Challenges for Skill Development in India
“Lessons from Germany and United Kingdom”
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Abstract: Skill development is the National priority of India for reaping the demographic dividends. Though in India vocations were at helm in past centuries, the situation in near past has been pathetic. Foreign invasions and their detrimental policies have crippled the vocational training system. Therefore it is imperative that India restructures its VET system before initiating skills training. This paper analyses vocational employment training (VET) of Germany and United Kingdom on the basis of certain VET performance indicators like Access, Attractiveness -Flexibility, Skill development and Labour market relevance and Overall transition and Labour market trends. Lessons learnt from these nations are comprehended for identifying challenges for skill development in India.

Keywords: Skill Development, Training, Challenges for VET, Skill India, Vocational Education.

I. INTRODUCTION
Skill development has been a concern for all the economies of the world. India with the current population of 1.31 billion as on March 2016 is having the advantage of demographic dividend as the majority of the Indian population is work centred youth. India is a developing nation and to move towards development, the focus needs to be shifted from academic education to vocational education and training (VET). Although there are many Vocational education institutes in India yet Vocational education has not gained importance like academic education. As the concern for Vocational education has gained popularity recently, India has a great opportunity to learn from countries like Germany and the United Kingdom where Vocational education has paved the way to development.

Germany and the United Kingdom belong to the European Union. Both these countries follow a different concept of Vocational education. Germany, on one hand, follows the Dual System of Vocational education wherein 1 to 2 days training in a week on an average is provided in Vocational schools and 3 to 4 days on an average in a week is provided in a Company which gives an individual a better understanding of the Vocational subject. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, consists of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF). All the qualifications come under the umbrella of the National Qualification Framework and Scottish credit and Qualifications framework. Under NQF, each qualification is assigned a different level and SCQF has levels for qualifications as well as credit value for learning. Credit value here refers to the credit points for different learning. In both the case of Germany and the United Kingdom, the focus has been towards lifelong learning.

II. OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH
The objective of the research is to examine the VET in Germany and the United Kingdom on the basis of certain performance indicators of VET and identify challenges for skill development in India.

III. UNDERSTANDING VET IN GERMANY AND UNITED KINGDOM
The following performance indicators of Vocational education highlight Vocational education in Germany and the United Kingdom as per Cedefop Country Statistical Overviews Update 2013.
1. Access, attractiveness and flexibility
2. Skill development and labour market relevance
3. Overall transitions and labour market trends

1. Access, attractiveness and flexibility:
The attractiveness of VET and accessibility to VET involves different stakeholders like students, employees and enterprises to participate in VET.

Source: On the way 2020: data for vocational education and training policies: country statistical overviews, ISBN 978-92-896-1444-3 (Data is presented as an index where European Union average is equal to 100)
The above Fig. 1 depicts the Access and attractiveness of VET in Germany and the United Kingdom as compared to the European Union. The average of European Union has been taken as 100 and the index of Germany and United Kingdom have been taken as performance indicators against the average of European Union. The different performance indicators include:

a) VET upper secondary students: Enrollment of students in upper secondary VET is an indicator of the growing importance of VET in Germany and United Kingdom. There is a dual system of vocational education in Germany where 1 to 2 days training on an average in a week is provided in vocational schools and 3 to 4 days training on an average in a week is provided in Company. This dual system of training assists the youth in gaining employment. This leads to the attractiveness of VET in Germany. In the United Kingdom, there is a provision of free compulsory education at the age of 18 [Abusland, T. (2014)] and afterwards, the student can avail further vocational education in further education colleges. In both Germany and the United Kingdom, vocational education has been given equal importance like academic education. Figure 1 depicts that upper secondary students in VET in Germany is 97% of the average of European Union as compared to the United Kingdom wherein upper secondary students in VET is 72% of the average of European Union. Germany has an edge over the United Kingdom because of the dual system of vocational education.

b) Adults in Life-long learning: United Kingdom is characterized by ageing population [Cuddy, N. and Leney, T. (2005)] and Germany also has an ageing population with low fertility rates. The ageing population has resulted in the demand for life care skills in these countries. For successful implementation of VET, Germany and the United Kingdom aim at the concept of lifelong learning which improves the GDP of the Nation and also provides an opportunity to the learner to learn new skills and improve the existing skills. Figure 1 depicts that life-long learning in Germany is 88% of the European Union average whereas the United Kingdom is far above the European Union average. Life-long learning has laid its main focus on sustainable development.

c) Employees participating in Continuing Vocational training (CVT): Germany has a bigger proportion (103% of European Union average) of the employees participating in CVT as compared to the United Kingdom (82%). Continuing vocational training has helped in improving the existing skills of employees and also for advancement in their career and this also increases the participation of employees in Vocational training. But there are instances where people perceive VET of low self-esteem.

d) Enterprises participating in training: In both Germany and United Kingdom, enterprise participation in training is above the European Union average. Enterprises participate voluntarily. The cost of vocational training is recovered in the long run as the cost of hiring labour from outside is more than the cost of providing training and employing the same personnel.

2. **Skill development and labour market relevance:**

![Figure 2: Skill development and labour market relevance](image)

Source: On the way 2020: data for vocational education and training policies: country statistical overviews, ISBN 978-92-896-1444-3 (Data is presented as the index where the European Union average is equal to 100)

Figure 2 depicts the Enterprise expenditure on CVT. The United Kingdom is below the European Union average in this case (88%) and Germany stands equal to the European Union average (100%). At the same time with higher enterprise expenditure on CVT, the employment rate for IVET graduates is also higher in Germany and is above the European Union average and the United Kingdom is below but close to the European Union average. Besides the expenditure on CVT, enterprises also provide on the job training for the workers to improve their skills and perform effectively. United Kingdom in this case is above the European Union average (102%). The reason behind providing training is to avoid skills mismatch. The dynamic market changes require a change in the skills of the workers. The above figure depicts that both Germany and the United Kingdom are below the European Union average in the case of workers with skills matched to their duties. The skill mismatch is a concern for every economy and there is always a gap in supply and demand for skills [Klosters, D. (2014)]. In Germany, companies voluntarily participate in training in the United Kingdom, many companies prefer to employ people already possessing the required skills [Suto, I. (2013)].
3. Overall transitions and labour market trends:

Figure 3: Overall transitions and labour market trends

(Data is presented as an index where European Union average is equal to 100)

Figure 3 depicts the transitions from education and training along with the people not in employment, education and training (NEET) and adults with lower levels of educational attainment in comparison to the average of European Union. The data in the above figure reflects that early leavers from education and training and people not in employment, education and training is much higher than the European Union Average for the United Kingdom and lower for Germany. There might be many reasons for early leaving from education and then not being in employment, education and training. Some of the reasons for early leaving from education might be the bad experience of school in the past and low self-esteem due to their poor academic background. There might also be the case wherein students from poor family background don't value education and finally end up in gaining low unskilled work.

Germany and United Kingdom experience ageing population and both the countries aim at life-long learning to attain sustainable development. But there are adults with lower levels of educational attainment. On one hand, Germany is only 53% of the European Union average in adults with lower level attainment and on the other hand, the United Kingdom is 86% of the European Union average. Therefore there are still adults involved in low paid or unskilled work.

III. LESSONS FOR INDIA

India is now progressing towards skill development but is far away from the level of VET in developed nations like Germany and the United Kingdom. The economic conditions in India might be different from Germany and the United Kingdom but the challenges in India are more or less similar. Some lessons for India considering the above performance indicators of VET are mentioned below:

1. The Attractiveness of VET: VET in India is not attractive in comparison to academic education. VET is not considered as a lucrative career option. This requires VET to be given equal importance like academic education and to provide learning pathways for advancement in career.

2. Enterprises providing training: Unlike Germany, India cannot have a dual system of vocational education as there are not many industries where training can be imparted. In addition, there are also not many companies wherein trainees can undergo an apprenticeship. Presence of less number of Companies for training or apprenticeship is another challenge for skill development in India. In addition, companies do not participate voluntarily in providing skill training.

3. Skills Mismatches: Skills mismatch is another challenge which India needs to face in skill development. The changing market dynamics demand new skills and India needs to be prepared to provide vocational training to the workers to meet the demands.

4. Early dropout in schools: Retention rate in schools needs to be controlled. Vocational education is not being taught in India in secondary schools and therefore VET does not gain much familiarity among students.

5. Expenditure on training: Expenditure on training is another problem in Skill development. This might involve public-private partnership which needs to be planned and strengthened.

6. Sustainable Development: Mere training will not solve the purpose but continuous training with learning pathways needs to develop for sustainable development.

V. CONCLUSION

India needs to learn from the better performing countries like Germany and the United Kingdom in Skill development. The focus should be towards sustainable development. The developed economies have given importance to vocational education along with academic education. India also needs to shift the attention to vocational education along with the academic education. The Government should ensure that people realize the value of Vocational education by providing learning pathways for advancement in
their career. At the same time, all the stakeholders of the VET including the students, employees and the employer should coordinate efforts for successful implementation of Skill development in India.

REFERENCES

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