

## Skill development issues, challenges and strategies in Bihar the vocational education

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### Abstract

This paper reviews the current state of education, skills development, and employment for youth of Bihar, and considers the challenges facing Bihar's skills development system. In Bihar, young people who will soon be entering the labor market constitute the largest segment of the demographic structure. The majority of young people have limited access to education and training, and most find work in the informal sector.

As India moves progressively towards becoming a 'Knowledge economy' it becomes increasingly important that the government should focus on advancement of skills and these skills have to be relevant to the emerging economic environment. In old economy, skill development largely meant development of shop floor or manual skills. Even in this area there are major deficiencies in our work force which need to be rectified. In new or knowledge economy the skill sets can range from professional, conceptual, managerial, operational behavioral to interpersonal skills and inter-domain skills.

This paper has been prepared at the concerned for the Government of Bihar. Despite the fact that Bihar has the fastest growth rate (17.06% in 2014-15) in India, difficulties have led the Government to conclude that far more needs to be done to engender more employment opportunities for the majority of people of Bihar, to enable them to participate in the benefits of growth and to contribute to that growth. To do this they must have education that equips them for the labor market. One of the sources of the skilled workforce is the vocational education. However, the government realizes that the system is not being able to appropriately respond to the needs of the labor market. A key issue, then, is what reforms or interventions are needed to improve the effectiveness of the system. Answering that question is far from easy and this paper attempts to provide some options for doing so. On the one hand Bihar faces the future with its changing realities (Globalization, competitiveness and the knowledge economy), on the other hand it must deal with the nature of its established traditions and structures.

In this paper I am looking for, skills development for employability, which stresses practical, technical and vocational, rather than largely academic knowledge, skills and understandings shall be referred to as technical and vocational education. Over time, and in different states, various terms have been and are being used to describing elements of the field that are now conceived as comprising technical and vocational education. These include apprenticeship, training, vocational education, industrial arts, technical education, technological-vocational education, occupational education, vocational education and training and career and technical education.

But other aspects should change if people are to move out of poverty. Over half of the labour force is still engaged in rural activities. Although there has been a significant movement away from agriculture this has still left most of the labour force, over 90 percent, working in the informal sector, much of it at low levels of productivity.

**Keywords:** skill development, vocational education, Bihar

### Introduction

Skills and knowledge are the motivating forces of economic growth and social development of any nation or state. They have become even more important given the increasing pace of globalization and technological changes provide both challenges that is taking place in the world. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

Even after more than fifty years of Indian independence the struggle of underprivileged to get equal rights and opportunities still continuing in the country. Nonetheless, over the years, while the status of skilled people in the states of south India has shown signs of significant improvement, the other states, particularly the Hindi heartland states, which include Bihar, have lagged behind. Much has been said about the prevalent nature of social and economic backwardness in Bihar. According to a recent study conducted by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation 26 out of the 100 poorest districts in India, are

from Bihar. This constitutes more than two third of the state (Source: District level deprivation in the new millennium).

Bihar is one of the most gifted states of the country in terms of its geographical location, fertile soil, bountiful water resources, and a vibrant culture rich in history. Bihar is a land locked State, having massive work force of hard working intelligent population and the huge supplier of human resources in the country. The facilities for imparting training are quite inadequate in view of its population. Bihar needs to create an army of skilled manpower to fulfil the demand of Industry to keep pace with its technological demands for the creation of such skilled manpower. The state must have training institutions of high quality. It requires creation of new Hi-tech Training institutes and up gradation of existing ITIs. Government has opened at least one ITI in all districts and one WITI in all divisions. Total Seating Capacity of ITIs & ITCs is 88901.

## Data and methodology

The proposed study mainly is descriptive in nature. It humorlessly based on secondary data and information which is collected from the concerned sources as per need of the research. The relevant books, documents of various ministries/departments and national and international organizations, articles, papers and web-sites are used in this study.

## Findings/Results

India's transition to one of the largest and fastest growing global economies, among all states in India. Bihar is one of the best growing economy (approx 10.6%) during the last decade has been a remarkable phenomenon. In order to sustain its growth trajectory, an efficient and continuous system of skill development for its workforce is critically imperative for India and particular to Bihar. Therefore, this section is devoted to portray the current skill capacity of Bihar; the major challenges in the successful implementation of skill development initiatives along with their way outs or suggestions.

## Issues

Bihar has made fast stride since 2006 in terms of growth rates and human development indicators. Yet, the poverty levels in the state show signs of sluggishness. As per a Planning Commission bulletin of March 2012, while the population under the poverty line at the national level declined by 7.3 percent between 2004-05 and 2009-10, the decline in the case of Bihar was a mere 0.9 percent. The corresponding figures in the neighboring states of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa were 11.9 percent and 20.2 respectively. Is the low skill base in Bihar one of the important contributory factors to this sluggish trend in poverty reduction?

The demographic profile of Bihar, the livelihood pattern of its masses and the low skill baseline indeed point to a strong causal relationship. As per the 2011 Census, out of the total population of 104 million, 40 million were in the age group of 15 to 29 years and the child population in the age-group 5 to 14 years was 20 million. Further, about 60 percent of the rural population in Bihar is landless and depends on labour alone for its subsistence. Yet, the existing skill baseline that determines the livelihoods prospects of this youthful population remains quite dismal. An IIPA scoping study on skill development commissioned by the Government of Bihar reports that in the age group of 15-29 years, only 0.3 percent reported 'to be receiving formal vocational training' as on the date of the survey and 0.2 percent reported 'to have received formal vocational training'. Another 1-2 percent reported to have received non-formal vocational training. Thus, "in each category, the all-India averages were 4 to 12 times their Bihar counterpart." A similar picture emerges from a district-wise assessment of skill demand sponsored by the National Skill Development Corporation.

India has target of creating 500 million skilled manpower by 2022. Thus, there is a need for increasing capacity and capability of skill development programs. To create a pool of skilled manpower in numbers with adequate skill that meets the employment requirements across the various sectors of the national economy.

The IIPA study highlights the following baseline based on NSS data for 2004-05:

- In Bihar, in the age group of 15-29 years: (i) only 0.3

percent reported 'to be receiving formal vocational training' as on the date of the survey; (ii) 0.2 percent reported 'to have received formal vocational training', and; (c) another 1-2 percent reported 'to have received non-formal vocational training'. By allowing a grace mark of another one percent for those who may have received non-formal training, the study concludes that only 3 percent of the persons in this age group in Bihar were either receiving or had received any vocational training (formal and non-formal) as compared to an estimated 15 percent at the all-India level in this age group. These ratios were lower for females and in the rural areas of Bihar (IIPA study).

- The low educational attainment baseline in Bihar and particularly the dismal literacy levels in the lower MPCE classes is a major constraint. Among persons who were currently not attending school, the percentage of persons who never attended any educational institutions in Bihar at 66 percent was almost twice that of the all India level of 35 percent. Similarly, the drop-out rates at the middle school level was quite high-72.4 percent and 58 percent for rural and urban males respectively, and 74.3 percent and 63.2 percent for rural and urban females respectively. While school enrolment has improved considerably in the recent past, the dropout rates at the middle and secondary school levels continue to be high. The Bihar Economic Survey 2011-12 also highlights this as a constraint in skilling the masses (IIPA study).
- There is a limited choice of different trades in Bihar. Training is being imparted in the state only for 132 skill trades. Out of these, 50 trades are in ITIs/ITCs (21 courses of two-year duration and 29 courses of one-year duration) and the remaining 82 are in other institutes/departments of the state. In other institutions, 37 courses were of more than six-month duration, 22 courses were of six-month duration and 23 courses spanned less than 6 months. A few courses were only of a month's duration. The highest number of trades of ITIs/ITCs is in 'the building and construction sector' and 'ITES or BPO sector' (7 trades each). Similarly, the highest number of trades of other institutions are in 'textiles, apparel and garments sector' (23 trades) followed by 'health care services sector' (13 trades) and 'chemicals and pharmaceutical sector' (9 trades) (IIPA study).
- In case of males in the rural areas, the most demanded field of training was found to be 'mechanical engineering trades' followed by 'electrical and 'electronic engineering trades'. In the urban areas, it was 'computer trades' followed by 'electrical and 'electronic engineering trades'. Among the rural female youth, the demand was a little different. About 21 percent had training in the field of 'computer trades'. Among the urban females, the most important choices were 'textile related trades and artisan/craftworks/handicrafts'. In Bihar, ITIs and ITCs played a major role in providing training to male youths. The Institutes for tailoring, embroidery, and stitch-crafts played the major role in providing training to females.(IIPA study)

## Challenges

Today, youth in developing countries who are seeking work face great difficulty. First, in the globalized era, competition has intensified among firms and industries, requiring them to improve the efficiency and quality of their products and services. This forces them to hire fewer, but more skilled,

workers. Thus, the entry requirements for youth seeking work have become higher and tougher. Second, the global economic crises and other trends have led firms and industries to engage in massive restructuring, resulting in fewer new job openings and growing unemployment, particularly among youth. Globally, some 200 million people are unemployed, including 75 million under age 25 (World Bank 2012a) <sup>[11]</sup>. Third, technological change, particularly the development of information and communication technology (ICT), is occurring at unprecedented speed, requiring workers to have more, and more complex, cognitive skills than ever. Moreover, the global economy is increasingly becoming “knowledge-based” (OECD 1997) <sup>[2]</sup>, demanding a higher intensity of knowledge and skills to do one’s job. Fourth, global labor markets are becoming increasingly casualised and flexible (Standing 1999). Firms are adopting more flexible employment practices. An increased proportion of workers, especially new to the labor market, must now work as casual labor, without job security and stable career prospects. Finally, because more people are migrating across national borders seeking work, youth from developing countries are increasingly exposed to global labor markets, competing even with workers outside their own countries who offer more knowledge, skills, qualifications, or competencies, or for lower wages.

To meet the challenges, Bihar is now ready for special preparedness and massive deployment of resources. As you know that though Bihar is the huge supplier of human resources in the country. The facilities for imparting training are quite inadequate in view of its population.

### Strategies

- A holistic and balanced expansion approach would be adopted to open New ITIs to target uncovered area. Thrust would be on consolidating and improving the capacity and quality of the existing institutions. New institutions would be set up to bridge the imbalances and disparities across state and to address special economic, social and technological needs of the state as well as country.
- Traditional education would be supplemented with skill based studies.
- Focus of modular courses and short term courses: With fast changing skills in the labour market, focus would be on short, relevant and effective courses that would get candidates into the workplace.
- Training of trainers to create new knowledge and improve teaching standards. Refresher courses for Trainers are also necessary. Initiatives to improve the quality and availability of Instructors in training institutions need to be launched in a mission mode.
- Panchayats, municipalities and other local bodies will be involved in skill development and employment generation at the local level.
- For skills development, State has taken a dominant role in terms of investment and being a facilitator.
- Skill development centers at village and block level will be promoted to provide skill development opportunity as well as to act as one-step kiosks with information on the local labor market/employment, vocational learning opportunities and support schemes.

### Vocational Training Scenario in Bihar

Reflecting the central government’s growing interest in and

commitment to skills development, the various state governments have also recently accelerated their efforts in that direction. The experience of Bihar, one of the most industrially and educationally backward states, is of interest. To expand access to skills development for less advantaged social groups, the Bihar government formulated a well-defined affirmative action program. This scheme tries to improve access to skills development at ITIs for women, disadvantaged groups (SC, ST, and OBCs), minorities, the disabled, and economically challenged people. In Bihar, 50% of students may be selected on the basis of general merit, and the other 50% are reserved (22.5% for SC; and 27% for OBCs). One third of the total seats must be reserved for women, and 3% for the physically disabled. Recently the government has passed the bill for 35 % seats reserved for women in all state government jobs. Moreover, though general-merit trainees now get a certain amount through different scholarships from the government, SC/ST and women trainees are fully reimbursed. These arrangements have improved their access to training at ITIs. In fact, many ITIs in Bihar accept more students from these groups than their quotas require.

### Innovative Reforms at Training Institutes

Reflecting the changing policy environment for skills development, training institutions have recently introduced several new initiatives.

#### Craftsman Training Programme

- 59 ITIs (Including Women ITIs)
- 12 women ITIs
- 455 ITCs

#### MES

- 23 ITIs
- 84 Private sectors

#### COE

- ITI Dighaghat
- ITI Nawada
- ITI Bhagalpur
- ITI Katihar
- ITI Motihari
- ITI Darbhanga
- ITI ITI Gaya
- ITI Muzafferpur
- ITI Sitamarhi
- ITI Forbesganj

#### PPP

- ITI Hajipur
- ITI Begusarai
- ITI Dehri on sone
- ITI Munger
- WITI Muzaffarpur
- ITI Buxar
- ITI Marhorah
- WITI Dighaghat Patna
- ITI Hathua
- ITI Betia
- ITI Supaul
- ITI Ghoghardiha

#### Technical & Professional Training Facilities

- No. of Polytechnic- 18
- Government-13
- Private- 05

- Community Polytechnic- 13 (under MHRD)
- No. Engineering college- 13
- Government- 06
- Private- 07
- No. of IIT- 01
- NIT- 01
- Handicapped Rehabilitation Training Institute -01
- Women Industrial training School -11
- Chankya law University, Patna
- Chandragupta Institute of Management
- So many Inter-colleges are imparting vocational education.
- L N Mishra Institute of Management & Social Changes, Patna.
- State Universities are conducting professional courses (MBA/BBA/BCA/MCA)
- Government has sanctioned four new Engineering colleges and ten new Polytechnics

### Special training scheme for rural youth

Some need based training programme, will be started to train rural youth in those skills which may assist them in getting engaged in self-employment. Such skills may be repair and maintenance of agriculture implements and hand pumps, plumbing, electrification works, TV and mobile repairs etc. This will particularly to help in employment generation in rural areas.

Trades have been identified and training will be started very soon.

### New initiatives

To track the progress of human development, a Manav Vikash mission has been constituted in the chairmanship of Humble Chief Minister of Bihar.

Bihar Board of Open Schooling and Examination (BBOSE), as an autonomous Organization of Human Resource Development Department, Govt. of Bihar has been setup with the mandate to "Reach the Unreached" in terms of Education & Skill, in Bihar through Open & Distance learning mode.

Bihar government is promoting the private institutions to uplift the skills among the youth particularly women by providing subsidies to the institutions.

Bihar knowledge centre has been established which will be a key interface between students & the industry thereby creating job opportunities for talent of Bihar.

### Skill mapping

- Government has conducted a study by hiring Indian institute of public administration New Delhi, for demand mapping of various skill sets in domestic, national and international markets.
- IIPA has submitted the final report. Government has hired A.N Sinha social study Institute for preparation of work plan and Bihar skill development policy.
- NSDC & BBOSE has also conducted a skill mapping through Tholons in Nine districts of Bihar i.e, Madhubani, Munger, Nalanda Muzaffarpur, Nawada, Patna, Saharsa, Rohtas and Purnea.
- Tholons has submitted the report. That will be considered in preparation of work plan and Skill Development policy.

### Plan of Action

- Creating and strengthening training facilities in Government and Private Sector including under PPP mode capable of conducting long term courses in market driven trades for minimum of 1,00,000 Youth every Year.
- Creating and strengthening training facilities in Government and Private Sector including under PPP mode capable of conducting Short term Courses in market driven trades for minimum of 5,00,000 Youth every Year.
- Training 20,000 women every Year in long Term market driven trades and 1,00,000 every Year in short term courses
- Training 10,000 Youth of minority community every Year in long Term market driven trades and 50,000 every Year in short term courses.
- Training 10,000 Youth of SC/ST category every Year in long Term market driven trades and 50,000 every Year in short term courses.
- Providing infrastructure including land, building, machines etc. to all Industrial Training Institutes; modernizing machines in line with industry use in the Industrial Training Institutes.
- Retraining of workers to upgrade their existing Skills
- Building Capacity of the instructors working in Government and Private ITIs to upgrade their teaching skills and capacity.
- Modernizing all Government Industrial Training Institutes to cater to the needs of market; by computer training, English education and introducing more market driven courses.
- At least one region specific training centers like Madhubani Paintings, Bamboo work and traditional skills.
- At least one ITI in each subdivision and one WITI in each districts.
- Skill Development Centre in every Panchayat of the State
- Encouraging Private sector to establish 500 new Industrial Training Centers in the State preferably in uncovered areas.
- Strengthening Bihar Skill development Mission and develop state skill development Policy and work plan and ensure that 20 Lakh youth are made employable per year through skill development and professional courses.

### Conclusion

To make Bihar nationally competitive and to boost its economic growth further, a skilled workforce is essential. As more and more Bihar moves towards the Knowledge economy, it becomes increasingly important for it to focus on advancement of the skills and these skills have to be relevant to the emerging economic environment. For transforming its demographic dividend, an efficient skill development system is the need of the hour. Therefore to achieve its ambitious skilling target, it is imperative to have holistic solutions of the challenges instead of piecemeal interventions.

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