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Investing in Youth: Strategy for Viksit Bharat @2047

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Abstract-

Higher education Institutes (HEIs) play a vital role in a country by providing access to education, providing skill manpower and entrepreneurs, generating knowledge and contributing to the economy. Today when most of the youth is unemployed in India wasting their most valuable time and energy in unproductive activities HEIs can play a vital role in developing these students according to the needs of the country by imparting them market/industry demanded and future ready skills and traits and developing personal qualities like courage, self-reliance, adaptability with problem solving approach. These institutes can help in developing the youth as innovators, creators, inventors who can confront with coming generation challenges and find sustainable solutions for all the problems. Hence objective of this paper is to find out the strategies how investment in youth through higher education can bring a catalyst change and help India in becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047 from a developing country of now.

Keywords: Higher Education; Higher Education Institutes (HEIs); India; Viksit Bharat; Youth

Introduction-

India is a nation of youth passing with demographic dividend stage where more than 65% of its population is in the working age between 15-64 years with least dependency currently with an average working age of 29 years. It is estimated that by 2030 its young population will be of 85 crores. While India has set an ambitious target of becoming Viksit Bharat by 2047 or a 5 trillion economy by 2030. The goal cannot be achieved without investing in its vast population that is youth. For this India has to focus on education, skilling, health, entrepreneurship and productive engagement of youths in solving the problems of the society and that can be done through quality education. Vivekananda once said, "Development of a nation cannot be possible without quality education." As Education is not merely about imparting knowledge but about empowering learners to reach their full potential- academically, socially and ethically. As Henry Ford also said, "Where success is concerned people are not measured

in inches, pounds or degrees or family backgrounds; they are measured by the size of people's thinking, how big we think determines the size of our accomplishments."

As the world is changing very rapidly, the coming generations will confront with more complex challenges from climate change to cyber security, ethical uses of all technologies and natural resources around the globe etc. Solution to the complex problems of the society will require out of the box thinking across disciplines. Creativity, more interdisciplinary and experiential learning, problem solving inside and outside the classrooms or the laboratories will be a necessary requisite for it. HEIs will have to produce learners with a new mindset. Learners who are innovators, inventors, creators with problem solving approach, passionate and not conformists, can apply their learning to solve real world problems. It requires revision of whole of our higher education system, rethinking of present system of degree distribution to designing course curriculum. HEIs must have to reimagine their teaching methodologies to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real world applications. The bookish knowledge alone will not help the youth to realise the goal of life.

Objectives

- To find out total working population of different age groups of India
- To find out the skill gap of Indian youth
- To find out the government initiative in skilling or providing employment to youth
- Suggesting the strategies to harness youth power to make India Viksit Bharat by 2047

Research Methodology-

This paper is based on secondary data taken from different resources and experiential learning that researcher has achieved during her more than two and half decade of academic experience in HEIs and also working as an academic leader of a higher institute from last many years, focussing on skilling the youth of rural areas especially girls of poor and lower middle-class families and working with many skills organizations like PMKVY, RSETI, SIDBI, MSME TC and others.

Discussion-

According to Report released by State Bank of India number of children from 0-14 yrs are decreasing in India. In 1991 they were of 36.4 crores which will be 34 crores in 2026. Percentage wise they will reduce from 37% in 1991 to 24.3% in 2026. (Gupta, 2025) Likewise senior citizens (>60 yrs) population is doubled in this period. It was 7.9 crore in 2001 and will be 15 crores in 2026. But the brighter part is working age population which was 58.6 crores in 2001 will increase to 91 crores in 2026. It means if we are able to harness the full potential of this youth power we can become Viksit Bharat by 2047.

In 2025 only 7% youth of India get formal skill training while in Germany, Japan and South Korea this ratio has reached from 70-90%. Though India has opened 7 more IITs, & more IIMs, 15 more AIIMS but they are a drop in the ocean with vast growing youth population that is entering (approx. 18 lakh/month) into the market every year around 2 crores. India currently requires 1.2 crore jobs per year for the youth coming in the market means 10 Lakhs per month. For eg. Uttar Pradesh has 2 IITs one in one in Kanpur (>65 yrs. old) one BHU (Engineering college converted into IIT) but population of youth has increased manifold in last 100-150 yrs in UP. Are 2 IITs and 1 IIM sufficient for 25 crore Population?

The Report "Skills for the Future: Transforming India's workforce Landscape" released by Union skill minister Shri Jayant Chaudhary in July 2025 that used PLFS data from 2017-18 to 2023-24 revealed that over 50% of graduates are employed in roles like clerks, machine operators and sales workers (Skill Level 2) while 38.23% of graduates are in skill level 4 jobs, 28.12% of post graduates are in mid skill occupations pointing to underutilized talent. Regional disparities are stark. In 2023-24 just 4.6% of Bihar's workforce was in skill level 4 jobs, compared to 33% in Chandigarh and over 20% in Goa,



Pondicherry and Kerela. Delhi (9.59%) leads in skill level 3 roles while Uttar Pradesh (1.33%) and Bihar (0.94%) lag. The report also highlights some positive trends. Delhi, Pondicherry, Goa have seen modest increase in mid and high skill job shares.

The report released by Azim Premji university titled “State of Working India 2026” shows the situation of joblessness among Indian graduates. It found that around 67% of unemployed youth (around 1.1crore) in 2023 were graduates up from 32% in 2004 (30 lakh). (see the table) While in the same period the share of graduates among youth has risen from 12% in 2004 (1.9 crore) to 28% in 2023 (6.3 crore). The report found out the between 2004 to 2023 around 5 million graduated were added every year while the number of employed graduated rose by only around 28 lakh annually out of which only 17 lakh were salaried. The report draw on official databases of last four decades explains various reasons of joblessness among graduates including mismatch of their skills means maximum unemployment is among those who have a degree but are not meaningfully skilled or educated. This is the fault of our education system that creates youth who are good for nothing.

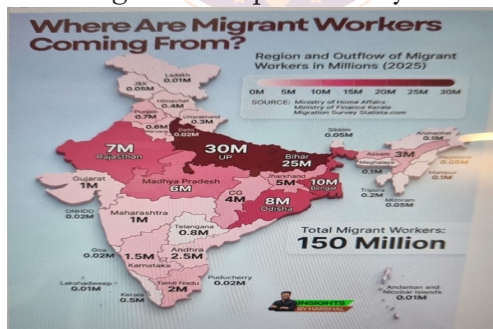
DEGREE OF JOBLESSNESS **TOI**

Year	Graduates		Unemployed Graduates	
	As Share Of 20-29-Year-Olds	No. (In Lakh)	As % Of 20-29-Yr-Olds Unemployed	No. (In Lakh)
1983	4%	50	13%	7
1993	6%	90	22%	20
2004	10%	190	32%	30
2011	16%	320	44%	40
2017	22%	490	46%	100
2023	28%	630	67%	110

Sources and notes: NSS, EUS and PLFS, various years

Source: Times of India, Azim Premji University Report 2026

If we go towards non-graduates or illiterate workers the migration map given below shows us the picture. It shows that over 150 millions workers move across India in search of livelihood from states like Bihar, UP, West Bengal and Odissa not for aspiration or opportunity but for subsistence work and the pitiable truth about them is they earn less than Rs. 10000 per month shows clear picture of job problem especially in rural areas low agricultural productivity and regional economic balance.



Source: Azim Premji University report 2026

Though government has started many PMKVY and NKVM but according to different reports approximately 30% trained youth did not get employment even after training and those who got, got temporary or low paid jobs. (Shukla, 2025) This means only providing certificate is not sufficient. It’s the quality of training and its linkages with industry that will decide its success. This problem is more severe in rural and suburban areas where training centres are less and not qualitative, lacks digital connectivity or technical training. Without filling this gap of rural and suburban India skill problem of India will not solve.

Take eg. of India’s Agriculture sector where 42% of workforce work today but it’s contribution in total GDP of India is only 18%, a low productivity sector also rural regions facing problem of poor infrastructure, education and health facilities so no farmer want their children to continue in it hence India facing rural to urban migration but this sector is having high potential if train the rural youth and



farmers in diversified farming along with multiple or cash crops, associating some small businesses with it like dairy farming, poultry, organic manure making, mushroom cultivation, aromatic plants or nursery, many items making from agricultural waste like broom, bamboo items or disposables etc. This is why recently many MBAs and retired soldiers are returning to farming while associating it with small businesses like food processing, export market or smart Bazaars supplying fresh vegetables and fruits or organic products. Azim Premji university report 2026 also says that during the post covid period from 2021-22 to 2023-24 maximum employment rose in agriculture sector. Out of the 8.3 crore jobs added between 2021-22 to 2023-24 4 crores added in agriculture with women accounting major share of 3.8 crore. (Premji Report 2026)

RBI report 2026 also says that states like Bihar, UP, MP, Rajasthan, Jharkhand have the potential to become developed states provided they reap the benefits of demographic dividend of their young age population by providing them right kind of skill and education and increasing their expenditure on education.

Government initiatives in this direction-

- **Startups India**– more than 2,00,000 startups and 117 unicorns after 2014
- **EPFO**– linked schemes to support employment, payments up to Rs. 15000/month for new formal workers
- **PMKVY**- from 2015 going on trained 14.3 million, certified 11.4 million but placement has declined to 5% in PMKVY 3.0
- **RSETI**- 590 institutes and BSL's village coaching scheme empowering rural youth and providing rural entrepreneurship training with a short-term course (6-60 days) so far from its establishment in 2007-08 RSETI has trained 55.53 lakhs rural youth with a settlement rate of around 73% (40.27 Lakh). (Singh, 2025)
- **Other schemes**– DDU-GKY, NATS, ITIs, JSS- together training millions
- **For Women**– Lakhpati Didi, Drone Didi, Bima Sakhi Yojna, Establishment of women's hostels, creches, women centric SHGs initiatives still female LFPR is as low as 19.7%
- **Union Budget**– 2024-25 upgrading of 1000 ITIs and 2025-26 Rs. 60000 crores through CSR fund for skilling to make India skill capital of the world, youth apprenticeship and Internships programs in 500 firms offering Rs. 5000 stipend/month

Suggestions and Conclusion-

No doubt government is taking steps in this direction and many steps have been taken in this direction as start-up India, Digital India, investing in infrastructure, skill education but we need to go beyond skill India programme and new education policy. Recently there was a news that in last 11 years 27 crore people have come out of extreme poverty and in rural areas it has come down from 18.4% to 2.8% while in urban areas it has reduced from 10.7% to 1.1% but still 5.44 crore people are still living below the poverty line and are unable to earn \$3 per day and also the problem of sustainability. Though India Has ranked 4 in the world on equality index in 2025 but What should be done to bring these people out of extreme poverty as spoke by Manoj Sinha secretary Lucknow in event "Invest UP" that we should focus on zero poverty by providing skill education to all youth and state of the art training and in this HEIs can play a vital role. Given the support and vast opportunities these HEIs should be given the task to train the youth of their local area. For this Instead of opening universities or HEIs in one area or urban areas we have to open government funded state of the art universities in each and every district covering a radius of maximum 30-35 kms. Focussing on skill and providing them task to first do skill mapping of that area and find the skills required in that area along with the skills demanded in the world. accordingly design courses/curricula according to the needs of that area sitting with the industry people and businessman of that area and train youth of that area into it with state-of the art technology. Special courses should be designed for general public especially women, businessmen,



farmers of rural areas to bring them into productivity sector. Only then India can achieve the target of 50% GER in higher education from the current 28.4% and that too employable. Take eg. of Hyderabad skill university of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Vishwakarma skill university of Haryana or skill university of Delhi or NIELIT (Digital University) We can open these in every state or if population is more many universities can be opened in a state.

Another alternative can be till we have capital shortage or infrastructure to open these universities we can open model skill colleges in every district or upgrade existing colleges into modern skill colleges as recently Haryana has done by providing an initial fund of Rs. 20000 crores to open modern skill colleges in every district. For skilling in rural areas mobile vans equipped with digital classrooms can be useful. Accompanying with local industry is necessary with internship and apprenticeship facility.

We must have to develop habit of life-long learning in our youth as technology is changing very fast and to keep pace with it everybody requires upskilling after 3-5 years. In this online training and micro-programs can help. If we have to become Viksit Bharat by 2047 or a 5 trillion economy by 2030, we must have to harness the potential of our youth by providing them right kind of skills instead of mere degrees before it is too late or we shift into demographic disaster/loss. Thus, this is high time to do so otherwise it will remain a utopian dream whatever efforts you do at other level because a nation is what its people make.

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