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TOPIC: EMPLOYMENT

Shaping a future-ready workforce

India's Workforce Readiness: Adapting to a Rapidly Changing Global Job Market

1. Context: The Urgent Challenge Ahead

- India is facing a **critical challenge in preparing its workforce** to meet the demands of a rapidly changing global job market.
- **Technological innovation, climate change, and economic disruptions** are transforming the nature of jobs across the world.
- Reports like the *Future of Jobs Report 2025* (World Economic Forum) and the *QS World Future Skills Index* stress the importance of aligning education systems and skills training with future workforce demands.

2. Global Drivers of Labour Market Change

- The global job market is undergoing structural changes influenced by:
 - **Technological advancements** (AI, automation, digital platforms)
 - **Changing demographics and ageing populations**
 - **Economic uncertainty and deindustrialization**
 - **Global political tensions and conflicts**
 - **Climate change and the shift to renewable energy**
- Projections by 2030:
 - **170 million new jobs** could be created worldwide.
 - **92 million existing jobs** may be lost due to automation and shifting industry needs.
- **60% of global employers** believe tech innovation and digital access will shape the future of jobs.
- **50% of employers** highlight the impact of economic transformation and decline of traditional sectors.

3. The Growing Need for Reskilling and Upskilling



- Companies are now emphasizing:
 - **Training and reskilling employees**
 - **Improving employee well-being and wage structures**
 - **Investing in mental health and adaptability**
- Around **59% of workers** will need to acquire **new skills** to stay relevant.
- High-demand skills include:
 - **Analytical thinking**
 - **Technology use and development**
 - **Resilience and self-management**
 - **Big Data analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
- **Soft skills** like emotional intelligence, adaptability, problem-solving, and leadership are becoming as important as technical knowledge.

4. India's Position in the Global Skills Landscape

- As per the *QS World Future Skills Index*:
 - India **ranks 2nd globally** in readiness for **AI and green skills**, reflecting strong potential.
 - However, '**Skills Fit**' score is **only 59.1**, suggesting a disconnect between available skills and job market needs.
- Strengths:
 - **Score of 99.1 in identifying and hiring future skill talent**
- Gaps:
 - **26th rank in Academic Readiness**: Indicates weak support for innovation and entrepreneurship in education.
 - **Very low score of 15.6 in Innovation and Sustainability Readiness**: Shows India's lack of preparedness for green and eco-focused jobs.
 - **Low R&D spending** reduces India's global competitiveness in developing clean tech, smart infrastructure, and renewable solutions.

5. Education Reform as the Way Forward



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- India needs to **upgrade its education ecosystem** to match global trends:
 - Shift from rote learning to **real-world, application-based education**.
 - Focus on **creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship** in higher education.
- Strategies to implement:
 - **Hackathons**, innovation challenges, and **startup incubation centres** in colleges.
 - **Design-thinking workshops** and project-based learning to develop critical problem-solving skills.
 - Introduce **green-focused curriculum** aligned with local environmental challenges and sustainable practices.
- Universities and vocational institutes must:
 - **Collaborate with industries** to co-design job-relevant courses.
 - Offer **internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training** to make students industry-ready.
- **Teacher training** is equally important:
 - Teachers need exposure through **certification programs, hands-on workshops, and international exchange opportunities**.

6. Role of Government and Policy in Workforce Transformation

- The Indian government must **lead the transformation** by:
 - Increasing **investment in skill development programs**
 - Building **digital infrastructure in rural areas** to reduce urban-rural skill gaps
 - Promoting **research and innovation funding**, especially in green tech, AI, and renewable energy
- A **flexible and futuristic policy framework** is needed to:
 - Reform higher education institutions to adapt to rapidly changing job roles
 - Encourage **lifelong learning and continuous upskilling**
 - Align **vocational education with national and global skill standards**

7. Conclusion: Preparing India for the Future

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- India must act now to bridge the gap between **education and employment** in a transforming global economy.
- Building a future-ready workforce requires:
 - Strategic partnerships between academia, industry, and government
 - Investment in innovation, digital access, and teacher empowerment
 - A national vision that treats **education and skills as core development tools**
- By adopting these reforms, India can ensure **sustainable economic growth, social equity, and global competitiveness** in the years ahead.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/shaping-a-future-ready-workforce/article69423483.ece>

