

India – getting ready to be the world’s manpower capital



- India is poised to become the only talent-surplus country in the world in 2030
- Strategy to export the country’s surplus manpower
- India is working at different levels to benefit from the global demand for talent and skill
- More and more global companies are recognising Indian talent

When India-born Divya Suryadevara took over as CFO at General Motors, Satya Nadella succeeded Steve Ballmer as Chief Executive Officer of Microsoft, Sundar Pichai as CEO at Google, Shantanu Narayen as CEO at Adobe, Ajay Banga at MasterCard, Rajeev Suri at Nokia, Indira Nooyi at Pepsico, Padmasree Warrior as CTO at Cisco, global industry had little option but to acknowledge that talent from India has come of age. A more exhaustive list would reinforce the fact that India is quite easily becoming the world’s manpower capital. The country’s tradition of learning and hard work play a key role in building these credentials.

India as a resource pool of talent and manpower

Organisational consulting firm Korn Ferry says that by 2030, global job markets are likely to see an increase in its skilled workforce, jumping from 1.66 billion workers in 2011 to 2.16 billion by 2030. World Bank's Global Economic Prospects report indicates that developing economies will be key contributors to this addition to the global skilled labour force.

During this period, India, having the world's largest working-age population, is expected to have a skilled labour surplus of 245 million workers – half of the estimated 500 million increase in the world's skilled labour force— even as most of the developed and developing economies are expected to grapple with talent crunch during this time. For India and global job markets, this is a huge opportunity looming up on the horizon.

Korn Ferry says that industries in which talent surplus will be most visible in the next decade include financial services, with a surplus of 1.1 million, technology, media, telecommunications (TMT) at 1.3 million and manufacturing at 2.4 million of extra manpower. The report goes on to suggest that by 2030, all countries except India will be gripped by TMT talent deficits.

Job-ready Indian resource pool

India's surplus talent pool comes from the nation's vast supply of working-age citizens, being made job-ready via several world-class educational institutions and the Government of India's many programs to boost professional skills, technical skills, manufacturing skills, accounting skills, language and soft skills. One of India's top priorities is creating a working population with skills at par with their counterparts in other parts of the world. Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) under the PM's flagship 'Skill India' Mission is setting up India International Skill Centres (IISCs) through the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to provide skill training and certification, benchmarked against international standards for Indians aspiring to work overseas. The aim is to train 400 million people under different schemes and make them job-ready.

Global partners

Partner nations like Japan, Singapore, UAE, Finland, Sweden, Maldives, Jordan and Lebanon are working with MSDE to host interns, provide on-the-job training and then either absorb them in overseas locations or at manufacturing plants that have been built in India.

Skill India's first batch of technical interns reached the Land of the Rising Sun in July 2018 and was placed at Maxell Ltd., the consumer electronic company, at its Ono-Shi and Hyogo prefecture plants in Japan. The interns work there for 3 years and get trained in stringent Japanese working processes.

Several other companies in other countries have also come forward to train Indian interns with technical skills at overseas locations, giving them healthy stipends.

Participation by State Governments to implement Skill Development programs

Domestically, MSDE has implemented several programs to develop skills and make the Indian workforce job-ready. For example, 10 Himalayan states have launched skill and entrepreneurship development programs to develop niche skills such as construction skills for large infrastructure projects in hilly terrains, hydropower stations, and smart cities; ecosystem-based employment such as afforestation, eco-restoration, use of wood in construction material, new wood-based products and other state-of-the-art technological innovations.

Several Skill Development Training Extension Centres across India ensure that people from every region can enroll in one skill development program or the other and become future-ready.

State governments operate existing centres under the Public-Private Partnership mode. These include ITIs, Polytechnic colleges and Entrepreneurship Development Centres which train students in different priority sectors such as textiles, healthcare, logistics, transport, information technology, electronics manufacturing, food processing, urban infrastructure, smart city projects, chemicals, petrochemicals, plastics, energy, tourism and downstream industries.

Prime Minister's vision

Nearly a million people go abroad every year from India. During Prime Minister Modi's recent visit to Vladivostok for the Eastern Economic Forum, he reiterated that India was looking at the possibility of manpower export. "We are exploring the possibility of sending people with some skills to areas where there is a manpower shortage. That is not limited to just the Far East of Russia. This is an effort we are making in several countries. This is one area where we feel there is good potential."

In a futuristic plan with a vision spanning the next ten years, the Government is mapping the requirements of several countries in key regions, to provide customized training to people. This initiative is aimed at organising

the talent flow from India by focusing on the needs of a region. For example, while Central Asian countries need blue-collar workers, Australia needs trained manpower in hospitality and European countries need people for geriatric care.

The programme that has been put in place by the Government includes international centres adhering to country-specific training requirements and run by private partners, followed by coordination with international placement agencies to help these people get placed abroad.

A structured format for people going abroad for jobs is a win-win solution for the government, the job seekers and the skill sector. The goal is not only to customize human resource requirements as per the needs of a country but also to familiarize job seekers with immigration rules, as well as the culture and work life of the country.

More and more global companies are giving importance to Indian talent because the diverse experience gained working in India prepares a person for the global market. When Indians are appointed by foreign companies in key roles, it proves once again that Indian education equips students with the capabilities to work for a global market. From Mr. Sundar Pichai to Mr. Satya Nadella, Indian talent finds a place in every major sector of the world. When more and more young people get access to quality and affordable education and skill training, it will not take India too long to become the leading supplier of global talent.

India has indeed moved on – from being ‘brain-drained’ to training brains to serve tomorrow’s connected world.