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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN NSDC'S SKILL TRAINING PROGRAMS: A BRIEF ANALYSIS

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Abstract : The National Skill Development Corporation plays a very important role for the moving ahead of skill development agenda of India as it ensures creating a skilled work force meeting the demands of the economy that is dynamically taking shape. It has been found that beneath all the institutional complexities lies the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of NSDC's skills training programs, and the research provides a brief analysis on this context. Some of the critical setbacks to success include disparities in good quality training, lousy industry interface, regional differences in accessibility, and low placement rates. Other deterrents include funding and high dropout rates. In contrast, some positive trends are related to new technologies, better partnerships with industry, and a greater emphasis on entrepreneurship and digital learning that may help narrow performance gaps in accessibility and content for training. Continued government support and moving towards output-based training models also open up considerable scope for improving the effectiveness of programs. This analysis brings out the need for continued evaluation and strategic improvement to ensure that the programs of NSDC make a meaningful contribution to skills development and employment in India. Addressing these challenges and opportunities poised for growth will further enhance the impact of NSDC in meeting the short-term and long-term economic needs of the workforce.

Introduction : National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) National Skill Development Corporation was set up in 2009 as a public-private partnership not-for-profit organization. Its primary objective of creating and funding initiatives to catalyse skilling across sectors. The NSDC works towards placing India in the global board for quality skilled nations, thereby improving employability and supporting economic growth by producing a skilled workforce adequate to answer the needs of various industries operating in the country. After a string of major successes, there are challenging issues and good opportunities ahead that could ensure proper optimization of skill training initiatives. The National Skill Development Corporation was established with the National Skill Development Initiative: A public-private partnership to drive skill development initiatives across the country in India. It is aimed at addressing the significant gap within the skills developed in the workforce and enhancing employability. The NSDC collaborates under the Skill India Mission by development and delivery with training partners and industry stakeholders of a slew of skill

training programs across various sectors. This would eventually create skilled and job-ready individuals and fulfil the changing needs of the labour market, thereby contributing to economic growth.

Despite the significant contributions made by the key skill training programs, still various challenges have been posed. Other than varying quality at training, the shabby performance of industry partners, regional imbalance, and scarce resources have been challenges in the quality of skill training programs. Low placement rates and other dropout levels become critical hurdles in making them succeed in the long term. Such challenges point out the necessity of strategic improvements and innovations.

On the other hand, looking at the prospects of NSDC's skill training programs, the advance in technological fronts, scope for potential policy support, and encouragement of entrepreneurship is promising. A combination of some steps toward confronting the challenges existing in that regard, such as embracing digital learning, strengthening industrial collaboration, and focusing more on an outcome-based approach for training, can be viewed in relation. The discussion here analyses problems and prospects of NSDC's skill training programs in terms of the implications for workforce development as well as the economic trajectory of the country.

Problems with NSDC's Skill Training Programs:

- 1. Quality of Training and Certification:** The quality of training and certification under the programs run by NSDC is very poor. Many reports and studies have highlighted issues with standardization in curriculums and a mismatch between the outputs of the trainings and the requirements of the industry. Certificates received at the end of the trainings are not fully recognized by the organizations providing employment and lowered the employability of the graduates.
- 2. Limited Industry Collaboration:** Even though NSDC has attempted to bridge the academia-industry gaps, its collaborations have not been with all the sectors on a regular basis. The critical requirements for building strong collaborations with industries would be to focus training programs on the existing needs of the industry as well as on emerging demands across sectors. If such programs are not sustained, then there is a danger that they will train in irrelevant skills that do not lead to job readiness.
- 3. Accessibility and Regional Imbalances:** Not only do skill training programmes differ unevenly with regions in India, but more urban areas receive the benefit than rural. Therefore, there are wide regional imbalances between skill development and employment opportunities. Rural populations, particularly in the less developed states, suffer from poor infrastructure and have little awareness of training options.
- 4. Placement and Employment Rates:** Although most of the trainees complete their training, the conversion into employment remains a problem. The reports of NSDC have established that in some cases, placement rates are low because there is mismatch between the skill imparted and the demands on the job market. Sometimes, employers look out for other skill sets or even practical experience that would not have formed part of the training program.
- 5. Funding and Resource Constraints:** The NSDC funding model is based on partnership with training providers and industry players. However, less funding and inadequacy of resources assigned to the relevant training programs may limit its focus and efficacy. Training centres often face problems of lack of access to state-of-the-art tools, technology, and teaching methodologies.
- 6. Dropout Rates and Motivation:** Other concerns are high dropout rates from such training programs. Dropout reasons included: financial constraints; no job or job reservation pending; and a feeling of under-preparedness due to lack of motivational input that perceived skill training may not result in quick tangible income or job

benefits. The consequence of this is curtailment of the reservoir of trained manpower entering the workforce and, overall program outcomes.

Prospects of NSDC's Skill Training Programs:

- 1. Adoptions of New Technologies:** The NSDC has identified the potential and integration of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and digital platforms into its training programs. This change towards technology-enabled training may positively change the learning experience of participants, develop industry-specific skills among trainees, and at the same time, make sure that the program remains current and competitive.
- 2. Improving Industry Collaboration:** This would include the design of training modules and liaising with key industry players, hence making trainees more employment-ready. Collaborations with industry can ultimately lead to developments that will assist in designing customized programs that may meet the needs of the market—that is, the application of relevant and practical skills after graduating.
- 3. Focus on Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment:** Module training in entrepreneurship and business management has now become an important aspect of skill development programs. It is also a critical component of self-employment and setting up small businesses, more especially in rural and semi-urban regions where formal employment may be limited. Entrepreneurship will thus lead to the creation of more jobs and sustainable growth in the economy.
- 4. Multiplication through Digital Platforms:** Digital learning and online training modules, however, slowly seem to emerge as a more practical and cost-effective approach to scale outreach to more people. In terms of access gaps, candidates from remote and underrepresented locations can make use of the already available e-learning portals to learn skills without requiring any physical infrastructure.
- 5. Government Programs and Policy Support:** Other notable policies for the government are those that spur skill development through myriad schemes such as the Skill India Mission and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). Also, it is the funding and support from the government policies that can facilitate an increase in opportunities for skill training programs and operationalize and scale up the NSDC programs to cater to the changing needs of the economy.
- 6. Focus on Outcome-Based Training:** This would call for a paradigm shift from an enrolment number-based training to an outcome-based training methodology where measurable skills and employability outcomes are ensured. The quality issues can be addressed in this way because the trainees would acquire skills that are tangible and in line with their job roles and expectations of the industry.
- 7. Skill Mapping and Data-Driven Approaches:** Data analytics can also be used for skill mapping and tracking labour market trends. This is very vital because by acquiring such information, one will be able to understand which of the skills are in demand. This sets training programs according to the well-suited provision that will fit available skills with local and national economic needs, thereby making sure trainees get relevant and up-to-date training.

Conclusion:

Skill training programs under the NSDC have made commendable progress in the bridging skill gap in India. However, such issues about quality of training, liaison with industries, access through regions, and assurance of gainful employment must be attended to in order to really maximize the effects of these programs. With new technologies, strengthening of industry linkages, emphasis on entrepreneurship, and then policy support, NSDC can help overcome

challenges and really make strides toward an effective, skilled, and employable workforce in India. Continuous monitoring for targeted improvement and the inculcation of innovative strategies that hold together globally accepted standards and local requirements would be the direction in which skill training initiatives can be successfully implemented.

Address quality issues by moving towards the outcome-based training approach to focus on measurable skills, like employability outcomes, not to any enrolment numbers. Therefore, this shift can ensure tangible outcomes for trainees in order to be able to face those job roles and industry expectations better.

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