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Skill Development and Entrepreneurship: A Strategic Road Map to Youth Empowerment in Viksit Bharat

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ABSTRACT

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 aspires to transform India into a fully developed nation by the centenary of its independence. At the core of this vision lies the empowerment of youth, often referred to as 'Yuva Shakti'. With the largest youth population in the world, India possesses a significant demographic advantage. However, this advantage can be realized only through strategic investment in skill development and entrepreneurship. This research paper examines skill development and entrepreneurship as twin engines of youth empowerment. It critically analyzes government initiatives, the role of higher education institutions, the growing importance of digital and green skills, and the challenges associated with employability and innovation. The study proposes a comprehensive roadmap aimed at transforming India's youth into skilled professionals, job creators, and global leaders, thereby contributing to the realization of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

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1. Introduction

India is home to more than 600 million young people between the ages of 18 and 35, making it one of the youngest nations globally. This demographic structure offers a unique opportunity for economic growth and social transformation. However, youth empowerment extends beyond mere employment generation; it involves building capabilities, fostering innovation, and nurturing leadership. Skill development enhances employability, while entrepreneurship promotes self-reliance and job creation. Together, these elements form the foundation for achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat.

2. Pillars of Skill Development

India's conventional education system has often been criticized for its emphasis on theoretical knowledge rather than practical skills. Recognizing this gap, policy reforms such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocate the integration of vocational education at the school and higher education levels. The Skill India Mission, particularly PMKVY 4.0, focuses on industry-relevant training, digital skills, and on-the-job learning. Strong industry-academia collaboration is essential to align curricula with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and the Internet of Things.

3. Entrepreneurship: From Job Seekers to Job Creators

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of innovation and economic resilience. India has emerged as the third-largest startup ecosystem globally, supported by initiatives such as Startup India, MUDRA, and Stand-Up India. These schemes facilitate access to finance, mentorship, and market linkages, particularly for rural youth and women entrepreneurs. Incubation centers and innovation hubs within educational institutions play a crucial role in nurturing entrepreneurial talent.

4. Role of Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions serve as catalysts for youth empowerment by bridging the gap between education and industry. Outcome-based education, project-based learning, entrepreneurship development cells, and faculty upskilling initiatives enable students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world challenges. Colleges and universities also act as local innovation ecosystems that promote creativity and problem-solving.

5. Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Youth Empowerment

Digital literacy and artificial intelligence have become indispensable skills in the modern workforce. Rather than viewing AI as a threat to employment, it should be adopted as a productivity-enhancing tool. Digital platforms such as SWAYAM, virtual laboratories, and online certification programs facilitate inclusive and flexible learning opportunities, ensuring that technology acts as an enabler of equitable growth.

6. Inclusion and Social Equity in Skill Development

An inclusive approach to youth empowerment is essential for sustainable development. Special focus must be given to women, rural youth, tribal communities, divyang individuals, and first-generation learners. Localized training models, instruction in regional languages, and targeted financial support can significantly enhance participation and outcomes.

7. Challenges and Gaps

Despite notable progress, several challenges persist, including skill mismatch, regional disparities, limited industry exposure, and social risk aversion toward entrepreneurship. Addressing these issues requires continuous curriculum upgradation, robust mentorship networks, and policy support mechanisms that

reduce the risks associated with innovation.

8. Strategic Road Map to Viksit Bharat 2047

The proposed roadmap emphasizes:

Digital democratization.

Promotion of green and future-ready skills.

Structured mentorship programs.

Development of soft skills.

Systematic impact assessment.

Youth must be prepared not only for existing jobs but also for emerging sectors driven by sustainability, technology, and innovation.

9. Conclusion

Youth empowerment is a long-term nation-building strategy. By integrating skill development with an entrepreneurial ecosystem, India can transform its demographic strength into global leadership. Investing in youth potential today will ensure a resilient, innovative, and self-reliant Viksit Bharat by 2047.

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