

Shaping a future-ready Workforce

Context : As global job markets undergo rapid transformation driven by technology, climate goals, and economic shifts, preparing a future-ready workforce has become essential. India stands at a critical juncture to bridge skill gaps through educational reforms and industry-academia collaboration.

Key Drivers of Labour Market Transformation (WEF Report 2025)

- Technological advancements and digital access identified as top drivers by **60% of employers**.
- **Other critical forces by 50% of employers** : demographic shifts, geo-economic fragmentation, economic uncertainties, and green transition..
- **Climate change mitigation** is both a job creator (e.g., renewable energy) and a disruptor due to business model adaptations.
- **Dynamic labour market outlook**:
 - 170 million new jobs projected globally.
 - 92 million roles at risk of becoming obsolete (Job displacement).

Employer Priorities & Workforce Demands

- **Employers are focusing on:**
 - Workforce training
 - Employee well-being
 - Wage increases
- **59% of workforce needs reskilling in:**
 - Resilience
 - Analytical thinking
 - Technological literacy
- **High-growth roles include:**
 - Big Data specialists
 - AI engineers
- **Rising emphasis on soft skills:**
 - Adaptability
 - Emotional intelligence
 - Leadership

Insights from QS World Future Skills Index

- India ranks 2nd globally in preparedness for AI and green skills.
- High score in 'Future of Work' (99.1) indicates strong demand-side readiness.
- Skill Fit gap: Low score of 59.1, highlighting supply-side deficiencies.
- Poor performance in:
 - 'Academic Readiness' (Rank: 26)
 - Innovation & sustainability (Score: 15.6/100)
 - Entrepreneurial mindset and R&D investments

Opportunities for Reform

- **Need for curriculum transformation:**
 - Integrate critical thinking, resilience, entrepreneurial skills
 - Use of experiential and interdisciplinary learning
- **Encourage initiatives like:**
 - Hackathons
 - Startup incubators
 - Design-thinking workshops
- **Green curriculum imperative:**
 - Establish sustainability research centres
 - Promote green technologies
 - Support student-led community environmental initiatives
- **Strengthen academia-industry collaboration:**
 - Co-create curricula
 - Provide internships and mentorships
 - Develop job-ready graduates

Institutional and Governmental Action Points

- **Faculty development through:**
 - Training, certifications, global exposure
- **Government must focus on:**
 - Investing in research, innovation, skill development

- Expanding digital infrastructure, especially in rural/semi-urban areas
- **Call for a paradigm shift in higher education:**
 - Make the system agile, innovative, and aligned with global workforce demands

