
India as the Global Talent Engine: Skilling Youth for Borderless Employability

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Abstract: As the global workforce undergoes a paradigm shift driven by digital transformation, economic change and demographic imbalances, India stands uniquely self-confident to lead the talent revolution. With over 65% of its population under the age of 35 and proactive policy interventions like NEP 2020 and Skill India Mission, India is emerging as a dynamic supplier of globally employable professionals. This paper explores India's role in global talent mobility, the evolving skills ecosystem, regional trends in demand, and strategic interventions required to maintain momentum. Drawing insights from the India Skills Report 2025 and supplementary international reports, the study outlines a roadmap for sustainable, inclusive skilling and employment across borders.

Key Words: Global Talent Mobility, Skilling India, Employability, India Skills Report 2025, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Digital Transformation, Demographic Dividend, Remote Work, Skill India Mission, Borderless Employment, EdTech, Vocational Training, Global Workforce, Industry 4.0 and Strategic Policy Interventions

1. Introduction

The 21st century global economy is being reshaped by intersecting forces, technological disruption, shifting demographics and changing patterns of labor migration. In light of these developments, India, with the help of its youthful demographic is exceptionally placed to supply talent to economies facing severe skill shortages. The India Skills Report 2025 which is a collaborative initiative by Wheebox, CII, AICTE, AIU and Taggd, highlights the nation's enthusiasm to take up a central role in global talent mobility. This research paper explores the transformation of India from a skill reservoir to an international talent powerhouse by assessing structural trends, chances and policy pathways that can optimize its demographic dividend.

2. Research Objectives:

- To study India's demographic advantage in the context of global skill shortages.
- To explore recent trends in global talent mobility and identify sectors with increasing demand for Indian professionals.

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- To assess India's skill development ecosystem, including government policies and public-private initiatives.
 - To identify regional and gender differences in employability and labor participation.
 - To propose tactical interventions that boost India's global employability and facilitate smoother talent mobility.

3. Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative, secondary research methodology, drawing from the following sources with descriptive and analytical approach, concentrating on synthesizing cross-sectoral and cross-national data to identify patterns, challenges and strategic possibilities in skilling and global mobility.

- International datasets (e.g., ILO, WEF, OECD, IRENA)
- Policy documents (e.g., NEP 2020, Skill India Mission)
- Government reports (e.g., India Skills Report 2025)
- Media articles and industry white papers
- Analytical synthesis of trends across sectors and regions

4. Global Talent Mobility Trends

Speedy advances in digital technologies, combined with demographic imbalances and shifting economic centres are pushing countries to reevaluate their talent strategies. India, with its youthful demographic and increasing employability, is emerging as a pivotal player in the global talent ecosystem.

It is emphasized in the India Skills Report 2025 that since developed nations encounter skill shortages, the demand for globally mobile professionals has intensified. More than 85 million jobs could go unfilled worldwide by 2030 due to a lack of skilled talent as per the World Economic Forum (2023). The said gap is not evenly distributed, it is most severe in countries with elderly populations such as Germany, Italy and Japan. The said countries are those where the working-age population is shrinking.

With a median age of 28.2 years, India contrasts sharply with these economies. It is worth mentioning here that approximately 65% of the Indian population is under the age of 35 and around 12 million youth enter the workforce every year. Thus, there is a possibility that India can help the world in providing trained professionals in the years to come along with meeting its own development goals.

4.1 Europe: Efforts to Address the Demographic Crisis

There is a need for a well-trained/ skilled workforce particularly in the field of IT, healthcare and sustainable energy in Europe since the elderly working age population in Europe is a matter of concern.

As per estimation by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), approximately 40% of new jobs in Europe will demand high-level qualifications by 2030. Keeping in mind the said scenario in technical roles, Indian professionals mostly in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and healthcare are being actively courted through revised visa regimes and international partnerships.

4.2 Gulf Nations: Infrastructure and Innovation

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are actively diversifying their economies under long-term strategies such as Saudi Vision 2030 and the UAE Centennial 2071. With the help of the said initiatives, there will be more focus on investment in infrastructure, tourism, healthcare and financial services rather than generation of revenue merely from oil.

Indian engineers, architects, doctors and IT experts are playing an increasingly dominant role in meeting this demand. For example, Saudi Arabia's NEOM project, a \$500 billion smart city, is expected to generate more than 380,000 jobs by 2030, many of which will require international expertise.

4.3 Southeast Asia: Unlocking Opportunities in the Digital Boom

There is a digital revolution in countries like Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia. ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 expects immense development in digital infrastructure, which in turn, will generate demand for data scientists, software developers and fintech professionals. There can be a strong possibility for a good number of digitally trained Indian professionals to grab such opportunities of employment in upcoming days since they can be the better choice for above mentioned countries.

Furthermore, diplomatic relations of India with ASEAN countries have aided skill mobility through bilateral agreements and mutual recognition of qualifications.

4.4 Africa: Sharing of Knowledge and Partnership

Although the population of Africa's youth is growing faster, there is still a skill gap and unemployment. With the help of knowledge transfer and capacity-building projects, Indian professionals and educators are increasingly contributing to the development of African economies. India's collaboration with Africa through initiatives like e-VidyaBharti and e-AarogyaBharti tele-education and telemedicine platforms demonstrate how talent mobility can also be a form of developmental diplomacy.

4.5 Remote Work and the Rise of the Borderless Professional

As per Gartner's 2024 Future of Work Survey, many global organizations now employ remote teams and there is a possibility to increase remote hiring in the next three years. India has rapidly embraced this trend. Platforms like Turing, Upwork, and FlexJobs report that India is among the top five countries supplying remote technical talent to the US and EU.

Moreover, the gig economy and digital nomad visas offered by countries like Estonia, Portugal and Dubai are redefining how professionals engage with the global economy. Indian freelancers and consultants are tapping into these trends, contributing to a projected \$455 billion gig economy by the end of 2025.

5. India's Employability Landscape

With over 500 million people actively engaged in economic activities, India's labor force is the second-largest in the world. The constant entry of young educated individuals into the job market can be considered the real strength of India.

There is an exemplary growth in India's employability rate from 33 percentages in 2014 to 50.5 percentages in 2025 among Indian graduates as stated in India Skills Report 2025. This growth undoubtedly indicates the progress India has made in education along with alignment of academic outcomes with industry expectations. The said transformation in employability in India is made possible only due to multi-stakeholder collaboration among the government, academia, private sector and international organizations.

The reputed institution like AICTE has championed quality improvement in engineering and management education through curriculum modernization and accreditation. Concurrently, assessment agencies like Wheebox has standardized employability benchmarks via tools like the Global Employability Test (GET), permitting policymakers and companies to make data-driven talent decisions.

5.1 Gender Dynamics and Regional Variations

According to the CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy), the female labor force participation rate remains around 20%, far below global averages. However, the India Skills Report notes that female employability (measured in job readiness and skill availability) is on the rise, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, education and digital services.

As far as states are concerned, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh have shown strong employability indicators because of their large student populations and educational infrastructure. States like Kerala, though their high literacy rates, show slightly lower employability scores, possibly due to preference for public-sector roles and overseas employment.

5.2 Vocational Training and Skilling Ecosystem

India's formal skilling ecosystem is anchored by flagship initiatives such as:

- **Skill India Mission:** Launched in 2015, this umbrella program has trained the youth of the country in large number in industry-relevant skills. It includes the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

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- National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS): Inspires on-the-job training by incentivizing employers to offer apprenticeships.
 - Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs): More than 14,500 ITIs across India are being modernized with digital infrastructure, soft skill modules and placement cells.

The introduction of the National Credit Framework (NCrF) and the Unified Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) aims to integrate academic and vocational learning-an essential step toward flexibility and lifelong learning.

5.3 Higher Education and Global Readiness

NEP 2020 has been a game changer. Many central, state and private universities in India are working aggressively on multi-disciplinary learning, credit transfer systems and faculty collaboration at international levels to ensure the internationalization of Indian education in the best possible ways. Moreover, the noteworthy entry of Indian universities in QS and the world rankings can be seen as acceptance of Indian degrees internationally.

5.4 Digital Skilling and EdTech Revolution

As far as digital education markets are concerned, the Edtech sector of India can be seen as one of the largest and rapidly growing markets in the said field. There are various platforms such as Skill-Lync, Coursera, upGrad and NPTEL which are delivering courses related to data science, artificial intelligence, cloud computing and cybersecurity to many learners. The above said platforms are helping India overtake traditional barriers of cost, geography and scale with the government supported platforms such as MOOC and SWAYAM

It is further worth mentioning here that bilingual and multicultural expertise can be considered a unique asset of Indian Professionals making them adaptable to global workplace cultures. Besides this, certifications from international vendors like Microsoft, AWS, and Cisco give them an advantage in international job markets.

6. Sectoral Opportunities and International Demand

Key megatrends such as digitalization, demographic transitions, climate resilience and evolving customer behaviour play vital role in global economic transformation. India, with its rapidly skilling workforce and domain expertise, is uniquely positioned to meet sector-specific global talent demands.

Six major sectors are identified in the India Skills Report 2025 where Indian specialists are witnessing rising demand both domestically and internationally such as Healthcare, Renewable Energy, IT, Manufacturing, FinTech/EdTech and E-commerce. The said sectors align well with the occupational trends highlighted by global reports from the ILO, World Economic Forum and OECD.

6.1 Information Technology and Emerging Tech

The dominance of Indian IT exports to countries like the US, UK and Australia is well known, but a newer trend is the movement of Indian IT professionals to onshore locations through H1-B, skilled migration, and remote contracting models.

Key roles in demand:

- Cloud engineers (AWS, Azure, GCP)
- AI/ML engineers
- Cybersecurity analysts
- Data scientists
- DevOps specialists

India's strength lies in its deep pool of engineers with coding skills, coupled with rising certification in cutting-edge tools like Kubernetes, TensorFlow, Power BI, and React.

6.2 Healthcare and Life Sciences

The World Health Organization (WHO) predicts a shortfall of 18 million healthcare workers worldwide by 2030, concentrated in low and middle-income countries. India is helping bridge this gap, with nurses, paramedics and doctors finding employment in Canada, the UK, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Top destinations:

- The UK's NHS International Recruitment Program
- Germany's Triple Win Initiative for nursing
- UAE and Saudi Arabia's expanding private hospital chains

Approximately 70,000 to 80,000 MBBS graduates yearly are produced by India's medical education system alongside a strong paramedical and AYUSH ecosystem. Upskilling in healthcare analytics, medical coding and telemedicine has further globalized the Indian health talent pool.

6.3 Renewable Energy and Sustainability

As nations race to meet net-zero targets, green jobs are becoming mainstream. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) estimates creation of a large number of green jobs globally by 2030. Being the world's third-largest renewable energy producer, India is already training professionals in solar panel design and installation, wind turbine maintenance, EV battery engineering, sustainable construction and environmental auditing.

India is preparing its youth for climate-oriented global roles, particularly in Europe, Australia and North America with the help of programs like SURYAMITRA and the Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP).

6.4 FinTech and EdTech

The digital payments revolution has catapulted India into a leadership position in fintech. Startups like PhonePe, Razorpay and Paytm are not only expanding globally but also carry across Indian talent to foreign subsidiaries. Indian professionals skilled in blockchain,

RegTech and UI/UX design are being hired in large numbers as the fintech market in Africa and Southeast Asia booms.

Similarly, EdTech firms such as BYJU's, upGrad, and Vedantu are expanding internationally, creating roles in content design, curriculum alignment and platform analytics.

6.5 E-commerce and Digital Economy

The pandemic accelerated global e-commerce growth. With it came rising demand for talent in areas such as digital marketing, supply chain optimization, data-driven customer experience and last-mile logistics tech.

India's e-commerce ecosystem is a vibrant training ground. Amazon India, Flipkart, Meesho, Myntra and others have matured a generation of professionals ready for cross-border placement. With Southeast Asia and Latin America emerging as high-growth digital markets, the export of e-commerce talent is becoming a new trend.

6.6 Advanced Manufacturing and Industry 4.0

With the global reconfiguration of supply chains post-COVID and the "China+1" strategy, India is emerging as a chosen manufacturing base. Technologies like Industrial IoT, robotics, CNC automation and predictive maintenance are driving job creation in India's PLI (Production Linked Incentive) supported sectors.

Indian engineers and technicians are being hired by international firms for roles in smart factory design, mechatronics, quality control in pharma manufacturing and precision engineering for EVs.

The Gulf countries, Japan, and Germany are key destinations where Indian technicians trained under GSDM, NSDC and ITI systems are migrating for long-term roles.

7. Strategic Policy Interventions

India's journey toward becoming a global talent powerhouse is not accidental, it is the outcome of deliberate, layered and planned policy interventions that span national, state, and institutional levels. These interventions are intended not only to improve skilling outcomes but also to internationalize Indian talent, simplify mobility and integrate education with industry demand. This section explores key government programs, regulatory frameworks and international collaborations that are shaping India's global employability and facilitating talent mobility.

7.1 National-Level Skilling Programs

7.1.1 Skill India Mission (SIM)

Launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), SIM aims to train over 400 million individuals by 2025. It includes flagship sub-programs such as:

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY): Offers free short-term training in over 300 job roles aligned with NSQF (National Skills Qualification Framework).
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Certifies informal sector workers to standardize and validate their skills.
- SANKALP and STRIVE: Improve institutional capacity and create outcome-based funding for skill development centres.

7.1.2 National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)

This program incentivizes private and public sector employers to hire and train apprentices. It has helped create real-world exposure for over 5 lakh youth annually enhancing employment rates.

7.1.3 Digital India and BharatNet

These initiatives improve rural broadband access, making it possible for youth from tier-2 and tier-3 cities to access online courses, attend virtual job fairs, and participate in international certification programs. This directly impacts employability across non-metropolitan regions.

7.2 Education Reforms with Global Outlook

7.2.1 NEP 2020

NEP is India's most transformative education policy in decades which emphasis on multidisciplinary learning, skill integration into academic curriculum, flexible exit options and credit transfer mechanisms aligned with global standards.

The above said initiatives shall make Indian students to be academically and professionally mobile. IITs and central universities are in process of collaborating with global universities to ensure effective implementation of dual degree and exchange programs under NEP2020.

7.2.2 National Credit Framework (NCrF) and Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)

These are foundational to India's push for credit portability and transnational education, making Indian degrees interoperable with systems in Australia, Europe and North America.

7.3 International Collaborations and Migration Policy

7.3.1 International Mobility and Skills Agreements (IMSAs):

India has signed multiple bilateral agreements for labor mobility with countries such as Japan, Germany, the UK, UAE, and Australia. Examples include:

- Indo-Japan MoC for Technical Intern Training Program (TITP)
- UK's India-UK Migration and Mobility Partnership
- Germany's 'Triple Win' Nursing Recruitment Program

Such a framework provides clear pathways for Indian professionals to work overseas with legal shields and recognized credentials.

7.3.2 Global Skill Registries and Emigration Reforms:

India is developing platforms like the SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support) and eMigrate portal to facilitate safe and documented labor migration. These systems ensure that Indian workers abroad are monitored, supported and protected.

7.3.3 International Certifications and Language Training:

NSDC and other agencies have partnered with global certification bodies (like CISCO, AWS, Google and IELTS) to train and assess Indian applicants according to international standards. Programs in German, Japanese, French and Arabic are also being promoted for mobility to specific countries.

7.4 Role of States and Localized Interventions

State-specific programs provide tailored solutions for skilling. For instance:

- Regional economic clusters like textile, pharma and drone technology are focused under Gujarat's Mukhyamantri Kaushalya Vikas Yojana.
- Kerala's ASAP (Additional Skill Acquisition Programme) focuses on future technologies and provides soft skill training to students.
- NAIPUNYAM Portal by Andhra Pradesh is an integrated skilling, assessment and employment matching platform.

These initiatives ensure that skilling is contextualized, industry-led and inclusive, taking into account local economic strengths and socio-cultural contexts.

7.5 Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and Industry Alliances

Industry associations such as **CII, FICCI and NASSCOM** are playing a pivotal role in curriculum design, industry-academia collaborations and internship programs. The **Model Career Centres (MCCs)** and **Sector Skill Councils (SSCs)** act as bridges between students and employers.

International companies operating in India such as Accenture, IBM, Siemens and Microsoft have also contributed to workforce readiness through internal training academies and certifications.

8. Challenges and Recommendations

While India has made substantial progress in preparing its workforce for the global job market, several critical challenges continue to hinder the full realization of its talent potential. These challenges are structural, systemic and sometimes even cultural. Understanding and addressing them is essential to ensure the success of India's global talent mobility mission.

8.1 Key Challenges**8.1.1 Skill Mismatch and Outdated Curriculum**

Despite a wide array of skilling initiatives, there remains a persistent mismatch between the skills taught and those demanded by employers both domestically and internationally.

- Many university syllabi have not kept pace with emerging global technologies and soft skill requirements.
- Traditional education often emphasizes theoretical learning over practical, hands-on training.
- According to the India Skills Report 2025, over 45% of graduates still lack industry-relevant skills, especially in communication, digital literacy and adaptability.

8.1.2 Digital and Regional Divide

- Urban-rural disparities in access to technology, training centres and reliable internet remain significant.
- Most world-class skilling programs are available in metros, excluding millions of talented youth from tier-2 and tier-3 cities.
- Language barriers and lack of awareness about global career paths further isolate rural talent from international opportunities.

8.1.3 Low Female Participation

- Female labor force participation in India continues to hover below 25%, one of the lowest in G20 countries.
- Social norms, safety concerns and the double burden of unpaid care work disproportionately limit women's access to skilling and job opportunities.
- The India Skills Report 2025 highlights that while employability among women is increasing, participation in global assignments remains low.

8.1.4 Limited International Recognition of Credentials

- Though programs like NSQF and NEP 2020 aim to standardize qualifications, many Indian certifications are still not fully recognized abroad.
- This limits mobility, especially for skilled trades like electricians, fitters and hospitality workers who may otherwise qualify for overseas roles.

8.1.5 Inadequate Career Guidance and Labour Market Information

- A large portion of India's student population lacks structured career counselling.
- Many youth are unaware of potential global career pathways, application processes or immigration policies.
- Labour market data, especially for global job trends, is fragmented, outdated, or difficult to access.

8.1.6 Regulatory Bottlenecks and Visa Restrictions

- Indian professionals often face stringent visa regulations and complex emigration procedures.

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- For example, non-STEM graduates find it challenging to secure work permits in countries like the USA and Germany.
 - The lack of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) for certain professions limits international job placements.

8.2 Recommendations

8.2.1 Strengthen Industry-Academia Integration

- Revise and update university curriculums every 2–3 years with inputs from employers, alumni and international organizations.
- Embed mandatory apprenticeships, project-based learning and internships into degree programs.
- Foster academia-industry think tanks for real-time feedback on global skill demands.

8.2.2 Invest in Rural Digital Infrastructure and Multi-Lingual Skilling

- Expand the reach of BharatNet and Digital India initiatives to every village.
- Create local language content on online learning platforms and integrate AI based translation for real-time skilling access.
- Establish “Global Skill Hubs” in rural clusters that combine infrastructure, faculty and job placement support.

8.2.3 Promote Gender-Inclusive Skilling Policies

- Provide financial incentives, travel stipends and security measures to support women’s participation in training programs.
- Launch specialized global placement programs for women in sectors such as caregiving, digital marketing and design.
- Partner with organizations like UN Women to create gender-friendly workplaces and international assignments.

8.2.4 Expand International Credential Recognition

- Accelerate mutual recognition agreements with skill destination countries.
- Integrate globally accepted certification bodies (e.g., CompTIA, Cisco, PMI) into national qualification frameworks.
- Offer dual certification pathways for critical job roles to ensure seamless overseas placements.

8.2.5 Build a National Global Career Navigation Platform

- Launch a centralized global career portal with job listings, visa information, country-specific demand forecasts and training suggestions.
- Integrate AI powered chatbots for personalized guidance and career mapping based on skill sets.
- Partner with embassies, overseas employers and diaspora networks to provide mentoring and job matching.

8.2.6 Simplify Migration and Strengthen Worker Protections

- Simplify the eMigrate system with user friendly interfaces, mobile accessibility and real-time job alerts.
- Enhance the role of Indian embassies in providing support for workers abroad in terms of legal aid, upskilling, reintegration on return.
- Expand pre-departure orientation programs to include intercultural training, local laws and financial literacy.

9. Conclusion and Future Outlook

India stands at the cusp of a transformative era in global workforce mobility. With one of the world's youngest and fastest growing labor forces, the country has a unique demographic window to not only meet domestic employment needs but also serve as a global talent reservoir. The India Skills Report 2025 clearly signals that the time to act is now. As the world grapples with skill shortages, technological transitions and demographic shifts, India's role as a talent exporter is becoming increasingly vital.

9.1 India's Demographic Dividend as a Global Asset

More than just a numerical advantage, India's youth bring with them adaptability, multilingual abilities and an increasing familiarity with global workplace cultures. This, combined with the country's expanding skilling ecosystem and forward-looking policies, makes India a strategic player in the evolving global economy. India's potential lies in becoming not just a source of workers, but a source of skilled, future-ready professionals who contribute meaningfully to innovation, service delivery and economic transformation worldwide.

9.2 Skilling as a Diplomatic and Developmental Tool

India's success in exporting talent has significant soft power implications. When Indian professionals succeed abroad in healthcare, technology, academia or entrepreneurship they act as ambassadors of Indian capability. The growing diaspora strengthens bilateral ties, facilitates cultural exchange, and contributes remittances, which exceeded \$125 billion in 2023, according to the World Bank.

Furthermore, workforce mobility can foster South-South cooperation, where India assists developing nations in building their own human capital capacities. Initiatives like e-VidyaBharti, Pan African e-network and Skill India International Centres are examples of how talent mobility and development diplomacy intersect.

9.3 The Road Ahead: Policy Imperatives and Vision 2047

To maximize its potential as a global talent engine, India must adopt a **visionary and integrated approach**. Key priorities should include:

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- Institutionalizing lifelong learning through micro-credentials and stackable qualifications.
 - Incentivizing industries to adopt global skill standards.
 - Creating a national “Global Mobility Index” to track progress on skill exports.
 - Expanding India's footprint in multilateral labor mobility agreements and global economic forums.

As we look ahead to India@100 in 2047, our vision must be clear: an India that not only educates and trains its youth but also empowers them to become global citizens who drive innovation, productivity and inclusive growth across the world.

9.4 Final Thoughts

The landscape of global work is shifting from fixed locations to digital platforms, from routine tasks to creative problem-solving and from homogeneous workforces to diverse, cross-cultural teams. India has the ingredients to lead this change: scale, youth, skill, and aspiration.

But these must be channelled through smart policies, coordinated execution and a commitment to inclusion. If done right, the next two decades will not just be a story of India’s growth, there will be the story of how India helped the world grow.

India’s youth are not waiting for the world to come to them but they are preparing to go to the world. With the right push, they will not only find success abroad but help redefine what success means globally.

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