

## **Skill Development in India: Integration with Holistic Education -NEP 2020-Marching Ahead**

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### **Abstract:**

Countries with superior level of skills among their citizens are able to adjust effectively and extract opportunities from the world economy. India, with the aim of becoming a knowledge economy, needs to emphasise the advancement of skills among students, youth, and the employable population by creating the requisite ecosystem within a suitable economic environment. India aims to benefit from initiative such as *Skill India* and its demographic dividend. Hence, it is necessary to establish the required ecosystem for skill enhancement to reshape the Indian economy with the help of education and training.

Employability skills and training are major strengths for creating employment, which unfortunately our country is still lacking. Many colleges, institutes and universities across India are unable to create an employable population only through degrees and mark sheets with good percentages. We need to train our students as per the changing needs of the corporate world so that they are not only selected but also retained because of their skills, knowledge and training. Specific initiatives must be taken to create a skilled workforce for emerging industries to gain economic advantage. Unless we develop intellectual resources trained with the right skills and innovative thinking, we cannot meet job requirements.

The government of India has taken an initiative through **NEP 2020**, a policy to reshape the education system according to industry needs, particularly in the post-pandemic era. The aim is to supervise skill-based education for students to meet changing technological requirements. The National Education Policy involves many beneficiaries and contributors, administrator under UGC and AICTE. The idea is to provide vocational and job-oriented education so India can take demographic advantage and prepare its workforce with contemporary and future skill sets, moving toward an *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* and *Viksit Bharat*.

Ministry of Skill Development is inviting various institutes to create ecosystem. This paper is based on concept-based information collected from secondary sources. It interprets government policy frameworks and the present education system, analyses its ability to improve students' skills and deliberates on major strengths, challenges and recommendations at the end.

### **Keywords**

Skill India, NEP 2020, Employability, Vocational Education, Demographic Dividend

## Introduction

It is an established fact that a skilled and intelligent population can promote economic stability and take the country to a higher level of growth through the process of progress. Better employment opportunities will be available to those trainees or students in colleges who have gone through the process of skill development. Developing individual skills in a particular field will build the abilities to enable entry into the professional network so that recruiters will look for them because of their talent.

Developing skills is necessary to create improved capacity and capability, which will enhance efficiency and provide professional options and employability. Knowledge and skills are what propel a nation's economic and social progress. Technical training equips the workforce with information and capabilities required, making them eligible to face competition in the industry. Every organization is interested in quality work and higher output, so they look for a potentially skilled workforce as compared to low-skilled workers.

From the organizational point of view, high attrition rate is a great concern. If they go for trained personnel, it will always save cost because quality is preferred over quantity in a knowledge-driven economy. Organizations can divide their workforce into various categories to make assessments about present skills and the need to upgrade them. Some can be provided basic training, others can be considered for skill upgradation, and a few can be selected to match international standards and accordingly trained.

### **Government perception and policy on Skill Development in 2009, focused on the following issues:**

- The need to create a vocational qualifications framework to bridge general and technical education.
- Creating a system to deliver competencies as per national and international standards.
- Providing different kinds of pre employment training and up skilling to all categories, including women and minorities, so that their employability and chances of employment increase.
- Stress on research and planning to promote excellence and the use of the latest technology.
- Developing skills of trainers to ensure quality delivery of knowledge and information.

The policy also suggested that institution-based colleges, polytechnics, ITIs, and vocational schools should come forward to take responsibility for providing formal as well as informal training, keeping in mind the need for in-house skill development as well as through distance learning programs.

A skilled workforce can accelerate the process of better quality production because they are supported by needed skills and resources. Education improves knowledge and promotes critical thinking and creativity. If education is supplemented with vocational and skill education followed by training, it will shape the nation's capability to meet the challenges of working as per market demand and create its own place at the national and international level. On the other hand, if the education system is outdated for instructional content and training modules, it will not benefit skill development.

These ministries function through various departments and enablers under the State Skill Development Missions and through institutions such as NSDC, NSDA, SSC, NCVT, and SCVT under various Acts. Implementing bodies include ITIs, universities, schools, and colleges. All these initiatives have been planned for the benefit of marginalized communities, low-income groups, and unemployed youth of the country. All activities are controlled by ministry of Skill development and Entrepreneurship.

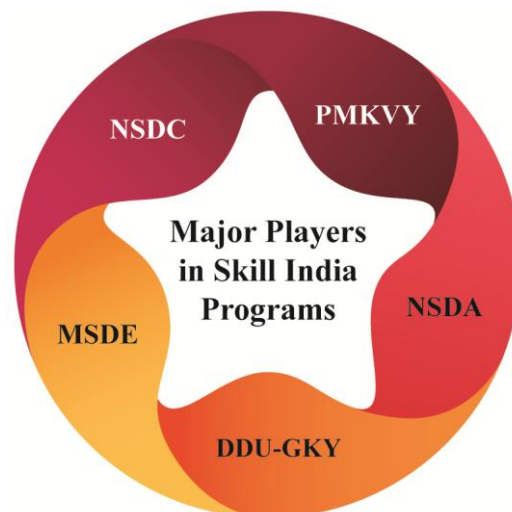
Skill development helps in learning different tools, upgrading knowledge, and improving job prospects. Obsolete knowledge gets replaced with technological advances, and the system is able to create a workforce that is creative and eligible for professional growth. Productivity improves when efficient workers' complete tasks as per required standards, which improves personal growth and the ability of the nation to attract better investment prospects by adopting innovations and technology as per global requirements.

People get motivated to acquire entrepreneurial skills and change their mindset to overcome obstacles, leading to a decline in unemployment. By following the process of skill development, individuals not only improve their employment prospects by bridging gaps but also satisfy industry needs, which results in better production and higher profits.

Trained and skilled people begin to be socially mobile, which ultimately brings down income inequality. People move from one place to another, and inclusiveness among various communities, women, and underrepresented groups increases. A culture of continuous learning, upskilling, and lifelong learning encourages personal and professional growth. Integration of the workforce at national as well as international levels improves workers' confidence and contributes to their creativity and critical thinking, which is appreciated by employers.

### Objectives of the Research Paper

1. To understand concept of skill development in India.
2. To understand the ecosystem as developed by the Government of India.
3. To analyse the contribution of enabling bodies, assessment, and appraisal.
4. To analyse awareness among stakeholders.
5. To study the NEP 2020, National Education Policy 2020 and its relationship with Skill India Mission.
6. To provide recommendations and suggestions.



### Methodology

This paper, descriptive in nature, gathers information and data from secondary sources through literature sources to assess how skill development initiatives can lower employability gaps. Reports of the various ministries and departments will be accessed. NEP 2020 and its implementation through various schools, institutes, colleges and universities

will be examined and its effectiveness will be judged by interview and discussion models. One of the main objective of Integration of Skill education with regular education to be taught in reformed manner of holistic education will be critically analysed. Data from websites, Social Media, public platforms, programs will be collected, observed to make opinion and give policy suggestion for proper implementation and integration of NEP with present system of education. This qualitative research will conclude on note of need for future research.

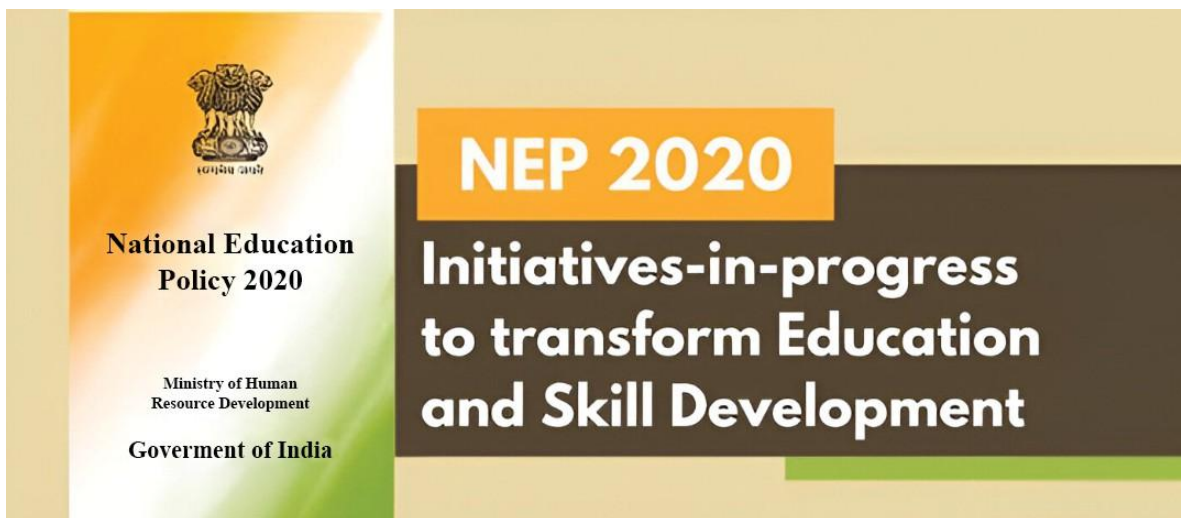
## Literature Review

Researchers have made extensive studies about the subject of skill development in India. Various aspects have been researched, analysed, and shared through different papers and reports. A few are briefly taken here for reference and better understanding.

- **Behera and Gaur (2022):** Researched that ignoring skill education and focusing only on academics while disregarding career counselling will not be helpful in achieving the desired objectives.
- **Patil and Charinthimath (2021):** Concluded that if the key players like applicants, institutions, governments, and training partners participate seriously, and if the curriculum is improved as per industry requirements with corresponding infrastructure development, the effect of skill development programmes will be better.
- **Swain and Swain (2020):** Concluded that despite India enjoying a demographic dividend, it is necessary to gain from the *Make in India* programme by improving workforce skills. To increase employment at the national level, *Skill India* should also focus on fostering entrepreneurial skills among the workforce.
- **Arora and Chhadwani (2019):** Evaluated the effect of the *Skill India Mission* on economic restructuring of the country and concluded that the programme needs proper implementation, as very few people were trained in the first phase.
- **Krishnamurthy and Shrimati (2019):** Presented an analysis of skill sets available and recommended that for the young workforce over the next 20 years, it is necessary to adopt best practices for skill development with regular introspection and periodic reviews.
- **Srivastava and Vasantha (2018):** Conducted a study on the operational style of NSDC, NSDA, SSC, and Digit T, and concluded that the *Skill India Mission* can be implemented successfully through these agencies.
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- **Ansari and Khan (2018):** Observed that it is crucial to capture skill reforms in India from both economic and statistical perspectives. Through this, youth unemployment can be lowered, employment levels can be increased, and self-employment can be fostered.
- **Prasad and Purohit (2017):** Concluded that it is necessary to have formal education, technical training, and professional preparation to cover various gaps and facilitate qualification prerequisites for promoting skill development among the youth.
- **Misra (2015):** Comprehended that the policy of skill development should be updated to produce highly competent labour. This can be achieved through developing public-private partnerships to serve both local and global business needs.

- **Okada (2012):** Pointed out that without skills, children tend to dropout from school and educational institutes. The Government of India should ensure the success of the skill development mission.
- **Singh et al. (2017):** Suggested that e-learning will become an important tool for skill development as a self-study platform. Virtual learning will provide online courses and degrees to students. This will develop digital technology, build job-specific abilities, and allow flexibility in education for acquiring career-specific abilities.
- **Naresh (2021):** Discussed the advantages and problems of digital learning in the 21st century in the Indian context. He concluded that the most impactful educational method is digital learning. Schools, colleges, and universities are adopting it at several levels of the education system.
- **Gulati et al. (2021):** Studied SWAYAM and analysed the impact of MOOCs and their contribution. They concluded that mobile apps through MOOCs platforms like Coursera and SWAYAM make courses widely available. Useful information is provided in a variety of ways to stakeholders, enhancing curriculum and pedagogy.
- **Dr. S. C. Patil and Prof. Amaresh B. Charantimath (2021):** Retraining, education, and short-term courses can bridge the skill gaps.
- **Vidhyadhar T. Banajwad and Dr. Mukta S. Adi (2020):** To achieve sustainable rural development, it is necessary to integrate skills policies and strategies and develop institutions to provide skill-based training. They emphasised that education and skill development are essential requirements for a developing country like India, which has a very large youth population.

### New Education Policy 2020 and Skill Development



Source: <https://nationalskillsnetwork.in/nep-2020-initiatives-in-progress-to-transform-education-and-skill-development/>

The Government of India introduced NEP -2020, to reshape education system in India through education supported by skills and vocational training for students, keeping in view the revolution in technology and the requirements of industry. As we all know, the education system in any country is a tool to prepare students/children for the future world. With technological advances at national and global levels, it is necessary that the workforce should have multidisciplinary abilities. This can happen if regular education is supplemented with skill and vocational education.

The stakeholders are parents, students, educators, educational institutes, society, and the government. The facilitators are the institutes set up by the Government of India such as the respective Ministry, UGC, AICTE, and other independent institutes created for providing skill-based education by integrating it through vocational education with the mainstream curriculum to be studied by the students.

**Joshi and Somani (2021)** highlighted that the Government of India started *Skill India Mission*, which is being implemented through more than 20 central universities via specially designed skill development programmes. NEP 2020 has recommended changes in both teaching methods as well as assessment to prepare students to face the challenges of careers in the domestic as well as global market. The aim is to develop entrepreneurship skills by acquiring various job-oriented skills required, considering the changes in technology through modern innovations. It has also been recommended that we should conduct vocational education and training along with regular teaching to prepare a skilled workforce for the country.

Kumar investigated it and was of view that for Indian economy, it is necessary to incorporate vocational education as well as training in the system of imparting education for achieving inclusive and equitable growth **Kumar.s (2022)**

There is a complexity at the level of parents and students to consider VET Vocational Education and Training route as they prefer to have higher education and high status career so they do not to subscribe to VET alone. We will need to add prestige to career taken through VET or will have to wait for its integration. **Ganie. R(2022)**

Institutions must promote skill development as compared to academic performance, which will encourage integration of vocational education with regular education (**Malik. N & Das. J (2022)**)

Employability skills and vocational skills of the students at all levels can be enhanced under NEP -2020 if Teachers capacity and skills are enhanced. (**Pathak. K. R .NCRT**)

Vocational Education Development Programmes impart practical skills so that learner can engage in job directly after education. The process will transfer the skills for the productive activities of the society. (**Yadav. J. 2022**)

*Samagra Shiksha*, in alignment with the aims of the Skill India Mission is being run by Department of School Education. This scheme aims to enhance employability and personal abilities of students. Awareness has to be created at all levels, enabling students to make a choice as per their aptitude, aspirations, and competence.

*Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana*. Skill hubs and skill centres are targeting school dropouts and out-of-education students to include them in the programme of integrated skilling. This scheme has been launched with effect from January 2022. Under this scheme, the *Employability Skill Module* is covering communication, mathematics, , entrepreneurship, and green skills, along with information and technology .

The concept of flexibility has been introduced to provide students an opportunity to change their subject preferences as per their choice. In case of uncertainty or discovering interest in some other subject or line of education, they may exercise the option to change and continue

working toward their dream of higher education and career goals. In this way, it is proposed to give students a sense of security so they can perform academically as well as professionally through vocational and skill education.

NEP 2020 also stresses that the capacity of teachers be improved and both formal and non-formal ways of teaching should be included in the procedure to impart education. Web-based education, virtual learning, and specially created portals have played a great role in achieving the objectives of NEP 2020 .

(NEP) 2020 is the policy of the 21st century, approved by the Government of India on 29th June 2020. The NEP has proposed to change the structure of the 10+2 system of education to 5+3+3+4. The rationale behind this is that education has four stages, namely: foundational (up to the age of 8), preparatory (up to the age of 11), intermediate (11 to 14), and secondary (14 to 18). Providing holistic education through various schools and institutes of higher learning by providing them a hybrid education ecosystem is the goal to prepare students for jobs and entrepreneurship by acquiring 21st-century skills to excel in both the domestic as well as international markets.

### **Challenges – of Integration and Way Forward of NEP 2020:**

#### Challenges of NEP 2020 – Skill Development in India

- Perception

The National Education Policy (NEP) plans for tremendous growth of vocational education through educational institutions to achieve the benefit of employability and economic growth. This is to be done through schools, colleges, and universities by introducing vocational education and training under a common umbrella in the coming decade and extending this training to nearly 20 million students. However, there are various challenges in implementing the new education policy, particularly with respect to integration and perception.

- Lack of Awareness

It is difficult to overcome the general feeling of not giving much importance to vocational education, as it does not add to social status compared to conventional courses. The challenge is to create awareness programmes and conduct media campaigns to spread information and communicate to the masses with the help of multimedia measures.

- Integration & Alignment

Integration of vocational education with general education is also facing challenges in developing the required curriculum and aligning it with regular content taught in schools and colleges. Many universities have not yet adopted it, and many schools are still not ready to incorporate VET as a teaching mode. The capacity and capability of teachers for adopting good practices and innovative teaching methods is still lacking, and centres need to be created to train teachers so that they may further impart skills.

- Capacity of Trainers

The dream of introducing an integrated model of providing 21st-century skills and entrepreneurship education in schools such as Artificial Intelligence, Robotics is suffering because of non-availability of required laboratories and infrastructure. Promotion of vocational education through web-based systems, online platforms, virtual learning, and digital tools is not yet becoming a regular practice, as teachers themselves require training to adopt new ways of teaching and pass them on to students. Developing teacher capabilities by providing professional training through short-term courses in various locations is necessary. Ensuring vocational training of good quality will foster innovation and enable teachers to pass it on to students.

- Holistic Assessment

Holistic assessment and evaluation systems are also difficult to implement because they involve measuring competence through aptitude tests and achievement of learning outcomes. Teachers need training in 360-degree assessment methods to measure student capability. Another challenge is providing vertical mobility to students in vocational subjects at the school level. It is not an easy job to identify, design, and develop vocational courses that are needed by industry and align with student interests. The real challenge is to develop a strong system of capacity building and improvement for all stakeholders at the state, district, and national levels, especially in teaching–learning institutes.

### *Skill Development and challenges ( Policy and Operational )*

The journey of skill development in India has gone through many ups and downs and has faced many challenges. These challenges have emerged from all stakeholders and institutions due to imbalance in demand and supply and structural gaps. Industry interface with government and academia has not been of the desired standard, and student mobilization has remained low.



India has focused more on technical skills, whereas non-technical skills are equally important. There has been a noticeable shift toward skills in software, internet-based businesses, and hardware, as people adopt digital ways of working. Technological innovations are emerging, and efforts are being made to adopt them and respond to market needs. However, the picture is not as promising as expected, as there are gaps and unfulfilled targets due to several reasons discussed below:

### **1. Functioning of SSCs**

In 2024, it was found that only a fraction of individuals received training against the projected numbers. This has been attributed to ineffective functioning of SSCs and shortage of skill trainers. There is misalignment between industry needs and training outcomes. Participation is also affected by gender biases and socio-cultural norms, with marginalized groups and women participating less in training programmes.

### **2. Coordination – Skilling and Entrepreneurship**

Efficacy of Initiatives under Skill development mission has been reduced due to shortcomings in the ecosystem, weak coordination and inadequate Infrastructure. The country's training capacity is insufficient, leaving nearly 60% of migrants without access to training. There is a need to re-evaluate the approach to skilling and entrepreneurship.

### **3. Industry–Academia–Policy Makers Interface**

Industry and training institutions are expected to collaborate and share requirements for modern-day technology and innovation. However, most training institutions have minimal interaction with industry and lack knowledge of present-day needs. This adversely affects curriculum revision and alignment with industry demand.

### **4. Awareness and Facilitation**

Low enrolment in ITIs, vocational training schools, and polytechnics prevents students from accessing valuable training. Conservative mindsets, unwillingness to migrate, and the belief that conventional degrees are sufficient hinder participation. In reality, skill-based training is essential for reducing unemployment and improving productivity.

### **5. Training the Trainers about NEP 2020**

The quality of trainers is another challenge. Many are not competent enough or lack required skills to match new learning styles and delivery systems. Trainers need regular upskilling and professional development to bridge this gap and provide effective vocational education.

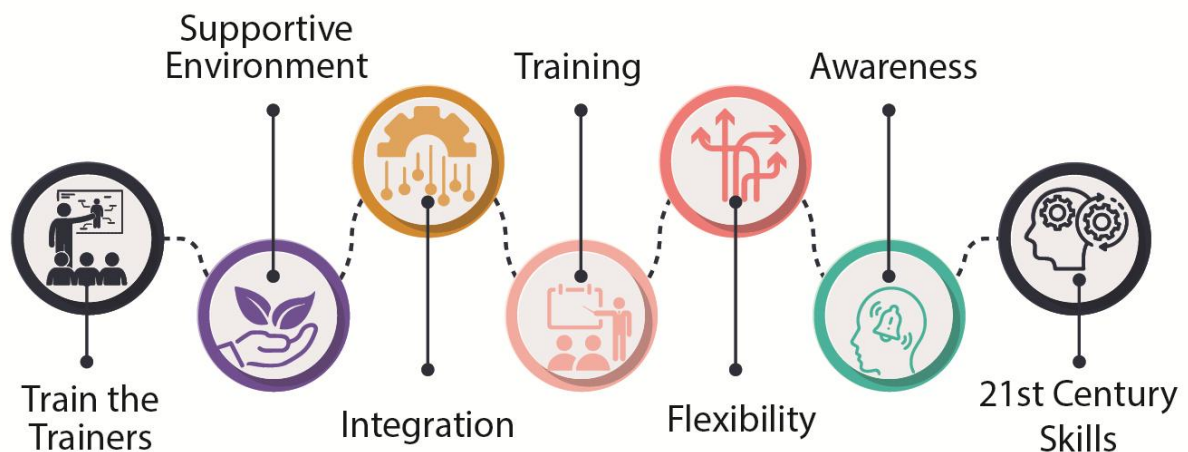
### **6. Demand and Supply Imbalance**

A considerable discrepancy exists between workforce skills and market demand, driven by rapid economic expansion. This imbalance affects individuals as well as the economy, despite growth prospects. The government needs to bridge this gap through new initiatives and targeted interventions.

## 7. Financial Assistance

Financial barriers prevent weaker sections of society from participating in training programmes due to high costs. Scholarships and fee support are limited. People in rural and remote areas are often unaware of opportunities and cannot access training, which is concentrated in cities and metropolitan areas. Programmes need to be extended by ministry to rural areas to encourage youth participation.

Recommendations and Suggestions



### 1. Need for Supportive Environment

A supportive environment is essential for implementing NEP 2020, which will nurture entrepreneurial activities and create awareness about skill development. Socio-political dimensions must encourage upskilling opportunities, and a broader social change is required to ensure that initiatives contribute to equitable growth. As we move towards achieving the status of a developed India, all critical gaps need to be addressed through systematic improvements and an inclusive approach.

### 2. Training

Skill development plays a crucial role for improving personal, societal, and national empowerment. It enables to meet the demands of a competitive landscape, enabling people to earn more. These advantages motivate people, society, as well as government to conceive skill development programs that foster a skilled workforce, ensure sustainable growth, and address challenges from fast-changing innovation and technology. Participation in such training programs has been shown to boost confidence, self-assurance, motivation, creativity, and decision-making ability. Additionally, it increases opportunities for earning, improves overall efficiency, and promotes social transformation and inclusiveness, contributing to better economic growth.

### **3. Awareness**

As highlighted earlier, there are gaps in demand and supply in the job market. Awareness must be created among students, parents, trainers, and policymakers to shift the perception that a job can be secured solely through traditional education. Education must be supplemented with skill-based training aligned with industry demands. National campaigns should be launched to spread awareness about the importance of skilling, primarily through social media and other communication modes, ensuring the message reaches both urban and rural areas. Students must also be encouraged to take vocational streams in schools, which can provide opportunities for alternate careers, livelihood generation, and even entrepreneurship, making them job creators rather than job seekers.

### **4. Train the Trainers**

There is a pressing need to enhance the capacity of teachers under NEP 2020, along with upgrading infrastructure for training across the country. Existing infrastructure should be effectively utilized to establish training centers for skill development, while new multi-skilling institutes and virtual teaching ecosystems should also be created. These initiatives will help bridge geographical gaps in education delivery. Youth in villages should have access to such upskilling programs through online or blended mediums, preparing them for both domestic and international markets. Schools, vocational institutes, training centers, colleges, and universities must be motivated to include skill advancement courses in their curriculum, taught with equal importance as regular subjects, leading to certification and graduation opportunities.

### **5. Integration**

Vocational education should be integrated with mainstream education, making it an essential part of schools and colleges. Regular education providers must include vocational and skill-enhancement training as compulsory add-on courses. This integration would encourage students to explore their interests while simultaneously preparing for employment opportunities. Such a system would help students discover their strengths and align their education with both learning and earning potential.

### **6. Flexibility**

Flexibility must be provided to students to opt in and out of vocational and skill-enhancement courses based on their preferences. Opportunities for multi-skilling should be allowed during their educational journey, enabling them to expand knowledge as per their choices. Institutions should collaborate with enablers and implementing agencies to ensure proper coordination among students, institutes, and policymakers.

### **7. 21st Century Skills**

Education systems must be empowered with policies and decisions that enable students to acquire 21st-century skills beyond core technical knowledge. These include creativity, life skills, social skills, teamwork, collaboration, and leadership in times of crisis. Building resilience, boosting confidence, and adapting to challenges are essential traits for the younger generation. Students, teachers, parents, and society must collectively shift their perceptions about traditional education methods and embrace innovative styles of learning

as suggested by NEP 2020, while also upholding cultural values. This integrated approach will reshape and strengthen the education system for the future.

## Conclusion

There were obstacles in getting competent and trained workers as it needed the combined efforts of different agencies and students. There was need of concentrating on increasing entrepreneurial capabilities in the workforce. To look for such model which offers quality as well as guarantee to take India to become Atmanirbhar Bharat, National Education Policy NEP 2020 was announced to reshape the education system and bring in fundamental change of bringing in the concept of holistic education and giving choice to the student to take skill based education or vocational education by integrating with the mainstream education. Lot of challenges have been faced in the last five years as very few universities have adopted this model and process is on. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship along with Ministry of Education is taking all efforts to implement this integrated model.

It is expected that this process of integration will be accepted in true letter and spirits and it will improve professional outcomes and will increase the participation of more institutes and universities to create skilled workforce with multidisciplinary abilities to explore the opportunities for sustainability as well as development. There will be provision of inclusive, adjustable quality education as per need of the industry. We need to continue with our research to know more and more about its policy and implementation. Perception of parents and teachers and society will change towards combination of vocational along with the regular education. As such, the country will move on further to achieve the objective of sustainable inclusive economic growth. Future is bright and it will help us to reach towards Viksit Bharat.

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