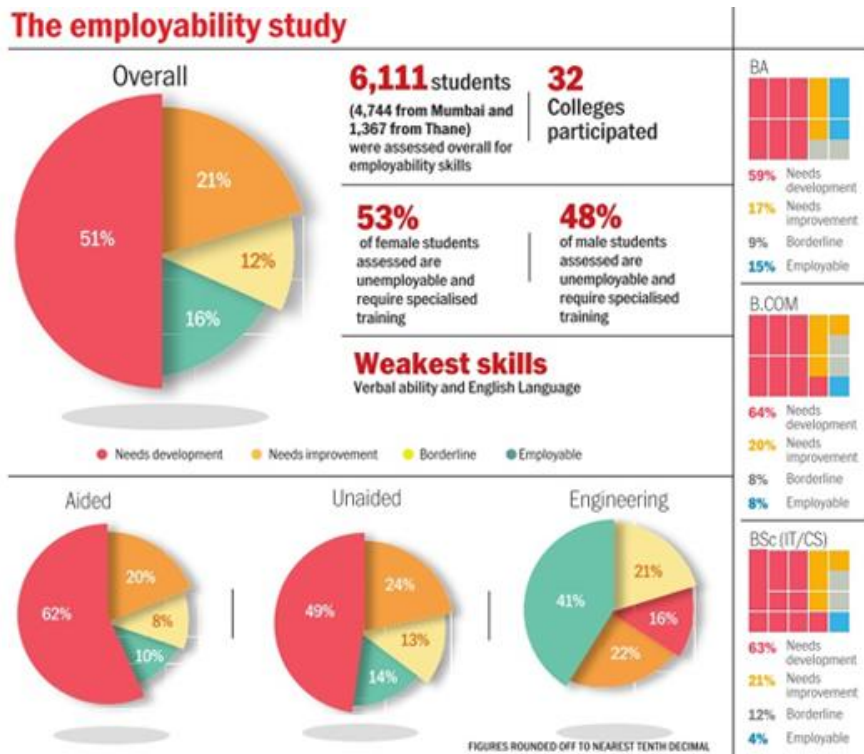## 1.2 OVERVIEW OF SKILL GAP

The country will face a lot of challenges in the sphere of education in the next five years. About 70 million more people have to be imparted skills as the country aims at increasing the percentage of workforce with formal skills through vocational education and training from 12 percent to 25 percent.

With 15 million youngsters entering the workforce each year, more than 75 percent are not job ready. India will need 700 million skilled workers by 2022 to meet the demands of a growing economy. This glaring imbalance,due to lack of technical and soft skills, points towards the urgent and growing need to make young Indians job-ready focusing on young graduates to augment their employability.
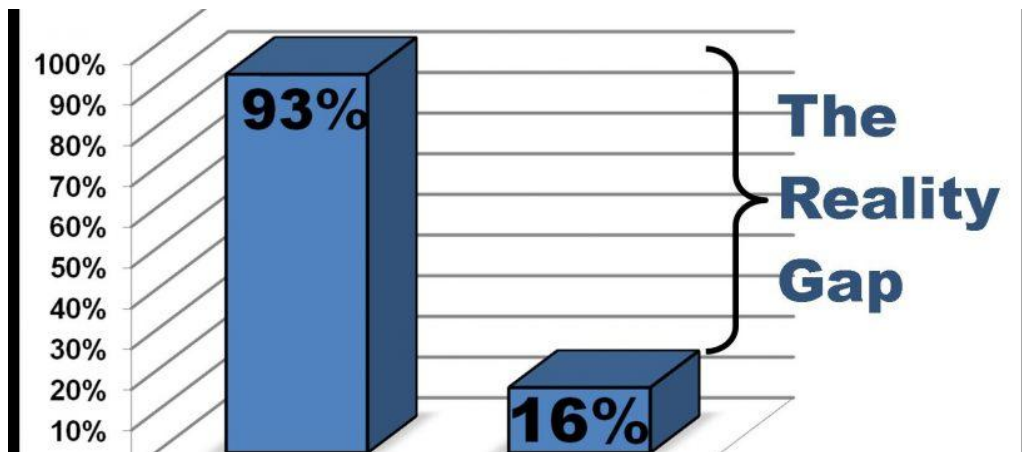
The above figure shows the statistical data of soft kill gap research carried out in one of the marketing company.

In this demand-supply gap scenario, a look at the Indian education system will reveal that the number of technical schools in India, including engineering colleges, has actually more than trebled in the last decade, according to the AICTE. Part of the skills gap problem is that only a small percentage of India's young go on to higher education. The university systems of few countries would be able to keep up with such demand, and India is certainly having trouble. The best and most selective universities generate too few graduates, and new private colleges are producing graduates of uneven quality.

The employability study

Overall: Needs development 51%, Needs improvement 21%, Borderline 12%, Employable 16%

6,111 students (4,744 from Mumbai and 1,367 from Thane) were assessed overall for employability skills. 32 Colleges participated

53% of female students assessed are unemployable and require specialised training

48% of male students assessed are unemployable and require specialised training

Weakest skills
Verbal ability and English Language

Legend: ● Needs development ● Needs improvement ● Borderline ● Employable

Aided: 62%, 20%, 8%, 10%
Unaided: 49%, 24%, 13%, 14%
Engineering: 41%, 21%, 16%, 22%

FIGURES ROUNDED OFF TO NEAREST TENTH DECIMAL

BA
59% Needs development
17% Needs improvement
9% Borderline
15% Employable

B.COM
64% Needs development
20% Needs improvement
8% Borderline
8% Employable

BSc (IT/CS)
63% Needs development
21% Needs improvement
12% Borderline
4% Employable

The above figure shows the research carried out at 32 colleges in Mumbai, where 53% females were unemployable and 48% males were unemployable.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A skills gap threatens the sustainability of businesses around the world. And while a big part of the skills gap is a shortage of people skilled in the STEM (science, technology, education, and math) industries, there also is a gap in soft skills such as communication and advanced leadership skills.

ED GORDON, author of "Winning the Global Talent Showdown" and the upcoming "Future Jobs: Solving the Employment and Skills Crisis," believes the education to employment to talent creation system—from first grade through college through career training—needs to be revamped. "It's not a skills problem; it's a talent issue," he asserts. "People don't have the liberal arts and thinking skills and specific career training they need in today's technologically advancing world. We need the skills to keep this very complex technology working. This includes medical technology, aerospace, automotive, etc. We need people to build airplanes, keep the lights on at the Super Bowl, fix high-tech cars and plumbing systems, and teach kids writing skills."

According to SanjeevDuggal, most institutions do not prepare candidates for the new working world, making them struggle while facing the competencies of the professional realm. There is pertinent need to equip graduates with interpersonal communication, basic computer knowledge, the ability to speak English and work as a team.

For instance, the country currently faces a huge shortage of sales associates, computer operators, beauticians, hair stylists, medical sales representatives, mobile repair engineers,

plumbers, electricians, sewing machine operators, masons, bartenders, painter-decorators. Yet, the scant regard we have for vocational training and skill development has led to decades of neglect of these skills.

Once this due regard to skills is given, there is a need to support the tech growth with investment in skills and knowledge to prepare for the future. Revamping the education system can help bridge the talent gap staring at us, especially at the college level, as it forms the first step into the professional world. Colleges need to collaborate with industries to chalk out a curriculum that entails and integrates technological education and advancements. Providing training of technical as well as soft skills or communication skill, transforming students into workers.

1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Academics should be more flexible and interdisciplinary.
2. Faculty training institutions to provide up to date training.
3. The syllabus should be uniform throughout the country.
4. Government hiring and recruitment mechanism should change.
5. Special strategy to be planned for remote areas.
6. Autonomous independent accreditation agencies.
7. Educational loans should be cost efficient for customers.

1.5 CONCLUSION

Education system plays a vital role in overall development of an individual. We conclude that positives aspects of ancient Indian education system such as physical education, moral education and spiritual education should be adopted. Revamping the education system is a must to bridge the skills gap by focusing on the quality of education and not on the quantity. Probably re-working the reservation system shall help in decreasing the employability gap being created by the existing education system. In light of the same it might be of some help if an income based reservation system is adopted rather than a caste based system. The present Aadhar Card system is capable of tracking income level of individuals, it might serve the purpose.

1.6 REFERENCES

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