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Project Management Leadership - Leveraging India's skilled population for competitive edge

The Job Ready Indian Workforce

--- Get ready for the world of work, the India is coming!

Author: Gaurav Buddhadev

Abstract

With a stable political situation and being the youngest Country, India has significant advantages and has tremendous potential. To capitalize on these advantages and potential, India will require well trained and highly skilled workforce. The Indian corporate sector and the Indian education sector can collectively contribute to the skills development, address the country's skill gaps and help empower the young, enterprising, enthusiastic and transforming Indian workforce. To realize this potential, India needs to overcome many challenges, bring a lot of transformation in the education system and enhance the drivers of growth to build a job ready workforce.

The first part of the paper looks at the values that the corporate sector and the education sector can add to the nation and the challenges these sectors could face while adding these values. The second part of the paper looks at the different avenues that the Indian education system can transform & collaborate with the corporate sector and the different ways the government can facilitate the contribution from both these sectors. This paper will be prepared and presented to assure that the audience is engaged and informed. The audience being from Various Business Horizons, Industry Experts, Academicians and Program & Project Managers will leave the presentation with the confidence that they are more knowledgeable. The audience can contribute to the success of the presentation by their active participation in the form of thought sharing and/or asking questions.

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The Republic of India

"India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great-grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only."

--- Mark Twain

Significant Advantages to India:

India has a young, vast, aspirational, dynamic and English speaking work Force. India has a progressively rising middle class. It is projected that by 2030 India will have the single largest middle class population in the world. Higher living standards will trigger a virtuous cycle of increasing consumption and investment leading to growth.

The visionary, enterprising and supportive government initiatives have created excellent start up ecosystem in the country. After US and UK, India stands 3rd on the top startup ecosystems in the world.
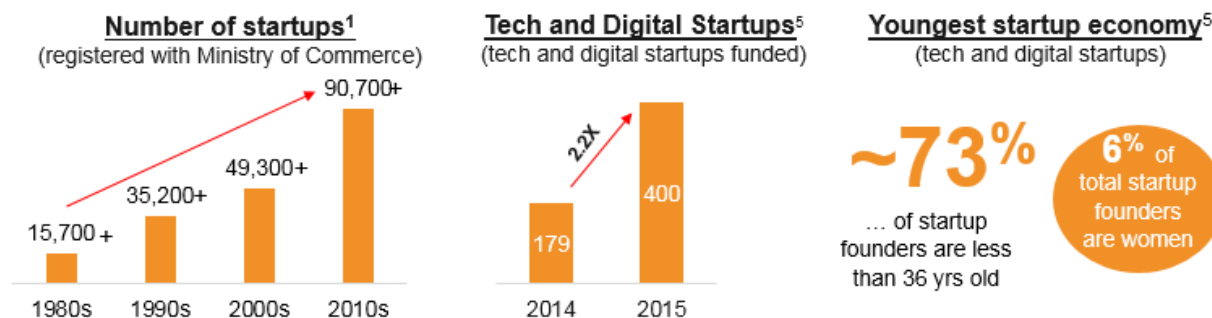

Figure 1: Entrepreneurship in India has grown significantly over the last decade.

Strong business and institutional growth, Strong financial institutions and flexible government policies are boosting investor confidence in India. The increasing investment opportunities and the robust national growth have attracted strong investor confidence in India. The increasing engagement of Indian corporations and universities in promoting innovation and entrepreneurship is another advantage.

The rapidly advancing technology is creating new opportunities. Biomedical technologies, Nanotechnology, Cloud & Cognitive Analytics, Internet of things, Space research and Satellite technologies are some of the key contributors to the technological advancement in India.

India has a large, well established and connected diaspora who contribute through remittances and continuing business engagement. The growing Indian diaspora the permeates international business has been a great asset to the nation.

Over all, the cultural, economic and technological factors in India support the development of a robust ecosystem formation.

Demographics: India's greatest opportunity to capitalize on

India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. The current average age in India is 28. By 2020, the average age in Japan will be 48, in China it will be 37, Europe 46, the United States will be 40, and India's average age is going to be 29. There are 226 million Indians in the age group of age group from 10 to 19 are going through school and ready for higher education.

As per the International Labor Organization, by 2020, we will have 160 million people in the age group of 20 to 24 who would be ready to join the work force. Similar figure for China is expected to be 94 million. By 2025, 55% of Indians will be of working age and this will constitute 25% of the global work force.

About 95% of our 12 year-olds across India can read and write. This is certainly good news. So, if we get things right, we educate and train the youth of India well, we will really transform not only our own economy and our society, but also the world at large.

Key Challenges faced by India

- Population, Poverty and Malnutrition
- Basic Health Facilities and Infrastructure
- Women's safety and Women Empowerment in rural India
- Quality of higher education, school dropouts and unemployability
- Cross border terrorism & Radicalization

<u>**Education in India**</u>

"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

— Alvin Toffler

<u>Introduction</u>

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state and local. Under various articles of the Indian Constitution, free and compulsory education is provided as a fundamental right to children between the ages of 6 and 14. From recent MHRM research data, there are around 1.3 million schools in India. The ratio of public schools to private schools in India is 7:5.

In 1947, the literacy rate of India was 16%. There were only four-lakh students in the entire country in higher education. We had 26 universities, fewer than 700 colleges. As of 2014, there are 677 universities, 37,204 colleges and 11443 stand-alone institutions in India, as per the latest statistics from the website of India's HRD ministry. These numbers would only have increased by now. Today, our literacy rate is 74%. There are about 20 million students in higher education today. So the education in India has surely expanded and grown over the years.

<u>Higher Education In India</u>

The Indian economy has enormous growth potential. This advantage can be capitalized only if India ensures that its workers have the skills to fulfill and realize this potential. For this, the India's higher education system needs to evolve to better prepare citizens for jobs and empower them with the vision and confidence to achieve their dreams. The challenge that India faces is unemployability and not unemployment. So if the higher education institutes and organizations realize the skills gaps and bridges this gap, sky will only be the limit.

India's economy has a lot of upsides, however the challenge is skills gap. Skills requirements in India are rapidly changing & higher education institutions are struggling to keep up with these changes and demands. Higher education in India has not completely met the needs of its key stakeholders – Students, Industry and Society. India must overcome inadequate education quality, quantity & access to exploit its economic & cultural advantages.

As per a research at Stanford university, India produces 1.5 Million Engineering graduates annually. Out of these, 80% of the engineering graduates in India re reports are unemployable. From employment and recruitment point of view, 48% of employers in India face difficulty in filling jobs for the open positions and 71% of corporate recruiters surveyed cannot find applicants with the sufficient practical experience.

One can never be overdressed or overeducated, but well dressed and well educated that is what the higher education system needs to do for the youth of India. Over all, the higher education institutes need to focus on building the knowledge, make the students more creative & productive, and make them for efficient in delivering & applying their knowledge to the real-life situations.

India's Skill Challenge

As per the survey done by the IBM Value for Business Institute,

- 61% of India's surveyed educators say the higher education system is unable to respond to changing societal needs.
- 59% of Indian educators surveyed say that curricula used by higher education institutions are outdated & irrelevant.
- 54% of Indian educators surveyed say India's higher education institutions have inadequate interaction with industry.
- 70% of Indian venture capitalists surveyed indicated that startups cannot find employees with the right skills.
- Only 40% of Indian industry executives surveyed said new employees recruited in local labor markets have requisite skills.

Actions for the Higher Education Institutes in India

All what needs to change is the approach of training students. The Students must be trained from the inside out. Using their strengths to attack and nullify any weaknesses they possess. Over all, to increase the productivity of the higher education –

✓ Understand and Evaluate the exact need of the Industry by increased collaborations between industry and higher education in curriculum design, industrial training & practical client experience and skill enhancements and make students more employable.

✓ Collaborate with international universities to Promote greater exposure and familiarity to the latest technologies and advancements.

✓ Conduct workshops and trainings to give the real picture of the Industry and set the right expectations of the situations before they jump to the corporate world.

✓ Team up with the government by utilizing the new government policies/initiatives and following their vision and taking the advantages of the International relations India has with the other nations.

✓ Seamless connect and engagement with the Alumni of the Institute and other Industry Experts.

✓ Create enterprising culture, build ways and means to generate awareness about the Vocational Trainings and their benefits.

✓ Using the latest technologies in IT, communication and telecommunication to reach to the rural India and cater to the needs of the budding Indian Youth in rural India.

✓ Embrace technological changes and deliver the changes to the Students in the form of Knowledge and provide the architecture to the students to evolve.

✓ Make students ready for the disruptive technologies and coping up with this change by building dynamic mindsets.

✓ Build realistic and courageous leaders who have less/no fear of failure & unknown by promoting more experimental way of learning and taking every experience as the learning experience.

Corporate Sector

"Continuous learning is the minimum requirement for success in any field"

-- Dennis Waitley

Introduction

According to Ministry of Corporate Affairs Report, as on 31.12.2012, a total of 12,89,229 companies were on the Register (consisting of 11,67,226 private limited companies and 1,22,003 public limited companies). Out of the above, 8,72,957 companies were at work, comprising 8,06,666 private limited and 66,291 public limited companies. A majority of the companies at work (about 80%) were operating in activities covered under four broad heads, namely, 'Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Renting, Business Services'(31.57%), 'Manufacturing' (22.31%), 'Wholesale and Retail Trade, Restaurants and Hotels' (15.85%), and 'Construction' (10.74%) sectors.
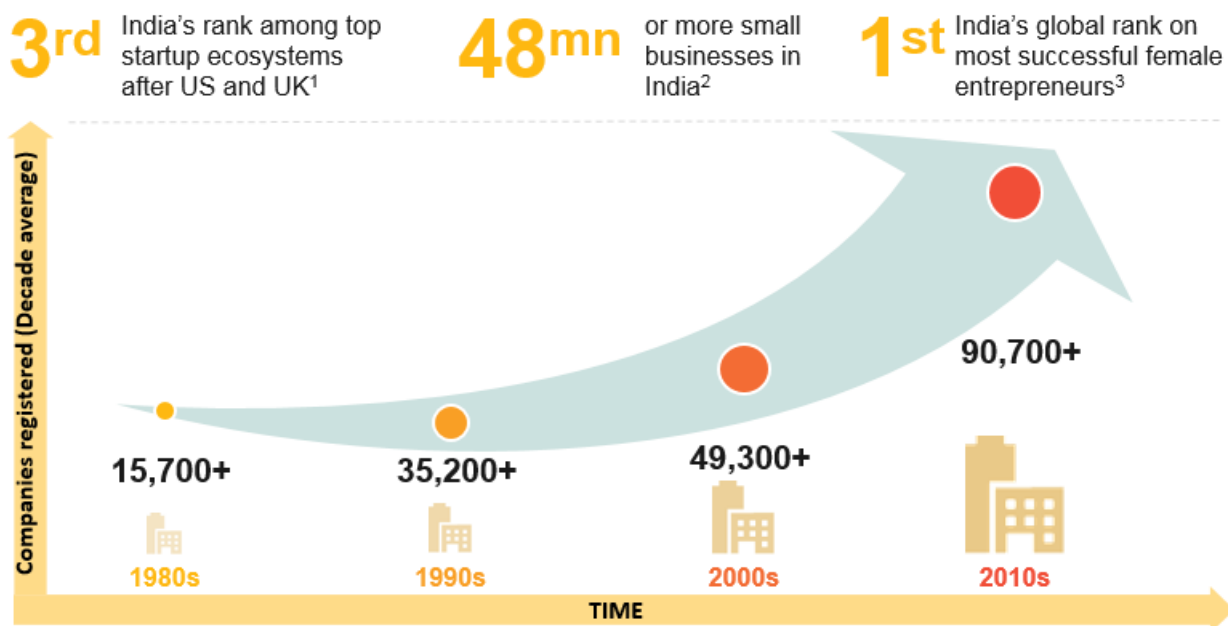
Entrepreneurship culture in India

Figure 2: India has a deep culture of entrepreneurship

Current Trend in Business, Digital Revolution and Reinvention

Technology is making the world smaller and more connected, but it is also enabling it to get smarter Technologies are creating a wave of industry and economic disruptions. Digital technologies have altered how people and businesses interact. These digital forces enable unprecedented levels of disruption and have fundamentally changed the business economics. Digital revolution is now becoming an older term and Digital reinvention has become necessary now for organizations to succeed. Continuous Innovation, incessantly evolving needs of the customers and embracing change are the new Mantras. Consumer adoption and use of digital, mobile and social media throughout the work is changing the nature of the business.

Important Changes in last 1 decade -

- 2 billion people actively using Internet and the craving of keeping in touch with the latest information.
- Over 5 billion mobile devices are being used globally and the rise of e-commerce
- Sudden and Exponential growth of Social networking sites and applications and the desire of people for communicating virtually
- "Applification" of everything, 77bn mobile application downloads till 2014 and thousands of applications still build on everyday basis.

To succeed in this constantly disruptive environment, successful organizations will have to offer new experiences, possess new focus, build new expertise and devise new ways to work. It requires business leaders to digitally reinvent their enterprise. A new generation of technology savvy customers have already started demanding sophisticated and tailored experiences.

Actions for the Corporate Sector

Apart from the regular economic activities and business,

- ✓ Embrace new technologies, ecosystems and constantly changing customer needs and deliver creative and innovative solutions to customer challenges.
- ✓ Collaborate with the higher education institutes and training centers and invest on research and development.

- ✓ Work hand in hand with the government and delivering cost effective solutions to the pressing problems of the society.

- ✓ Work together with the organizations of the same sector and build rapport with the other sector organizations to device products and services to the end user to make the end user's life more smooth and easy.

- ✓ Work along with Non-Governmental Organizations and contribute to the upliftment of the society at large.

- ✓ Build rapport with the education sectors by signing MOUs with the institutes/colleges to help the build more realistic and creative professionals.

- ✓ Assist colleges in fine tuning their curriculum with the latest need of the Industry and Technology and designing the curriculum which is more dynamic and which makes students more Job ready.

- ✓ Work directly with the government to capitalize on economic development and build a more dynamic and development India.

- ✓ The established organizations should work with the startups and provide organized mentorship platforms for startups.

Government Sector

"Good governance with good intentions is the hallmark of our government. Implementation with integrity is our core passion. "

- Narendra Modi

Introduction

A new India was born on 26th May 2014 when the 15th Prime Minister of India took the oath in the swearing in ceremony changing the dynamics of the political system of India. The BJP had won 282 seats and their alliance National Democratic Alliance won a total of 336 seats in the 543-seat Lok Sabha, the strongest mandate since the 1984 elections where Indian National Congress had won. With the new government taking the charge and started governing the nation, they have introduced some very important and critical policies targeting some of the grave challenges faced by the nation. Here is a synopsis of some of these important Policies/Schemes.

Important Government Policies/Schemes

Sr.No.	Policy/Scheme Name	Target Sector/ Challenge faced by nation	Purpose	Lauch Date
1	DIGITAL INDIA	Industry and Knowledge revolution	To transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.	1st July 2015
2	SKILL INDIA	Education Sector, Skilling and Re-skilling India	Skill India focuses on creating jobs for youth, the govt has decided to revamp the antiquated industrial training centres that will skill over 20 lakh youth annually and create 500 million jobs by 2020	5th July 2015
3	MAKE IN INDIA	Entrepreneurship, Business Sector	To promote India a manufacturing hub, Economic transformation in India, To eliminate unnecessary law and regulation.	25th September 2014
4	SWACHH BHARAT	General Health and Cleanliness	Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a national campaign by the government of India aims to accomplish the vision of clean India by 2nd October 2019.	2nd October 2014
5	SMART CITIES MISSION	Urban Renewal	A mission to develop 100 cities (the target has been revised to 109 cities) all over the country making them citizen friendly and sustainable	25th June 2015
6	PRADHAN MANTRI JAN-DHAN YOJANA	Financial Services to less priviledged section	To Access to various financial services like availability of basic savings bank account, access to need-based credit, remittances facility, insurance and pension to the excluded sections i.e. weaker sections & low-income	28th August 2014
7	PRADHAN MANTRI SURAKSHA BIMA YOJANA	Accidential Insurance	The government scheme is accident insurance coverage and is affordable for all sects of people.	9th May 2015
8	PRADHAN MANTRI JEEVA JYOTI BIMA YOJANA	Life Insurance	It is government backed life insurance scheme. It is open all sects of Indian civilians	9th May 2015
9	ATAL PENSION SCHEME	Pension in unorganized sectors	The Atal pension scheme is targeted at unorganised sector workers	9th May 2015

Chart 1: Important Government Policies/Schemes

Actions for the government

Apart from the regular governance and taking care of the challenges faced by the nation (as mentioned in the first part of the paper)

✓ Promote startup ecosystems and build a more balanced and continuous growth of the startups. One of the big challenge the startups are facing is sustained growth and progressive balance sheet. Despite a strong entrepreneurial environment, more than 90 % of startups in India fail in their first 5 years.

✓ Encourage businesses and educational institutions to engage with startup entrepreneurs by providing physical or virtual environments or structures to make partnering more conducive.

- ✓ Support establishment of platforms that facilitate communication, knowledge sharing and innovation between Industry and Higher Education.

- ✓ Establish and Enable a vibrant investor environment to ensure adequate funding.

- ✓ Foster environment that encourages ethical leadership and risk taking.

- ✓ Leverage innovations from startups or startup-traditional business collaborations to address chronic economic challenges.

- ✓ Discover and apply startup innovations to address inadequate physical and social infrastructure, healthcare access, education standards and other areas of strategic importance.

- ✓ Simplify regulations for setting up new businesses. Simplify tax policies and support global connectivity and engagement.

- ✓ Promote and enhance the Vocational Training and Education and ensure that it reaches to the weakest sessions of the society.

Conclusion

Over all, the future of India looks bright. However, there are five key areas that will continuous attention, support and actions for the sustained development and success of the nation – improved governance, excellent collaboration between the education and the corporate sector, enlargement of the physical and social infrastructure, broader capital formation approaches and improved skill sets to realize the true potential of India. If India can bridge the skill challenges and gaps and build skillful professionals to meet the needs of the Industry and the society, India will be the next big economy to watch for. If India can take up a leadership role in emerging global economic ecosystems and continue to grow the way it has grown, India will surely be in a stronger position to show new and progressive directions to the world. If India can realize this goal of strategic global engagement and leadership, this time will truly become the ***Indian Century.***

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Thank you very much for providing me this opportunity!