

Role Of Skill India Programme In Providing Employment In India

Neetu Gaba¹ & Prof. Sanjay Kumar Rastogi²

¹Research Scholar of Commerce, M.J.P Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, (Hindu College, Moradabad)

²Faculty of Commerce, Hindu College Moradabad. Affiliated to GJU, Moradabad, UP

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Abstract

The budget allocation to the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) over the period 2020-21 to 2024-25 illustrates an evolving fiscal commitment to upscaling India's skill development ecosystem, critical for boosting employability and entrepreneurship. The Budget Estimate (BE) shows a clear upward trajectory, rising from Rs. 3002.21 crores in 2020-21 to Rs. 4520 crores in 2024-25, signalling increased government prioritization amid India's growing demand for a skilled workforce aligned with its demographic dividend. However, the Revised Estimate (RE) and actual expenditure figures consistently lag behind the BE, reflecting real-world challenges in fund utilization—such as implementation bottlenecks, infrastructural constraints, or delays in program execution. Notably, in 2022-23, only around Rs. 1474.22 crores were expended against an Rs. 2999 crore estimate. Encouragingly, the gap narrows in recent years, with actual expenditure rising to Rs. 2746.92 crores in 2023-24 and Rs. 2874.76 crores in 2024-25, showing progress toward effective budget absorption. This incremental fiscal trend coincides with Skill India's expansion into digital skills, emerging technologies, and inclusive skilling initiatives. For these substantial budgetary allocations to translate into tangible employment gains, continuous focus on timely fund release, rigorous project monitoring, infrastructure development, quality enhancement, and industry collaborations remains imperative. Overall, this budget analysis captures both the ambitions and operational realities of large-scale skill development funding in India's quest for equipping a competitive workforce.

Keywords: Skill Development; Skill-Based Training; Employability; and PMKVY

Introduction

The Skill India Programme, launched by the Government of India in 2015, is a flagship initiative aimed at enabling the country's youth with relevant and practical skills to enhance their employability and promote entrepreneurship across various sectors. It focuses on imparting market-relevant skills to over 40 crore young individuals by 2023, aligning with the urgent need to bridge the prevalent gap between the skills taught and those demanded by industry. The core objective is to create a productive and competitive workforce capable of meeting domestic labour demand while also competing in the global job market. Skill India recognizes that mere academic qualifications are insufficient for employment and thus emphasizes building hands-on competencies and practical knowledge.

The program covers a wide spectrum of skill development initiatives, including traditional vocations like carpentry and welding, as well as emerging sectors such as real estate, transportation, banking, tourism, and the gem industry. It supports lifelong learning through customized programs that include soft skill development like communication, problem-solving, digital literacy, and entrepreneurial training, enabling adaptability in a constantly evolving economic landscape. The Skill India Mission specifically targets marginalized groups and strives to improve female participation, thereby fostering inclusive growth. By strengthening public-private partnerships and engaging social stakeholders, it mobilizes investments to ensure sustainable financing and quality assurance in skill delivery.

Key terms that define the framework of this paper include “employability,” which refers to the ability of skilled individuals to find, retain, and progress in employment aligned with their competencies; “skill development,” which entails structured training initiatives aimed at enhancing an individual's capabilities in technical and soft skills vital for job performance; and “underemployment,” which indicates a situation where skilled workers are employed below their qualifications, highlighting a skill-job mismatch. “Marginalized beneficiaries” denotes socio-economically disadvantaged groups who gain access to skill training through inclusive strategies. The “dropout rate” measures the proportion of candidates who do not complete the training courses, which impacts program effectiveness.

By addressing these dimensions, the Skill India Programme seeks to reduce poverty, fuel economic growth, and make India a global leader in skilled manpower. This introduction sets the stage for analyzing the program's employment impact, challenges, and future prospects in the broader context of India's developmental goals and demographic advantages.

Review of Literature

Arora (2022) investigates Skill India's role in economic empowerment through a qualitative framework involving government report analysis and stakeholder interviews. The study reveals Skill India's substantial outreach in marginalized communities and its potential for demographic dividend harnessing. However, it underscores the persistent challenge of aligning acquired skills with labor market demands, advocating for accelerated industry-institute collaboration to optimize employment outcomes and economic participation.

Chaurasia (2023) employs mixed methods integrating survey data and secondary labor statistics to evaluate employability effects. The research quantitatively confirms that skill development initiatives markedly enhance employability probabilities. The findings emphasize the criticality of sector-specific vocational training and strong industry collaboration for maximizing outcomes, underlining the need for targeted, demand-driven skill programs.

Harishkumar and Tulasimala (2023) adopt an empirical regional approach via surveys and interviews within Karnataka. Their study confirms positive impacts on skill acquisition and placement rates but identifies skill gaps—especially soft skills—and suboptimal industry linkages that hinder sustained employment and scalability, recommending strategic improvements in curriculum and industry engagement.

Kumar (2024) conducts a literature and policy review to highlight systemic challenges like infrastructure deficits, curriculum bottlenecks, and inadequate private-sector involvement. The study proposes enhanced digital training, robust public-private partnerships, and continuous monitoring mechanisms as prospects for developing a sustainable national skill ecosystem aligned with evolving labour demands.

Grover (2021) synthesizes secondary data and expert interviews to analyse India's major skill programs. The study exposes barriers such as inconsistent funding, inadequate trainer quality, and demand-supply mismatch, advocating decentralized governance and increased quality focus to improve program implementation effectiveness and meet sectoral employment needs. Naqvi (2019) provides a systematic literature review emphasizing the diversity of skill development models in India. It stresses the importance of unified skill standards, certification frameworks, and ongoing reskilling provisions for fostering employability, concluding that adaptive policy frameworks and strong industry partnerships are vital for long-term program success.

Pandey (2021) applies quantitative methods and hypothesis testing using district-level survey data to empirically assess Skill India's employment impact. The results establish a significant positive correlation

between participation in skill programs and increased employment probability, while highlighting existing regional and sectoral disparities that require targeted intervention for balanced development.

SPRF India (2024) offers a data-driven analytical overview using aggregated government and survey data to capture current skilling trends. The report identifies marked expansion in training scale but persistent high dropout and underemployment rates, advocating for curriculum modernization, integration of digital skills, and enhanced post-placement support to optimize program efficacy and labour market relevance.

The India Skills Report (2025) by Wheel box aims to present a comprehensive analysis of employability metrics across India, particularly focusing on post-Skill India beneficiaries. Utilizing large-scale surveys and assessment data, the report highlights increasing employability rates, improved skill acquisition, and expanded program reach. Its findings underscore the positive effect of Skill India in enhancing workforce readiness and market alignment, though it notes continuing challenges in bridging skill-job gaps for certain demographics, suggesting targeted interventions for sustained impact.

The JETIR (2024) study titled “A Study on Challenges and Prospects of Skill India” investigates impediments faced by the Skill India program through qualitative and quantitative methods, including stakeholder surveys and secondary data analysis. It identifies key obstacles such as lack of awareness among potential participants, weak industry linkages, and socio-cultural barriers affecting participation, especially among women. The study calls for enhanced outreach, industry partnerships, and cultural sensitization to overcome these barriers and maximize program effectiveness. The CSR Exchange (2023) literature review synthesizes existing evaluations of Skill Development Programmes in India to quantify employment impacts. Employing meta-analysis techniques on published data sets, it reports a significant 23% increase in sample employment following program participation. The review emphasizes the role of standardized training modules and industry-certified certifications in achieving improved job placements, pointing to the need for continuous quality assurance and upskilling provisions.

The SDMIMD (2023) conference paper examines Skill India’s macroeconomic impacts using secondary data analysis and sectoral case studies. It concludes that the program acts as a catalyst for economic growth by enhancing employability and productivity across diverse sectors such as manufacturing, IT, and services. The paper also notes international recognition of Skill India as a model for large-scale skill development, recommending policy fine-tuning and integration of emerging technologies to sustain momentum.

The MSDE Annual Report (2023-24) provides official statistics on key Skill India schemes like PMKVY, NAPS, JSS, and CTS based on administrative data. Using descriptive statistical analysis, it reports millions of beneficiaries trained annually with improving placement rates over recent years. The report highlights program scalability, government commitment, and sector-focused outcomes while acknowledging challenges in retention and quality assurance that require closer monitoring and adaptive strategy.

Varthana (2023) explores the strategic role of skill development in transforming India’s job market through a policy review and secondary data analysis. It articulates how skill interventions are bridging unemployment by aligning workforce capabilities with evolving industry demands, particularly in MSMEs and informal sectors. The study advocates enhanced digital literacy and entrepreneurship training as bridges to sustainable employment, contributing positively to the national economic narrative.

IBEF (2025) outlines Skill India Mission’s advances in apprenticeship programs and post-education job training through data analytics and report synthesis. It emphasizes program innovations facilitating structured work-based learning, skill certification, and improved industry integration. The document reports positive

outcomes in apprenticeship uptake and labour market linkage, underscoring Skill India's role in elevating youth employability and promoting global competitiveness.

Tripathi (2021) examined India's skill development paradigm within the framework of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) campaign and other NSDC-sponsored programs. As a way for the skill development ministry to overcome the difficulties encountered during the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) initiatives, this study looked at the sector-wise competence requirements in different Indian states to determine the talent gap in a variety of industries. With the use of SPSS, the correlation coefficient was utilized to determine the relationship between the PMKVY scheme and skill development. The findings indicated that, in 22 important industries, there is a positive correlation between the estimated and real human resource requirements. Additionally, it was noted that the PMKVY program significantly contributes to workforce skill development. The outcome demonstrated a very favourable correlation between the variables. The results also showed that a sizable portion of candidates were placed following their training under the PMKVY.

Joshi and Pandey (2019) declared that it became crucial to research the role and the anticipated impact on youth job prospects and employability five years following PMKVY's founding. According to the CMIE data released in August 2019, Haryana has the largest rate of unemployment in the nation. The State selected the study, which looked quantitatively at the factors used to evaluate the PMKVY training's quality as judged by Haryana's youth. A survey of 375 young people who had received benefits under the PMKVY program served as the basis for the analysis. The respondents' demographic data, which were compiled using distributions of frequency and descriptive statistical techniques, include gender, age group, level of education, salary, and job prior to training.

Rinku & Rani et al., (2019) stated that Determining PMKVY's function in fostering employability skills and placement in Haryana state was the aim of this study. The study's data came from secondary sources. Information was gathered regarding the 68 training centers owned by the 10 training partners. This study demonstrated whether or not the training centers qualified for performance-based target reallocation. According to the 2019 India Skills Report, around 70% of young people were having challenges locating attractive occupations that matched their skill set because they were not receiving professional assistance.

Devi (2017) addressed the idea of enhancing skills in India as well as the policies and initiatives put in place to promote it. The study's primary goals were to identify the difficulties in skill development and to suggest a practical and structural remedy to alleviate the deficiency of important skills among India's present and future workforce. The researcher looked at a number of variables, including entrepreneurial policy and national skill development. According to the national skill development mission and the skill India campaign, the idea of skill creation is widely accepted, and several initiatives and strategies are being developed to start the concept not just in urban but also in remote regions.

Research Methodology

Need for the Study

India faces a demographic transition with a youth bulk seeking employment; however, labour market reports highlight a disconnect between education-induced skills and actual job requirements, resulting in significant underemployment and workforce vulnerability.

Objectives

- To assess the effectiveness of Skill India in creating employment across sectors
- To identify the main challenges and gaps in implementation
- To measure quantitative changes in employability and retention rates among trained candidates

Hypothesis

H0: The Skill India Programme has no significant impact on employment rates in India

Data Source

Both primary and secondary sources are employed.

- Secondary: Reports from the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, annual government data, India Skills Report, academic studies, published surveys.
- Primary: Survey data, interviews with training centre managers, and placement officers obtained from relevant literature and reports.

Research Tools

- Statistical analysis: Descriptive statistics, percentages, and comparative ratio analysis
- Tabulation: Employment generation metrics by year and sector
- Qualitative reviews: Content analysis of stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions

Limitations

- Limited access to comprehensive longitudinal primary data
- Regional disparities may cause data skewness
- Rapidly evolving labour market trends may impact post-study validity
- Non-response and selection bias in primary surveys

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Training Centres and Enrolments under Skill India (2023-24)

Program/Scheme	No. of Operational Training Centres	Enrolments in million
Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)	26,435	20.0
Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)	290	0.2
Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)	15,024	4.5
Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs)	714	0.5

Source: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Annual Report 2023-24

Analysis:

The table representing the number of operational training centres and enrolments under key Skill India programs illustrates both the breadth and scale of India's national skill development efforts. The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) stands out as the most expansive scheme, boasting 26,435 operational centres and training approximately 20 million individuals. This massive outreach underscores

PMKVY's role as the flagship program within Skill India, providing large-scale, short-term skill training that is flexible and industry-relevant. It emphasizes rapid upskilling and re-skilling, targeting diverse sectors from traditional trades to emerging fields like AI and robotics. In contrast, the Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) operates on a much smaller scale, with 290 centres training 0.2 million people, focusing particularly on vocational education for adult learners, dropouts, and disadvantaged groups such as women and minorities in rural and urban low-income areas. JSS fills an important niche by addressing social inclusivity and skill gaps among marginalized communities. Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) represent a long-standing institutional backbone with 15,024 centres and 4.5 million enrolments. Despite their scale, ITIs is challenged by issues such as outdated curricula, infrastructural deficits, and a gradual decline in admissions in some regions. Nonetheless, they provide formal technical education and a steady supply of skilled tradespeople essential for manufacturing and infrastructure sectors. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs) with 714 centres and 0.5 million enrolees, undertakes district-level localized skilling aimed at bridging immediate local employment demands. Their targeted approach enables focused skill delivery, which can complement the broader schemes. Overall, these figures reflect a comprehensive, multi-layered skilling ecosystem with programs varying in scale, target demographics, and specialization. While the high enrolment figures demonstrate strong government commitment to scaling skill acquisition, quality assurance, retention, and aligning training with evolving industry needs remain key challenges for maximizing employment outcomes.

**Table 2: Budget Allocation to the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship
(Rs. Crores)**

Year	Budget Estimate (BE)	Revised Estimate (RE)	Actual Expenditure
2020-21	3002.21	2723.86	1961.16
2021-22	2785.23	2785.23	1647.88
2022-23	2999.00	1901.71	1474.22
2023-24	3517.31	3260.18	2746.92
2024-25	4520.00	3300.83	2874.76

Source: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Annual Reports

Analysis:

The budget allocation to the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) from 2020-21 to 2024-25 reveals a steady governmental commitment to scaling skill development initiatives in India, though with notable fluctuations in expenditure relative to estimates. The Budget Estimate (BE) rose progressively from Rs. 3002.21 crores in 2020-21 to Rs. 4520 crores in 2024-25, reflecting increased prioritization of vocational training and entrepreneurship promotion amid India's economic agenda. However, the Revised Estimate (RE) and actual expenditure consistently fell short of initial BEs, indicating challenges in fund absorption or implementation delays.

For example, in 2022-23, actual spending was only Rs. 1474.22 crores against an estimated Rs. 2999 crores. The narrowing gap in 2023-24 and 2024-25—with actual expenditures rising to Rs. 2746.92 crores and Rs. 2874.76 crores respectively, despite significantly higher estimates—shows an improving trend in budget utilization. These figures reflect the complex realities of skill program rollouts, where funds must be supplemented by infrastructure development, training quality enhancement, and partnerships with industry.

The sharp increase in BE for 2024-25 signals an ambitious second phase with a focus on digital skills, emerging technologies, and inclusive skilling. Ensuring proper execution, timely fund release, and rigorous monitoring will be vital for translating these budget allocations into widespread employability gains, entrepreneurship growth, and a more skilled workforce aligned to India's evolving economic needs. This fiscal overview underscores both achievements and operational challenges within India's large-scale skill development ecosystem.

Table 3: Key Employment Outcome Indicators (India Skills Report 2025)

Indicator	Value (2015)	Value (2025)
Graduate Employability Rate (%)	33.0	54.81
Female Participation in Skilling (%)	28.0	36 – 40
Dropout Rate from Training (%)	<1	35
Underemployment Rate (%)	60	53

Source: India Skills Report 2025

Analysis:

There has been substantial improvement in employability of graduates, nearly a 22-point increase, indicating Skill India's effectiveness. Female participation increased showing improved gender inclusiveness. However, the high dropout rate of 35% is a concern affecting skill retention and completion rates. The underemployment rate remains high but has slightly declined, suggesting ongoing challenges in skill-job mismatches.

Table 4: Sector-wise Incremental Human Resource Requirements (2017-22) (in millions)

Sectors	Incremental HR Requirement (2017-22)
Manufacturing	22.1
Construction	17.5
Retail & Wholesale	15.3
Healthcare & Pharma	10.2
IT and IT-enabled Services	8.9
Agriculture & Allied	7.5
Banking & Financial Services	5.8
Others	16.7

Source: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Annual Report 2023-24

Analysis:

The highest demand for skilled manpower is in manufacturing and construction sectors, which are critical to India's industrial and infrastructure growth. Healthcare and IT sectors also show strong growth. This data helps align skilling programs with sectoral demand to enhance employment opportunities.

Table 5: Gender-based Skill Training and Employment Metrics (2023-24)

Metric	Male (%)	Female (%)
Enrolments	60	40
Completion Rate	70	65
Placement Rate	55	50

Source: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Annual Report 2023-24

Analysis:

While male trainees dominate enrolment and completion, female participation is increasing steadily. Placement rates show a slight gap which reflects workplace challenges or sector-specific biases. Efforts in women-specific programs and incentives are fostering female empowerment in skills and employment.

Table 6: Placement and Retention Rates Under PMKVY (2021-25)

Year	Number Trained (Millions)	Placement Rate (%)	Retention Rate at 6 Months (%)
2021-22	6.16	48	45
2022-23	2.11	52	50
2023-24	5.39	54	51
2024-25	20.34	56	53

Source: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Annual Report 2023-24

Analysis:

Placement rates have improved from 48% to 56%, indicating better job linkage. Retention rates also improved, demonstrating enhanced job sustainability. The growing numbers trained in 2024-25 indicate scalability but continuous monitoring of retention and quality is necessary.

Table 7: Regional Employability Rates (Selected States) (India Skills Report 2025)

State	Employability Rate (%)
Kerala	62
Gujarat	58
Maharashtra	55
Andhra Pradesh	53
Tripura	50
National Average	54.81

Source: India Skills Report 2025

Analysis:

States with focused skill development initiatives like Kerala and Gujarat show employability rates above the national average, suggesting that tailored interventions and partnerships yield better results. Regional disparities remain a challenge in less developed states.

Table 8: (Analytical Table) Employment Impact Pre and Post Skill India

Parameter	Pre-Skill India (2014)	Post-Skill India (2024)
Employability Rate (%)	46.0	54.81
Marginalized Beneficiaries	<15%	>42%
Annual Trained (millions)	<6	>15
Female Participation (%)	28	36-40
Dropout Rate (%)	<1	35
Underemployment Rate (%)	~60	53

Sources: Government Annual Reports, ISR, cited studies.

The Analytical Table comparing employment impact pre- and post-Skill India reveals several key insights about the program's effectiveness and challenges over a decade.

The employability rate improved from approximately 46% in 2014 to 54.81% in 2024, signalling measurable progress in aligning skills with labour market needs. This increase reflects enhanced training outreach, curriculum updates, and stronger industry linkages fostered by Skill India initiatives. However, the rise is moderate, indicating ongoing gaps in quality and relevance of skills (India Skills Report 2025).

Marginalized beneficiaries grew significantly from under 15% to over 42%, highlighting the program's success in inclusivity and targeting vulnerable populations who historically lacked access to skill development, promoting social equity and economic participation (MSDE Report 2023-24).

Annual training numbers more than doubled from less than 6 million to over 15 million, showing impressive scaling in capacity and government commitment. This expansion reflects infrastructure growth and multiple schemes such as PMKVY and NAPS driving mass skilling (MSDE Report).

Female participation increased from approx. 28% to between 36% and 40%, a positive trend toward gender inclusivity, supported by women-centric training initiatives. Though improved, this shows scope for further increasing female empowerment through enhanced support mechanisms and workplace integration (India Skills Report 2025).

The dropout rate rose starkly from below 1% to 35%, a major concern signalling challenges in training quality, engagement, or socio-economic factors preventing completion. This uptick requires urgent strategy recalibration focusing on student retention, counselling, flexible training modes, and addressing underlying socioeconomic barriers (SPRF India 2024).

Finally, underemployment decreased only modestly from around 60% to 53%, indicating that many trainees remain employed below their qualification levels, reflecting structural labour market issues including skill mismatches and limited high-quality job openings. This persistent underemployment underscores the need for dynamic alignment between skill programs and evolving industry requirements, plus stronger post-placement support (SPRF, Economic Survey 2024-25).

In sum, the Skill India Programme has succeeded notably in expansion, inclusivity, and moderately improving employability, but elevated dropout rates and persistent underemployment highlight key challenges for the next phase of reforms targeting quality enhancement and labour market integration.

Conclusion

Skill India has had a considerable positive impact on India's employment scenario through scaled-up outreach, democratised skill access, and a combination of direct job and entrepreneurship pathways. Challenges, however, persist in industry-institute linkage, retention, curriculum standardization, and the alignment of skills with fast-evolving labor market trends. Recent data signals notable growth in employability and beneficiary counts, but also warns of rising dropout, uneven placements, and underemployment rates, especially among qualified youth and marginalized communities. Strategic recommendations include strengthening industry partnerships, updating curricula, incentivizing trainers, and greater regional customization of module delivery. Ultimately, Skill India remains pivotal for harnessing India's demographic dividend, bridging skill gaps, supporting equitable employment, and positioning India as a global service leader.

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