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[SECURING AND DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES]

Securing and Developing Human Resources for the Future- Views from India.

Introduction:

India, the world's most populous democracy, boasts a diverse and rapidly evolving economy with a young, dynamic workforce. As it strides towards becoming a global economic powerhouse, securing and developing human resources is crucial for sustaining growth and innovation.

Securing human resources involves not just attracting top talent but also ensuring their retention and engagement. This means creating a supportive work environment, offering competitive compensation, and providing career development opportunities.

In India, where the demographic dividend is significant, addressing skill gaps through targeted education and vocational training is essential. Public and private sector collaborations can play a key role in this regard, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with skills relevant to the modern economy.

Developing human resources extends beyond initial training. It encompasses continuous learning and adaptation to technological advancements. Investment in leadership development and nurturing entrepreneurial skills are vital for fostering innovation and ensuring long-term economic resilience.

By focusing on these strategies, India can harness its vast human capital to drive sustainable growth, address emerging challenges, and capitalize on new opportunities in the global market.

The Current Situation and Issues about Construction Workers:

The construction industry in India is a vital sector, contributing significantly to the nation's GDP and employing millions. However, it faces several critical challenges regarding its workforce.

Current Situation:

The Indian construction sector is experiencing robust growth due to urbanization, infrastructure development, and government initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission and

the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. This growth has created a substantial demand for construction workers, who play an essential role in building residential, commercial, and infrastructural projects.

Despite this demand, the sector relies heavily on informal labour, with a significant proportion of workers being unskilled or semi-skilled migrants from rural areas.

Key Issues:

1. **Worker Welfare and Safety:** One of the most pressing issues is the lack of adequate safety measures. Construction workers often face hazardous working conditions, including exposure to heavy machinery, risky heights, and inadequate personal protective equipment. This leads to a high rate of workplace accidents and fatalities. Furthermore, many workers do not have access to health insurance or other welfare benefits, exacerbating their vulnerability.
2. **Skill Gaps and Training:** A significant portion of the workforce lacks formal training, which affects productivity and safety. While there are various skill development programs, they often fall short in reaching the vast number of informal workers. The need for effective vocational training and certification programs is crucial to enhance skill levels and ensure workers are equipped to handle advanced construction technologies.
3. **Economic Insecurity:** Many construction workers are employed on a contractual basis, leading to job insecurity and unstable income. This hazardous employment situation often leaves workers without financial safety nets during periods of unemployment or economic downturns. Additionally, the lack of proper wage regulations and delayed payments are common issues that affect their financial stability.
4. **Living Conditions:** Workers, especially those who migrate from rural areas, often live in substandard conditions near construction sites. Inadequate housing, poor sanitation, and lack of access to clean drinking water are prevalent issues. These conditions not only impact their health but also their productivity and overall well-being.
5. **Legal and Regulatory Challenges:** The enforcement of labour laws and regulations in the construction sector is often weak. Although there are various legal frameworks intended to protect workers' rights, the implementation is

inconsistent. This lack of effective enforcement contributes to the exploitation and mistreatment of workers.

Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including stricter safety regulations, improved training programs, better living conditions, and robust enforcement of labour laws. By focusing on these areas, the Indian construction industry can enhance worker welfare, improve productivity, and ensure inheritable or sustainable growth.

The Measures Taken to Secure Human Resources:

The construction industry in India, a cornerstone of economic development, faces significant challenges in terms of workforce skills and safety. To address these issues, the Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC) and various state governments have implemented a range of measures focused on skill development and worker welfare.

CIDC Initiatives:

1. **Skill Development Programs:** The CIDC, a premier institution dedicated to the growth of the construction industry, has been at the forefront of skill development initiatives. It collaborates with educational institutions and industry experts to design and implement training programs tailored to the needs of the construction sector. These programs cover a wide range of skills, from basic construction techniques to advanced project management and safety practices. CIDC's training modules aim to enhance the technical and managerial capabilities of workers, thus improving their employability and productivity.
2. **Certification and Accreditation:** To ensure high standards of training, CIDC offers certification and accreditation for training centres and individual workers. This process involves rigorous evaluation of training programs and facilities to maintain quality and relevance. Certification from CIDC is highly regarded in the industry and helps workers gain credibility and recognition for their skills.
3. **Partnerships with Industry and Government:** CIDC actively collaborates with industry stakeholders, including construction companies, technology providers, and government bodies, to align training programs with industry needs. These partnerships help in the creation of specialized courses and workshops that address emerging trends and technologies in construction. Moreover, CIDC works closely

with the government to integrate skill development programs into broader economic and employment policies.

4. **Research and Development:** CIDC is involved in research to identify skill gaps and emerging needs within the construction sector. This research informs the development of new training programs and curricula, ensuring that they are up-to-date with industry standards and technological advancements.

Government Measures:

1. **National Skill Development Mission:** The Government of India's National Skill Development Mission, launched in 2015, aims to provide a structured approach to skill development across various sectors, including construction. This mission supports various initiatives, such as the establishment of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Skill Development Centres, which offer vocational training and certification in construction-related trades.
2. **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** The PMKVY scheme, launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, is a flagship program aimed at enhancing the skills of youth across India. Under PMKVY, the government provides financial support to training providers and incentivizes trainees. The scheme includes specific modules for the construction industry, focusing on areas such as masonry, carpentry, and electrical work.
3. **National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET):** The NCVET plays a crucial role in setting standards for vocational education and training. It oversees the implementation of various skill development programs, ensuring quality and consistency across different training providers. The council works in coordination with CIDC and other stakeholders to promote industry-relevant training.
4. **State Government Initiatives:** Various state governments have launched their own skill development programs tailored to regional needs. For example, states like Gujarat, Tamilnadu and Maharashtra have established state-level skill development missions that focus on enhancing the capabilities of construction workers. These initiatives often include partnerships with local industry players and training institutions, addressing specific regional challenges and opportunities.

5. **Public-Private Partnerships:** State governments are increasingly engaging in public-private partnerships to enhance skill development. By collaborating with construction firms and training organizations, these partnerships aim to provide practical training, apprenticeships, and job placement services. This approach helps bridge the gap between training and employment, ensuring that workers are better prepared for the demands of the industry.

Both CIDC and various government bodies, including state governments, are making substantial efforts to address the skill development needs of the construction industry. Through a combination of training programs, certifications, research, and public-private partnerships, these initiatives aim to build a skilled, safe, and productive workforce capable of driving the sector's growth and development.

Challenges for Future to Secure and Develop Human Resources:

India, with its burgeoning population and rapidly evolving economy, stands at a critical juncture in developing its human resources for the future. As the country moves towards becoming a global economic powerhouse, several challenges and scenarios must be addressed to effectively harness and develop its human capital.

1. Skill Gaps and Mismatch:

One of the primary challenges India faces is the significant skill gap between the education system's output and the needs of the labour market. Many educational institutions emphasize theoretical knowledge over practical skills, leading to a mismatch between graduates' capabilities and industry requirements. This misalignment impedes the ability of businesses to find suitably skilled employees and hampers the overall productivity of the economy.

To address this issue, there is a need for a paradigm shift in education and training. The integration of industry-relevant skills into curricula and the expansion of vocational training programs are crucial. Public-private partnerships can play a vital role in aligning educational outcomes with market demands, ensuring that graduates are better prepared for the evolving job landscape.

2. Technological Advancements and Automation:

Rapid technological advancements and the rise of automation pose another challenge. As industries increasingly adopt automation and artificial intelligence, the demand for high-tech skills is rising, while routine, manual jobs are declining. This shift necessitates a concerted effort to reskill and upskill the workforce to ensure they can adapt to new technologies and remain employable.

Government and industry must collaborate to create training programs focused on emerging technologies. Investments in digital literacy and continuous learning platforms will be essential in equipping workers with the skills needed to thrive in a technologically advanced economy.

3. Demographic Changes:

India's demographic profile presents both opportunities and challenges. The country has a large, young population, often referred to as the “demographic dividend.” However, this potential can only be realized if there are adequate systems in place to harness it. Addressing the needs of a diverse workforce, including rural-to-urban migrants and varying levels of education, requires targeted policies and programs.

To maximize the benefits of this demographic dividend, it is crucial to focus on inclusive education, health, and skill development initiatives. Rural areas, in particular, need enhanced access to quality education and vocational training to ensure that all segments of the population can contribute to and benefit from economic growth.

4. Employment Generation and Job Quality:

While India is generating a significant number of jobs, many of these are in the informal sector with low wages and poor working conditions. The challenge is to create high-quality, formal sector employment opportunities that offer decent wages and job security.

Government policies should aim at improving labour laws, enhancing worker protections, and promoting fair labour practices. Additionally, supporting entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can contribute to job creation and economic diversification.

5. Migration and Urbanization:

The rapid pace of urbanization and migration from rural to urban areas presents challenges in managing workforce distribution and ensuring that urban infrastructure can support growing populations. Migrant workers often face issues such as inadequate housing, lack of social security, and difficulties in accessing services.

Addressing these issues requires integrated urban planning and policies that support migrant workers. This includes improving urban infrastructure, providing better housing and healthcare facilities, and ensuring that social security systems are inclusive of all workers, regardless of their migration status.

6. Policy Implementation and Governance:

Effective implementation of policies and governance is crucial for addressing these challenges. Inconsistent or poorly executed policies can undermine efforts to develop human resources. Strengthening institutional frameworks, improving transparency, and enhancing accountability in the implementation of skill development and employment programs are essential.

Summary:

Developing human resources in India for the future involves navigating a complex landscape of skill gaps, technological changes, demographic shifts, and employment challenges.

Addressing the challenges in securing and developing human resources in India is crucial for the nation's sustained economic growth and global competitiveness. The issues outlined—skill gaps, technological advancements, demographic changes, employment quality, and urbanization—underscore the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach.

Education and Skill Development: Reforming educational curricula to align with industry needs and enhancing vocational training are imperative to bridge the skill gaps. Investments in practical, hands-on training and continuous learning opportunities will better equip the workforce to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving job market.

Technological Adaptation: As automation and digital technologies reshape industries, there is a pressing need for reskilling and upskilling programs. Collaboration between government, industry, and educational institutions will be essential to provide relevant training and ensure that workers can adapt to new technologies.

Leveraging Demographic Dividend: India's young and growing population offers immense potential, but it requires targeted efforts to address educational disparities between urban and rural areas. By expanding access to quality education and vocational training in underserved regions, the country can maximize the benefits of its demographic dividend.

Improving Employment Quality: While job creation is vital, the focus must also be on enhancing the quality of employment. Strengthening labour laws, promoting formal sector jobs, and ensuring fair wages and working conditions are crucial steps toward improving the overall employment landscape.

Urbanization and Migration: Effective urban planning and comprehensive support systems for migrant workers are necessary to manage the challenges posed by rapid urbanization. Investing in infrastructure and social services will help create a more inclusive and functional urban environment.

By addressing these challenges with targeted strategies and collaborative efforts, India can develop a skilled, adaptable, and resilient workforce capable of driving sustainable growth and innovation. The combined efforts of the government, industry, and educational institutions will be pivotal in shaping a prosperous future for India's human resources.
