

INNOVATIONS AND EMPLOYABILITY

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Abstract : *India is a fastest growing economy. If India is to realize the dreams of making India superpower envisioned by visionaries like Late President Sir. Abdul J. Kalam, we must revamp our education system. Education must be job oriented. It should impart the skills of employability. Education must be linked to life. Life skills-based education (LSBE) is a form of education that focuses on cultivating personal life skills such as self-reflection, critical thinking, problem solving and interpersonal skills. We should impart Life skills-based education. Our student should be able to survive in this industry based world of cut-throat competition. There is need for including practical based education such as frequent visits to industries and problem solving tasks. We need to encourage creative thinking in students. The present paper establishes association between innovative ways and employability and offers suggestions for taking India to the economically leading global standing in the world.*

KEY WORDS: *Innovation, Employability, Education Commission, Micro-credential*

India is a fastest growing economy, we boast. However, a few jobs are created. The scene is deplorable as far as the creation or getting right kind of jobs for the young generation. "For a country where 1.2 crore people enter the workforce each year, the pace of job creation remains far below what is needed even though the economy is growing at over 7 percent. Across eight key employment generating sectors, only 1.35 lakh jobs were added in calendar year 2015, quarterly surveys of employment showed. In other words, jobs created were equal to only 1 percent of the addition to workforce." ("Bloomsberg")

The World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2018* tells us that by 2022, 75 million jobs will be lost to automation, but 133 million jobs will emerge as technology advances. (qtd. in "Austrade") Further, *The Future of Jobs Report 2020* underlies the same findings : "Although the number of jobs destroyed will be surpassed by the number of 'jobs of tomorrow' created, in contrast to previous years, job creation is slowing while job destruction accelerates. Employers expect that by 2025, increasingly redundant roles will decline from being 15.4% of the workforce to 9% (6.4% decline), and that emerging professions will grow from 7.8% to 13.5% (5.7% growth) of the total employee base of company respondents. Based on these figures, we estimate that by 2025, 85 million jobs may be displaced by a shift in the division of labour between humans and machines, while 97 million new roles may emerge that are more adapted to the new division of labour between humans, machines and algorithms." ("Reports")

Education in Modern India: Education Commissions ("Bitstream"):

Under the British rule, there were 17 universities and 636 colleges (with a total enrolment of 2,38,000 students), 5,297 secondary schools with 8,70,000 pupils, 12,843 middle schools with two million pupils and 1,72,661 primary schools with fourteen million pupils. Vocational and technical education was poorly developed, both at the school and university stages, and the supply of high level trained scientific man-power was very limited. There was too much of emphasis on English and too little stress on Mathematics, Science or the Indian languages. India became independent on 15 August, 1947. The need was felt to have own education system and own education policy, which would cater to the needs of the country and nurture the generations that would be adopting and following the preambles of the *Constitution* of India. University Education Commission (1948-49), under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was the first Commission on education after Independence, which was followed by declaration of other commissions subsequently, seeing the need of the time, and as attempts to overcome shortcomings in the extant educational system. Recently, in 2020, the new Education Policy was declared by the Govt. of India.

NEP -2020 ("National") ":

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), on 29 July 2020, under the leadership of Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, outlines the vision of India's new education system. It replaced the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming the nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all.

The changes and objectives are as such:

Languages

The policy raises the importance of mother tongue and regional languages; medium of instruction until class 5 and preferably beyond should be in these languages. Sanskrit and foreign languages will also be given emphasis. The policy also states that no language will be imposed on the students.

School education

- The "10 + 2" structure will be replaced with "5+3+3+4" model. This will be implemented as follows:
- Instead of exams being held every academic year, school students will only answer three exams, in classes 3, 5 and 8.
- Board exams will be continued to be held for classes 10 and 12 but will be re-designed. Standards for this will be established by an assessment body, PARAKH. This policy aims at reducing the curriculum load of students and allowing them to be more "inter-disciplinary" and "multi-lingual". Report cards will be "holistic", offering information about the student's skills.
- Coding will be introduced from class 6 and experiential learning will be adopted-

Higher education :

- It proposes a 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's degree in an undergraduate programme with multiple exit options. These will include professional and vocational areas and will be implemented as follows:
 - A Certificate after completing 1 year of study
 - A Diploma after completing 2 years of study
 - A Bachelor's degree after completion of a 3-year programme
 - A 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's degree (the preferred option)
- MPhil (Masters of Philosophy) courses are to be discontinued to align degree education with how it is in Western models.
- A Higher Education Council of India (HECI) will be set up to regulate higher education. The council's goal will be to increase gross enrolment ratio. The HECI will have 4 verticals:
 - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), to regulate higher education, including teacher education, excluding medical and legal education.
 - National Accreditation Council (NAC), a "meta-accrediting body".
 - Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), for funding and financing of universities and colleges. This will replace the existing National Council for Teacher Education, All India Council for Technical Education and the University Grants Commission.
 - General Education Council (GEC), to frame "graduate attributes", namely the learning outcomes expected. It will also be responsible in framing a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF). The National Council for Teacher Education will come under the GEC, as a professional standard setting body (PSSB).
- Other PSSBs will include professional councils such as Veterinary Council of India, Council of Architecture, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and National Council for Vocational Education and Training.
- The National Testing Agency will now be given the additional responsibility of conducting entrance examinations for admissions to universities across the country, in addition to the JEE Main and NEET.
- The policy proposes that higher education institutes like the IITs make changes with regard to the diversity of learning.
- The policy proposes to internationalize education in India. Foreign universities can now set up campuses in India.
- The fees of both private and public universities will be fixed.

Teacher education :

To become a teacher, a 4-year Bachelor of Education will be the minimum requirement needed by 2030. The teacher recruitment process will also be strengthened and made transparent. The National Council for Teacher Education will frame a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education by 2021 and a National Professional Standards for Teachers by 2022. The policy aims to: ensure that all students at all levels of

school education are taught by passionate, motivated, highly qualified, professionally trained, and well equipped teachers.

Innovations for Employability ("Austrade"):

Higher education institutions need to implement strategies and initiatives to enhance the employability skills of students. Students should get the employability skills, knowledge and attributes for career success. We should create the innovators and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. We should bring out graduates with a propensity for action and a capacity for application along with technical skills and knowledge. Our education system should enable and prepare students to work in different environments, locations, industries and roles. We need to have high-tech, online models supported through study destination funding and strong partnerships between education institutions, government, industry and community organizations.

We envision India as a dynamic, contemporary and progressive country, enjoying global standing and recognition. We need education institutions, policy makers, industry, society to work together for innovative approaches to careers development and employability. We need to have on-campus incubators, career fairs, digital platforms and mentoring as regular practice and work culture in India. Our students should be able to think critically and solve problems creatively. We should chalk-out programmes and establish partnership (Memoranda of Understandings) in such a way that they will enhance the entrepreneurial skills. Our education institutions should foster among students critical thinking, a commitment to lifelong learning and access to industry work experiences during study. Our country should earn reputation in the world as a destination that prioritises the employability of students.

"Students throughout the world expect a tertiary education to equip them with the skills, knowledge and attributes to thrive." ("Austrade") Our student should be able to adapt himself to the gig economy and to move between several occupations during a career. Students should be able to tackle complex problems, use theoretical principles, and understand and select proper technologies skilfully. Inconsistency in jobs and technology are the trademarks of the modern age. Mere knowledge is not sufficient; ability to execute in changing context and ambiguity is also important. Employability should become a core component of education system. We need to incorporate employability skills with formal educations. We should include more co- and extra- curricular activities in the curriculum. There should be study on business analysis and industries. We should build network through workshops, seminars, volunteering and cooperative attitude. As suggested in NEP, we need to have broad and flexible range of subjects, although it may pose challenges for curriculum designing and assessment.

Conclusion:

We need to have foresight. We should have vision and planning for the future. Our education system and institutions should be linked to the industries and societies of tomorrow. We should not forget that education and industry have a rigid bond and it plays

crucial role in this age of global competitiveness. Educational trainings should provide extra power for survival of our industries. We will definitely stand out as the super power in near future. It is incumbent on all education stakeholders to continue engaging with the employers to understand their needs and expectations, and mould our students accordingly, by offering them appropriate and necessary skills. We should use NEP tenets and guidelines in utmost best manner. Providing "Micro-credentials" which are skills, knowledge, and/or experience in a given subject area or capability is a solution. The employee can complete activities, assessments and projects, and receive a digital certificate or badge as evidence of attaining their new credential.

To reach the goal, we need to revamp education system, update education institutions, and prepare teachers by imparting to them high-tech and state-of-the-art skills. Then, no one can stop us from becoming super power - the country of the dreams of great thinkers and visionaries.

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