

SKILL QUALIFICATION: CHANGE OR ILLUSION?

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Abstract:

The Government of India is framing National Skill Qualification Framework with a long term vision to generate demographic dividend. This framework will be the foundation for prospective changes in educational policy of the government. For this government has made certain presumptions about present higher education system and willing to change it through international consultation and knowledge partnerships. However doubting the efficiency of present education system can be wrong conception. India is developing country. In some areas it lags behind but that do not indicate any urgent structural change in education system. In order to attain the common aim of demographic dividend, the rethinking of criticizing present education system must be made. The present research is conducted through interviews of employed people of India and their views of the education system are analyzed.

Key Words: employability, levels, skill, qualification

Introduction:

Education is a process of facilitating learning, knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. This is the process where person's intellectual is utilized through training and applied towards the thinking process. Education is formally divided into stages such as preschool, primary school, secondary school, college and university or apprenticeship. The education aims at development of a student so that he will know the rules of society, will pursue ability to be part of society and also will overcome human life challenges. Education whether taken from formal system or from informal system, is taken with the basic purpose of earning livelihood i.e. bread and butter for the life. More over student always consider education as a tool for overall development.

In India education is often considered as a tool for academic development. The present structure of Indian education is established in such a way that each level of the education will contribute towards academic excellence of learner. To enhance educational structure of India government is taking some initiatives like National Skill Qualification Framework, establishment of National Skill Development Corporation and organizing skill development workshops and apprenticeship programmes for the students. All such efforts are made on **fundamental strategy of skill development in learner to make him more employable.**

This strategy has made on the basis of some presumption like;

1. To gain demographic dividend in recent years.
2. Vocational education is a parallel stream and it needs enhancement by adding new vocation.
3. Present education structure is unable to implement the expected employability skills.
4. Structural change in education system will render the learner employability and competence in a required field.
5. Such change will be made as whole education process will be considered as skill implantation process for learner and skill measuring process for educator.

However the above conception for a present education system ignores the fact that even though Indian education institutes do not have any international ratings, India has attained 12.90% youth employment rate and 4.90 unemployment rate which is lesser compared to developed nations like Australia (6.3), USA (5.3), Canada (6.80), France (10.30), UK (5.6). In addition to that,

except one country (i.e. Pakistan) Indians have settled everywhere in the world. The present education system which have been criticized as creator of non employable labor, has proved itself for suitable for contribution to development of nation.

This research work aims to compare Present education structure and Planned structure. The researcher has made rationale that present system of education has majority characteristics already which are expected from the planned system. In simple words the purpose of changes in education system is not drastic compared to cost and risk involved.

In present research work the people of different age group have been interviewed and been asked about the contribution of education in their overall development.

Objectives:

1. To summarize the new education policy (changes in education structure) through the various reports and announcements of Government of India with special reference to higher education and skill development.
2. To identify the role of present education system in skill development of person and his employability.
3. To compare present education system and proposed system.

Research Methodology:

1. Collection of secondary data: Official gazette of the central government of India through its ministries, statistical data from labor department of government and policies and official announcement by the Hon. Prime Minister of India are the major source of data. In addition to that various reference books on theory of education has made conceptualization of this research regarding skills and skill development process.
2. Collection of primary data: One structured questionnaire is asked to sample population with an aim to analyze their opinion about the role of education in their development.
 - Sampling: A simple random sample method is used. The questionnaire is sent to the employees of Tata Consultancy Services, Pune (IT Consultancy Cadre). The enumerator has sent the questionnaire through e mail on 17/08/2015 and responses till evening of 19/08 /2015 are recorded .Totally 89 responses are considered for research.
 - The questionnaire is drafted in such a way that respondent is able to prescribe his opinion about the education through which he has undergone, the pros and cons, the skill development process and role of education in their employability.
3. Data Analysis: Data is analyzed on the basis of pre set standard. Percentile method is used to interpret the collected data.
4. Conclusion.

Conceptual Framework:

I. Key Concepts

1. Skill: Skill means the ability to apply the knowledge and use know- how to complete tasks and solve problems. Skills are described as cognitive and practical.. It involves logical, intuitive and creative thinking. It requires manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. Domain general skills are general skills for instance time management and domain specific skills are work related skills and suitable only for particular work.
2. List of Skill: With special reference to education and work profile of a person researcher has enlisted following essential skills:
 - i) Technical Skills: Work related skills
 - ii) Knowledge Skills: Clarity of Knowledge, Application of knowledge
 - iii) Solution for critical problems

- iv) Communication: Oral, Written, Understanding communication, presentation
- v) Critical thinking
- vi) Logical Skills
- vii) Decision making skills
- viii) Time management
- ix) Work related skills: Team work, learning at work, initiative, creating favorable environment.

3. Skill Development:

Skill Development is process empowered with the necessary and continuously upgraded skills, knowledge and internationally recognized qualifications to gain access to decent employment and ensure India's competitiveness in the dynamic global market. It aims at increasing the productivity and employability of workforce (wage and self-employed) both in the organized and the unorganized sectors. It seeks increased participation of youth, women, disabled and other disadvantaged sections and to synergize efforts of various sectors and reform the present system with the enhanced capability to adapt to changing technologies and labor market demands.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) "Skill development is of key importance in stimulating a sustainable development process and can make a contribution in facilitating the transition from an informal to formal economy. It is also essential to address the opportunities and challenges to meet new demands of changing economies and new technologies in the context of globalization."

Skills development can help build a "virtuous circle" in which the quality and relevance of education and training for women and men fuels the innovation, investment, technological change, enterprise development, economic diversification and competitiveness.

4. Higher education: Higher education means education beyond secondary level or education taken at colleges and university. In India on the basis of past academic performance or performance in the entrance examination wherever considered will condition for the admission for higher education in a particular field. Learner will take the admission for a particular course on the basis of his interest and willingness to make career. It is career specific/ field specific. After pursuing higher education it is expected that certain set of skill will be with him . In simple words his/her skills are developed in a particular field.
5. Employability : The set of skills which gives market recognition for the performance of person and gives employment. It includes professional growth, doing value for creating worth. Market recognition also refers to monetary rewards for skill based performance.

II. Skill Development Landscape in India

India is one of the few countries in the world where the working age population will be far in excess of those dependent on them and, as per the World Bank, this will continue for at least three decades till 2040. This has increasingly been recognized as a potential source of significant strength for the national economy, provided we are able to equip and continuously upgrade the skills of the population in the working age group.

In recognition of this need, the Government of India has adopted skill development as a national priority over the next 10 years. The Eleventh Five Year Plan detailed a road-map for skill development in India, and favored the formation of Skill Development Missions, both at the State and National levels. To create such an institutional base for skill development in India at the national level, a "Coordinated Action on Skill Development" with three-tier

institutional structure consisting of the PM's National Council on Skill Development, the National Skill Development Coordination Board (NSDCB) and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) was created in early 2008.

The main functions of the PM's National Council on Skill Development are as under:

- To lay down overall broad policy objectives, financing and governance models and strategies relating to skill development.
- To review the progress of schemes, and guide on mid-course corrections, additions and closure of parts or whole of any particular programme/scheme.
- Coordinate Public Sector / Private Sector Initiatives in a framework of collaborative action.

The NSDCB coordinates the skill development efforts of a large number of Central Ministries/Departments and States. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is a Public Private Partnership, set up to catalyze the setting-up of large scale, for-profit sustainable vocational institutions in the country, by encouraging private sector participation and providing low-cost funding for training capacity. In addition, it is expected to fund supporting systems such as quality assurance, labor market information systems and train-the-trainer facilities. Thus, the three-tier structure together facilitates implementation of skill development on the ground through three main channels - Central Ministries, the state governments and private and public training organisations.

III. Summary of National Qualification Framework and Education Policy of India

- i. Each level of the NSQF is associated with a set of descriptors made up of five outcome statements, which describe in general terms, the minimum knowledge, skills and attributes that a learner needs to acquire in order to be certified for that level.
- ii. Each level of the NSQF is described by a statement of learning outcomes in five domains, known as level descriptors. These five domains are:
 - a) Process
 - b) Professional knowledge,
 - c) Professional skill,
 - d) Core skill and
 - e) Responsibility.

Each of these is briefly described below:

a. Process

Process is a general summary of the other four domains corresponding to the level.

b. Professional knowledge

Professional knowledge is what a learner should know and understand with reference to the subject. It is described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity, as follows:

- Depth of knowledge can be general or specialized
- Breadth of knowledge can range from a single topic to multi-disciplinary area of knowledge
- Kinds of knowledge range from concrete to abstract, from segmented to cumulative
- Complexity of knowledge refers to the combination of kinds, depth and breadth of knowledge

c. Professional skill

Professional skills are what a learner should be able to do. These are described in terms of the kinds and complexity of skills and

include:

- Cognitive and creative skills involving the use of intuitive, logical and critical thinking
- Communication skills involving written, oral, literacy and numeracy skills
- Interpersonal skills and generic skills

d. Core skill

Core skills refer to basic skills involving dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments used for performing the job, including IT skills needed for that level.

e. Responsibility

Responsibility aspect determines the following:

- Nature of working relationships
- Level of responsibility for self and others
- Managing change
- Accountability for actions

The first five level aims at teaching primary skills. The next 5 levels are advanced and detailed as below:

Levels	Skills				
Level 6	demand a wide range of specialised technical skill, clarity of knowledge and practice in broad range of activity involving standard non standard practices	factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Reasonably good in mathematical calculation, understanding of social, political and, reasonably good in data collecting organising information, and logical communication	Responsibility for own work and learning and full responsibility for other's works and learning
Level 7.	requires a command of wide ranging specialised theoretical and practical skill, involving variable routine and non-routine context.	wide ranging , factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	wide range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	good logical and mathematical skill understanding of social political and natural environment good in collecting and organising information, communication and presentation	full responsibility for output of group and development

		skill
Level 8	Comprehensive, cognitive, theoretical knowledge and practical skills to develop creative solutions, to abstract problem. Undertakes self study, demonstrates intellectual independence, analytical rigour and good communication.	Exercise management and supervision in the context of work/study having unpredictable changes, responsible for development of self and others.
Level 9.	Advanced Knowledge and skill Critical understanding of the subject, demonstrating mastery and innovation, completion of substantial research and dissertation.	Responsible for decision making in complex technical activities, involving unpredictable study/work situations.
Level 10.	Highly specialised knowledge and problem solving skill to provide original contribution to knowledge through research and scholarship.	Responsible for strategic decisions in unpredictable complex situations of work/study.

IV. Lessons from Conceptual Framework:

1. About new policy of government: The essence of new education policy is concentration on skill development in the education. The evaluation of performance will be done only on the basis of norms of skill measurement. In spite of learning multiple disciplinary for a one field, learning specific knowledge will also be considered as qualification. Beginners will be vocational and advanced level qualified will be considered as professional.
2. Positive Impact: Qualification framework is similar with European Union Framework hence Indian Education system will be graded internationally. Integration of all fields of education will be possible. Various curriculum will be made available on the basis of leaning interest.
3. Negative Impact:
 - i) This system matches with European system but not with their infrastructure. For India as a developing country and especially in inflation period it is impossible for India to make this available for all.
 - ii) Teacher's work, appointment, qualification are not part of resource planning.
 - iii) There is no universal methodology for skill measurement. For e.g. for written examination there can be key answers; such things are not available for skill performance measurement.
 - iv) The population of country and requirement of particular skill holder are not at all considered.
4. The government has made presumption that under present system, there is very less or no scope for skill development.

Need of the study:

The government understood the problems which are generally faced by unemployed people i.e. skills up gradation process during education. However it ignores to recognize the sources of skills in employed persons. Before framing any new policy regarding making education more employable government should deal the facts which denote success of present education system. The employed person can tell in better manner that which skills are required to get the job as well as to perform the job. He can also classify which skills of him are developed by education system and which are developed by his employer. Hence it is required to analyze the feedback of employed population of country on education system with special reference to skill development.

Statement of problem:

In present research, study has been made to analyze the employed people feedback on the education system through which they have undergone. The source will be find out for the skills which have market value.

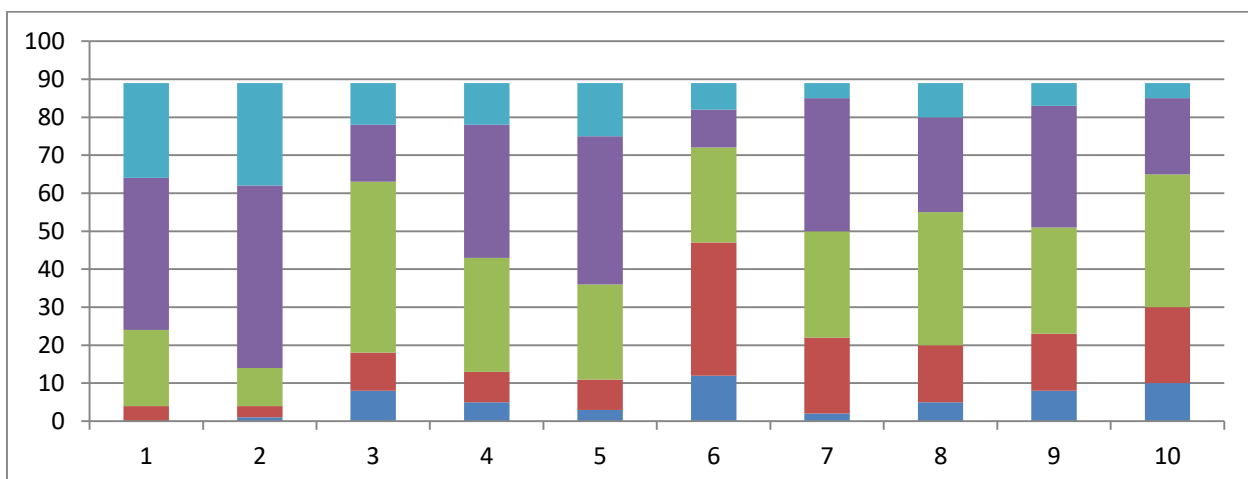
Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The questionnaire is circulated in Tata Consultancy Services (IT Cadre) through their intranet and feedback on skill development is taken during 17/08/2015 to 19/08/2015. This opinion poll is generated to interpret role of education in the development and employability of these people.

I. Analysis of Opinion about Education Institution and Skill Development Process conducted by them.**Table 1.1: Skill wise contribution by education system towards development**

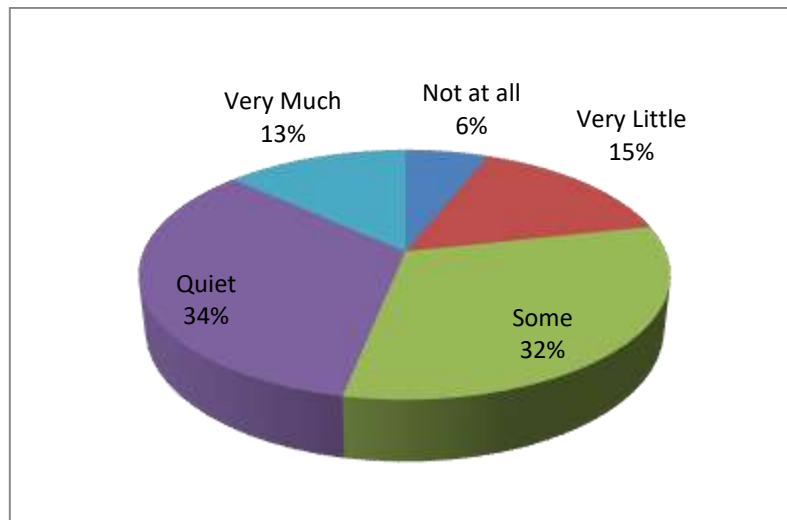
S. No.	Stem	Response					Total
		Not at all	Very Little	Some	Quite	Very Much	
1	Developed critical thinking and Logic	0	4	20	40	25	89
2	Developed ability to solve complex problems	1	3	10	48	27	89
3	Developed ability to work effectively with others	8	10	45	15	11	89
4	Developed ability to apply the knowledge.	5	8	30	35	11	89
5	Developed confidence to work independently	3	8	25	39	14	89
6	Developed written communication skills	12	35	25	10	7	89
7	Developed knowledge of field studying	2	20	28	35	4	89
8	Developed work related knowledge	5	15	35	25	9	89
9	Curriculum is well developed and focused	8	15	28	32	6	89
10	Demonstration of work while studying	10	20	35	20	4	89
	Total	54	138	281	299	118	890

Source: Primary Data

Graph: 1.1: Skill wise contribution towards development

Source: Table No. 1.1

Graph: 1.2: Overall contribution towards skill development



Source: Table No. 1.1

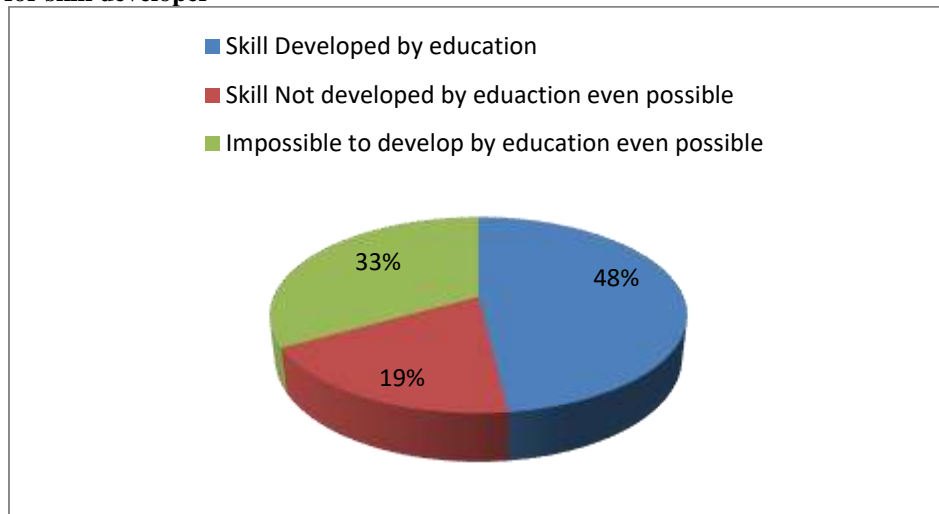
II. Analysis of skill development of specific skills implemented by institution or not

Table No. 1.2 : Comparison for skill developer

S. No.	Name of Skill	Opinion			Total
		Developed by education	Not developed by education even possible	Impossible to develop by education	
1	Technical Skill	55	34	0	89
2	Clarity of Knowledge	50	35	4	89
3	Practice of activity	35	9	45	89
4	Finding solutions for problem in field study	55	14	20	89
5	Understanding of political communication	8	5	76	89
6	Responsibility of own work	10	5	74	89
7	Critical thinking	55	10	24	89
8	Logical Skills	60	5	24	89
9	Strategic decision	35	35	19	89
10	Creation of favorable environment	65	15	9	89
Total		428	167	295	890

Source: Primary Data

Graph: 1.3 : Comparison for skill developer



Source: Table No. 1.2

III. Analysis of rank association to increase competence:

Table No. 1.3

SI No.	Helped to increase competence	Rank (% of respondent)			
		I	II	III	IV
1.	Work experience	60	25	10	05
2.	Training by employer	30	35	15	20
3.	Intellectual	15	25	30	30
4.	Education	05	15	30	50

Source: Primary Data

IV. Analysis of rank association for considerations made by the first employer:

Table No. 1.4

SI No.	Consideration by the first employer	Rank (% of respondent)				
		I	II	III	IV	V
1.	Knowledge Level	60	20	10	10	0
2.	Brand name of your institute	30	35	15	10	10
3.	Academic performance	25	20	35	05	15
4.	Personality	10	15	25	15	35
5.	Skills (If actually tested by 'Role Play' method)	05	10	15	25	45

Source: Primary Data

Experience rating:

Table No. 1.5

SI No.	Training Experience	Frequency
1.	Far better than education	35
2.	Quite more helpful compared to education	25
3.	Both are equally important	04
4.	As helpful as education	15
5.	Lesser helpful than education	10
Total		89

Source: Primary Data**V. Other:**

1. 60% of the respondent has agreed that educational institutes are able to provide job exposure however such infrastructure cannot be made available to them.
2. 55% of the respondent agreed that the updated theory learning have always helped them and theory learning must be part of syllabus.
3. 49% of the respondent have agreed that there academic performance is not an indicator of their knowledge level.

Findings:

1. 34 % of the respondents have agreed that their education has contributed the skill development in them which can be expressed as 'quite'.
These skills are critical thinking, logic, ability to solve complex problem, team spirit, application of knowledge, communication skills. In addition to that they have also affirmed that there institutes have developed their field knowledge, made them focused and tried to give demonstration of work while studying.
2. 48% of the respondents have agreed that the work skills like technical skills, clarity of knowledge, practice of activity, mathematical skills, critical thinking, logical skills strategic decision making (which have been explained in NSDF) can be implemented through present education system.
3. However skills like responsibility of own work, creation of favorable environment understanding political communication like negotiation are not included in present education system as it is impossible to teach such skills through education.
4. The more than 35% of the respondent have agreed that the training arranged by the employer was 'far better than education'. The work training will complete the education but it cannot replace the education.
5. 60% of the respondent has agreed that educational institutes are able to provide job exposure however such infrastructure cannot be made available by them.
6. 55% of the respondent agreed that the updated theory learning have always helped them and theory learning must be part of syllabus.
7. 49% of the respondent have agreed that there academic performance is not an indicator of their knowledge level. In addition to that some respondent said that it is criteria for getting job.
8. One of the serious finding of the study is **employers do not measure the skill levels at the time of giving employment.** They still give emphasis on academic performance.

Conclusion:

The national skill development framework aims to make changes in present higher education system. For that European method will be considered and education process will be conducted as skill development process for learner and skill measurement process for educator. The skills which make the person employable will be the fundamental aim of this change. The present higher education system is criticized as not capable to generate sound employment and not as per international standards. However this study has concluded that present Indian employees consider themselves as potential product of present education system. Their views about present education system can be summarized as follows:

1. Good academic performance will always result in good job as employer refers the same. In other words academic performance is an indicator of employability. The present education system measures the skill levels hence majority of employers rely on academic performance sheet.
2. The present education system develops all the skills which are referred as advanced employability skills as per National skill development framework.

3. The superficial skills like work responsibility, advanced communication skills which are also expected to develop among the learner is simply impossible through education system.

On the basis of all data analysis and sub conclusions researcher has judged that the National Skill Development Framework should not make any fundamental change in present structure of higher education system. More over **the problems of higher education are not related to any quality issue**. In fact they are related to uniformity and consistency. The central government should work with state government for the issue of solving the problems of higher education and there should be uniformity all over the nation. It will make the understanding simpler and there will not be any confusion in the mind of international employer.

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