

# SKILLING FOR IMPACT

## Youth Skilling Strategy (2026-2030)

### OUR STORY

The son of daily wage earners, Manjot (name changed), is an alumnus of Dr. Reddy's Foundation (DRF) skilling program from the Amritsar Centre. He still recalls the difficult days when only one of his parents could find work - or worse, when both returned home empty-handed. On those nights, the family of five would share a frugal meal and sleep under a leaking roof. *'I had a tough childhood, but this only doubled my intent to succeed,'* says Manjot. He remains grateful to his parents, who, despite severe hardships, never asked him to drop out of school.

After completing his schooling, Manjot's journey came to a halt. With no financial means for further studies, he began working as a laborer alongside his parents. His life took a turn when the village head handed him a pamphlet for DRF's skilling program. *'That piece of paper changed my life trajectory,'* he recalls. Though the training centre was far away and required him to cycle daily, Manjot persevered, knowing that this was his chance at a better future. In 2010, after completing a short-duration skilling program, he began his career at a global Quick Service Restaurant.

Today, he is overseeing sales across three major cities in Punjab, and even holds the record for the highest single-day sales. His personal life has transformed as well - he has built a house in his village, is married to a teacher, has two sons, supported the marriages of his three sisters, owns a vehicle, and enjoys financial stability.

Manjot's story is one among **the half a million** youth whose lives have been transformed through DRF's skilling programs. With just a little handholding, structured training, and assisting in finding opportunities to enter the formal workforce, their resilience and hardwork have rewritten their families' futures.

It is with this vision that DRF was established in 1996, to enable young and disadvantaged youth to access quality education and employability skills, and help them realize their true potential. Over the past two and half decades, with the unwavering support of our partners, our flagship skilling programs have impacted the lives of more than 5.6 lakh youth across the country. (Table 1).

Our skill development journey began in 1999 with the designing and piloting one of India's first short term placement-linked skilling models - 'Livelihoods Advancement Business School' (LABS) in the then, undivided State of Andhra Pradesh. The success of the LABS program resulted in its pan India scale up from 2004-08 with the support of Ministry of Rural Development, State Governments and other Development Agencies. Later, the program was replicated in other countries (Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Vietnam).

Early 2008-09, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and later from 2014-15 onwards the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) initiated similar skilling programs across the country. The launch of 'Skill India' Campaign in 2015 gave further impetus to it, resulting in a significant increase in skilling initiatives across the country by the government, private sector and not-for-profit organizations.

In 2016, we shifted our focus to improving the quality of skilling programs while operating at scale - particularly in the area of training, and the types of jobs in which youth were being placed. This shift included a yearlong intense research (secondary and primary) across seventy cities in twenty states; and involved engaging with hundreds of youth, our alumni, community

members, employers, peer skilling agencies and the government to arrive at possible solutions for improving the quality of skilling programs implemented at scale.

Based on the research findings, we made a key shift from only 'domain' based skilling to 'core employability skills'<sup>1</sup> and 'technical skills'<sup>2</sup>. While the focus of the former is to have a common training program on market aligned foundational skills for multi-sector entry level job roles<sup>3</sup> or self-employment, the latter is a job-role-specific training program for a specific sector<sup>4</sup> with a small component of 'core employability skills'.

As part of this shift we also ensured that our programs have: [a] certified trainers having competency to deliver training, [b] learning outcomes measured through pre and post assessments, [c] quality placements in formal sector jobs, as per the aspirations and competencies of youth, through tech-enabled matchmaking<sup>5</sup>, and [d] regular revision of modules based on emerging skills requirements

In the year 2022-23 a pan India skill gap study was conducted to explore emerging job opportunity in electric vehicle (EV) and solar sectors. Additionally, inputs from tech industry leaders were taken on the need for skilling in information technology based courses. All these skill gap studies helped us to design and pilot new technical courses from 2023 onwards in EV, solar, data science, AI/ML, and full-stack web developers. Further, to address the issue of upskilling, digital inclusion and life-long learning a self learning app, SKILLFY was designed and launched in the year 2022-23

Additionally, based on insights gathered from surveys with our large-volume hiring employers and alumni, the 'core employability skills' modules underwent its first major revision in 2023. In 2025, we further strengthened these modules by integrating AI-related components to ensure alignment with emerging skill requirements and the evolving expectations of the job market.

Year	Classroom- Led	App-Based
1999-2002	1132	
2002-03	215	
2003-04	328	
2004-05	18923	
2005-06	25123	
2006-07	45191	
2007-08	47064	
2008-09	46473	
2009-10	20820	
2010-11	25403	
2011-12	27191	
2012-13	19549	
2013-14	17032	
2014-15	21270	
2015-16	27732	
2016-17	18865	
2017-18	5892	
2018-19	11656	
2019-20	10924	
2020-21	12518	
2021-22	19673	
2022-23	23863	1598
2023-24	23161	16594
2024-25	24816	33116
2025-26 (30-Nov-25)	24083	19900
<b>Total</b>	<b>518897</b>	<b>71208</b>
<b>Total Youth &amp; PwDs Impacted &gt;5.90 Lakh</b>		

[Table 1: DRF - Skilling Programs' Impact]

<sup>1</sup> Our first 'Core Employability Skills' program 'GROW' now diversified into GROW Plus, GROW-Digital & GROW Women.

<sup>2</sup> The first "Technical Skills" program launched was HQHCS (High Quality Healthcare Skilling), gradually GROW- Green (Solar and EV Technicians courses for ITI pass students) and GROW Tech (AI/ML and Fullstack Developer courses for engineering and science graduates) were introduced.

<sup>3</sup> Our research findings showed that youth trained on 'Core Employability Skills' are able to get placed in 48 job roles (mapped with qualification packs) across 17 tertiary sectors

<sup>4</sup> General Duty Assistant (GDA) and Geriatric Care roles in Healthcare Sector, Solar Panel and Electric Vehicle Manintenance Technician roles Green Job Sector, and AI/ML, Fullstack Developer roles in IT Sectors.

<sup>5</sup> We have developed an IT platform which has an analytic enabled matchmaking engine, which got 'Digital Innovation Award' by International Data Corporation (IDC) in 2018. The platform was refreshed based on the new requirements of program in the year 2025.

The recent cross-sectional studies on the impact of our skilling programs established that imparting market aligned skills, having certified trainers, measuring trainees' learning outcomes and proper matchmaking of their competencies and aspirations with employers' requirements, helped in improving the overall quality and outcomes of skilling programs. In an impact assessment study conducted in 2023 (for details refer to annexure 33) employers reported that youth trained on 'core employability skills' are quick learners, confident, are equipped with professional skills and higher retention. Those who worked in the same job or new job for more than 6 months received a salary hike of 26 to 29 per cent respectively, as compared to the average annual hike of less than 10 per cent as per AON Survey in similar service sector jobs. An Alumni tracer study conducted in 2024 (refer to annexure 34) shows that those alumni who remained in jobs for 18-24 months saw an average salary increase of 49 per cent, as compared to the 20 per cent growth in the similar jobs as per 2023 and 2024 AON Survey.

Our skilling programs have now expanded to 21 states and union territories, with a presence of over 200 skilling centres across the country. The journey of the past 27 years has been made possible through the unwavering support of our partners. Like any long journey, our skilling journey too has witnessed its share of challenges and triumphs. However, the immense trust, encouragement, and consistent backing - especially from our long-term partners - have enabled us to overcome every hurdle and continue growing stronger.

We remain firmly committed to empowering young people to thrive in an ever-evolving skilling and employment landscape, while staying aligned with national skilling priorities and the emerging workforce demands of India and the global economy. As we revise our skilling strategy for next 5 years, a brief reflection on the opportunities and challenges before us is essential to ensure that our strategy remains grounded, responsive, and future-ready.

## CURRENT SKILLING SCENARIO *CHALLENGES*

### **A Weak Foundation**

The lack of strong foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) skills among individuals has become a critical global issue (refer to table 2). It exists not only in low-income or developing nations but also in high-income or developed countries. The latest 'Survey of Adult Skills' report reveals that on, average, 18% of adults across OECD countries do not meet the basic levels of proficiency in literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem-solving. The 2022 World Bank report (refer to reference 31) highlights that 70 per cent of 10-year-olds are unable to read and understand simple text.

FLN skills act as a base for meaningful learning in higher grades and foster 21st-century skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking. Children who fail to acquire the FLN skills face difficulties in catching up and might drop out of school. It also impacts their acquisition of advanced skills and influences their grasp of concepts across subjects. The damage is even greater for children who study in a language (e.g. English) they do not speak or understand. They face a 'double learning disadvantage' because they must try to learn a new language while absorbing concepts from other subjects. As per the ASER 2024 report, reading levels have shown improvement compared to the pandemic years; however, they still remain below the levels recorded in 2018. In arithmetic as well, children have made progress since the post-pandemic period, yet significant gaps persist. Much more needs to be done to ensure that all children in India acquire strong foundational skills by the time they complete primary education.

### **Dropout and Gross Enrollment Ratio in Higher Studies**

According to the UDISE+ 2024-25 data, national dropout rates remain relatively low at the primary ( $\approx 0.3$  per cent) and upper primary ( $\approx 3.5$  per cent) levels, but rise sharply to about 11.5 per cent at the secondary level. Similarly the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher

secondary (Classes 11–12) is 58.4 per cent in 2024-25. Meanwhile, the GER for higher education (age group 18–23) stood at 28.4 per cent in 2021-22. While enrolment appears high at school levels, the sharp drop in participation when transitioning to higher study underscores the challenge ahead. Under the goals of National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), India aims to reach a 50 per cent GER in higher education by 2035 - a bold target that will require sustained effort.

Parameters	2018	2022	2024
<b>Reading a Std II level text (Regional language)</b>			
% of Std III children	27.3	20.5	27.1
% of Std V children	50.5	42.8	48.8
% of Std VIII children	73	69.6	71.1
<b>Arithmetic</b>			
% of Std III children who can do subtraction	28.2	25.9	33.7
% of Std V children who can do division	27.9	25.6	30.7
% of Std VIII children who can do division	44.1	44.7	45.8
Data Source: ASER 2024			

[Table 2]

### Youth - Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

NEET is another major area of concern. According to the India Unemployment 2024 report, as of 2022, 28.5 per cent of Indian youth aged 15-29 fall into the NEET category. This percentage rises sharply with age: 12.1 per cent for those aged 15–19, 36.3 per cent for 20–24, and 39.1 per cent for 25–29.

There is also a stark gender disparity, the proportion of young women (48.4 per cent) in NEET is approximately 5 times of their male counterparts (9.8 per cent). The UN SDG Report 2024 highlights that as of 2023, 269 million young people are in the NEET category and there is an urgent need for increased efforts in reducing the NEET rates, especially among young women.

### Unemployment Rate

India's unemployment rate depends on where you look - it is quite high for the young and educated. As per Periodic Labour Force Survey India's official headline unemployment rate was 3.2 per cent in 2023-24 and 5.6 per cent in June 2025. It is also observed that the youth unemployment increases as the level of education rises. Those with graduate degrees or higher, face the highest unemployment rates, with a higher rate among women as compared to men. For example though 3.2 per cent may appear low, but during the same phase the graduates' unemployment rate is as high as 13 per cent and for youth aged 15-29, 10.2 per cent.

To understand this better let's have a look at India's working age population 'aged 15-64' (Table 3). Out of 990 Million working age population approx. 40 per cent population are not even part of the labour force. The unemployment rate which we generally refer to in various reports is calculated from denominator as labour force (and not the working age population of 990 Million).



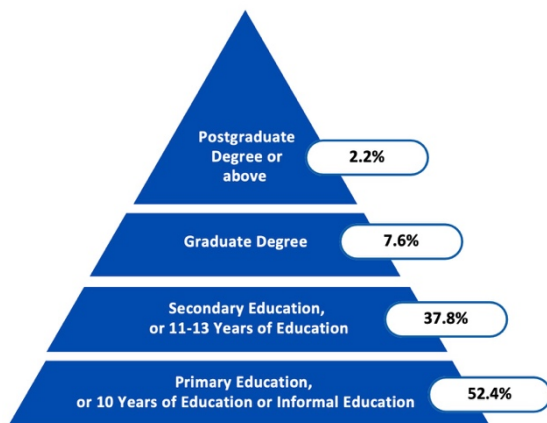
[Table 3: Estimated Figures from WB Reports]

Further unemployment rate is quite simply defined as people who are not working and are also looking for a job (read labour force). This is then captured using two reference periods. The

first one, used officially, asks the respondents about their employment status in the 365 days preceding the survey period. The second one asks the same but only for the preceding 7 days. Here is the nuance, ‘if you ask a casual labourer whether he or she has been working anytime during the last 365 days, the answer is always yes and this further raises the employed figures.

### Lack of Employability Skills

A majority of school and college graduates struggle to get jobs due to a lack of essential employability skills. Out of those who are working, 90 per cent of them have only 12<sup>th</sup> and below educational qualification as per 2024-25 Economic Survey report. (Figure 1).



[Figure 1]

The India Employment 2024 Report reveals that the percentage of youth accessing formal vocational training has barely increased, from 3.8 per cent in 2005 to 4 per cent in 2022. This participation remains far behind that of developed countries, where 60-70 per cent of the youth received formal vocational or technical training.

Additionally, even graduates with formal degrees often find themselves unequipped to meet the demands of the dynamic job market. According to a 2024 study by TeamLease Degree Apprenticeship, though India produces 1.5 million engineering graduates annually, only 10% are considered employable. This data point is concerning and highlights the gap between academic curriculum and industry requirements.

According to an EY and iMocha 2023 report, 81 per cent of organisations in India are grappling with a shortage of skilled tech workers. Furthermore, 28 per cent of organizations anticipate the need to reskill up to a third of their workforce in technology skills by 2025 to remain competitive in an increasingly digital landscape.

### Women Participation in Labour Force

There is a stark gender gap in the labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2024, the LFPR in usual status (15 years and above) for women was 41.7 per cent whereas for men it was 78.8 per cent. The India Employment Report 2024 also highlights that the women LFPR was only 25 per cent of the total female working-age population in 2022, with most of them engaging in self-employment, informal labour, or low-skill manual jobs. Although there was a slight increase in women LFPR during the pandemic, it was primarily driven by a rise in subsistence employment. Several studies have shown various barriers that hinder women's participation in the labor force. Our own research and learning from running dedicated women skilling centres highlights 10 such barriers (refer to reference point 32) such as responsibility for household and care work; inability to work “extra” hours due to domestic duties; absence of a segmented approach to different categories of women workers; unintended consequences of good-intention reforms (e.g., maternity benefits, prevention of sexual harassment act); lack of major system-wide reforms (e.g., tax incentives, childcare, flexible working); under-representation of women in vocational and STEM careers; caste, class and religion-based constraints on women’s work options; job scarcity and societal preference for men when employment is limited; impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related disruptions on women and; persisting norms and biases that lead employers to prefer men for the roles.

### Lack of Career Planning Support

One of the critical challenges confronting India today is the limited preparedness and awareness among young people as they transition from education to the workforce. This misalignment begins as early as high school, where a majority

of students remain unaware of the wide spectrum of career opportunities available to them.

According to the Mindler Career Awareness Survey (2022), nearly 93 per cent of Indian students in classes 8 to 12 are familiar with only about 7 career options, mostly traditional fields such as medicine, engineering, law, or teaching. In reality, the modern economy presents over 20,000 distinct career paths. Even more concerning is that 7 per cent of students have ever received formal career counselling or guidance.

This lack of structured exposure and informed guidance results in millions of capable students enrolling in academic programs that neither align with their interests nor meet labour market demands. The India Skills Report 2024 notes that over 65 per cent of high school graduates pursue courses unrelated to their aptitudes or aspirations. As a consequence, a large proportion of youth complete higher education without the skills or clarity required for today's dynamic job market, exacerbating India's employment and employability gap.

### **Lack of Quality Jobs**

India's rapidly expanding working-age youth cohort continues to face a notable shortfall in quality entry-level employment opportunities that offer sustainable wages and upward mobility. According to the India Employment Report 2024 by the Institute for Human Development and International Labour Organization, while labour-force participation has improved, especially among youth, the growth of productive and decent jobs has lagged behind. The report highlights that many young entrants secure informal, low-paying, or vulnerable positions despite education and aspirations. For instance, trends indicate that average monthly salaries for youth in salaried employment stood at just ₹14,709 per month in 2022-23—including urban youth, whereas self-employed youth earned only around ₹10,749 per month. These figures illustrate that access to a job does not necessarily mean access to a livelihood that can sustain a move into the middle class. Compounding the issue is that many skilling and training initiatives—though designed to enhance entry-level employment—are

not translating into jobs with decent starting salaries, regular contracts, and pathways for growth. Government-data analyses show that despite large scale upskilling efforts under schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), placement rates remain alarmingly low. Without deliberate policy and organisational focus on job quality—including wage floors, contract stability, employer accountability, and pathways for career progression—India risks stagnating in a cycle of vast youth employment but little youth prosperity.

### **Impact of AI on Job**

The future of work is being rapidly reshaped by emerging technologies—most notably by Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is proving to be the most disruptive among them. A multitude of new roles linked to AI development and its application in enhancing workforce productivity are emerging at unprecedented speed. This technological shift is transforming industries and job markets worldwide, while the curriculum revision cycles in our schools and colleges, typically spanning three years, remain largely limited in scope, leaving many students behind, unless we skill, upskill, and reskill them with relevance and quality.

According to McKinsey, India faces a deepening skills crisis, with nearly seven out of ten Indian jobs vulnerable to AI-led automation by 2030. The impact on entry level jobs is more, in a recent study done by Stanford University in 2025, (co-authored by economist Erik Brynjolfsson), researchers found that over the last three years, employment has dropped 13 per cent for people who are just starting out in fields exposed to AI - such as accountants, developers, and administrative assistants. As per Economic Survey 2023-24 Report - routine tasks, like customer service, are likely to be automated, while creative industries will increasingly use AI for image and video creation. In education, personalized AI tutors could transform learning, and in healthcare, AI may accelerate drug discovery, and all this will have impact on jobs and create a massive need to skill, upskill and reskill our labor force.

### **Stagnant Productivity of Human Capital**

The long-term growth arithmetic shows that from 1990 to 2023, India's output per worker grew at a median rate of 4.71 per cent. On paper this is a strong performance but the decomposition shows that total factor productivity (TFP) contributes only 1.19 percentage points, while capital deepening contributes 1.91 percentage points; the residual part, which measures labour quality shifts, structural changes, measurement noise, adds less than 2 percentage points.

These figures tell us that our economy remains driven predominantly by resource accumulation, rather than productivity. And for unlocking TFP, improving human capital is equally important other than reforms in various sectors. However, India's demographic dividend will turn into a burden if labour force entrants lack skills needed for a technologically evolving economy. (*Prof. Saumitra Bhaduri, Madras School of Economics, Mint, 4th December 2025*)

### **Climate Change**

It is important to factor in the impact of climate change which is likely to have a profound bearing on both humans and the ecosystems during the coming decades. The palpable changes in global average temperature and rainfall will have a direct bearing on Agriculture and allied sectors which employs more than 45 per cent of our total workforce (*Economic Survey 2023-24*).

Additionally, India's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement includes a target to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 35 per cent and increasing the share of non-fossil fuel based capacity in the electricity mix to 50 per cent by 2030 (*Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 2023*). As a result, there will be a vital need to reskill millions of farmers & workforce currently engaged in fossil fuel sectors to help them transition to manufacturing, service sector, green economy, or productive self-employment options as we transition towards a carbon-reducing regime.

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

With nearly 30,000 youth entering the workforce every day, and the potential impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on jobs, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to build future-relevant skills is a formidable challenge. Addressing this will demand large-scale collaborations and sustained collective action from all stakeholders - government, industry, academia, and civil society.

While multiple initiatives (such as PM Internship Scheme; Pradhan Mantri Vikshit Bharat Rozgar Yojna - Employment Linked Incentive to encourage employers to generate additional formal jobs; Scheme for Upgradation of 1000 government ITIs; New Labour & Employment Policy; New 4 Labour Codes, New Skilling Policy) are already underway, there remains an urgent need to bridge existing gaps, accelerate innovation, and leverage emerging opportunities to ensure that India's workforce remains competitive and meaningfully engaged in the evolving economy.

### **Demographic Advantage**

India has a population of over 600 million individuals aged between 18 and 35 years, with approximately 65 per cent of the population falling below the age of 35. This demographic dividend is predicted to last until around 2055-56, reaching its highest point in 2041, when about 59 per cent of the population will be in the working-age bracket of 20 to 59 years. (*S&P Global, Malin and Tyagi 2023*) As per the India Employment 2024 Report, each year, approximately 12 million individuals join the working-age population, creating a vast pool of labor that, if effectively utilized, could enable India to harness its demographic dividend. This growing workforce, which impacts both the worker population ratio and the dependency ratio, represents a "window of opportunity" for India's growth—a window that must be seized before it closes.

In order to fully capitalize this dividend, it is crucial to equip the workforce with the skills and knowledge required by the global labour market and the demands of Industry. The government is actively taking steps to transform this

demographic advantage into a productivity dividend by fostering job creation and entrepreneurial opportunities that align with the aspirations and potential of India's youth.

*(Economic Survey 2023-24)*

### **GoI Schemes, Policies and Initiatives to Strengthen Vocational and Skilling Ecosystem**

The Government of India, apart from the initial efforts made by various ministries to scale up placement-linked skilling programs, established NSDC, MSDE, and Skill Sector Councils to promote wage or self-employment in the country.

The MSDE runs various skill development programs such as (a) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (free short-duration skill training and certification) (b) Craftsmen Training Scheme at it is (Vocational training through a network of 14,955 ITIs) (c) Jan Shikshan Sansthan (For skilling of non/neo literates and persons with a rudimentary level of education) (d) National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (To promote apprenticeship training by reimbursing a partial stipend) (e) New Age and Future Skills (NCVET approved 200+ new age and future skill courses). They also launched the Skill India Digital Hub platform in 2023 with the objective of facilitating access to skilling, credit, and employment through AI/ML technology and NSDC International Limited was set up in 2021 for ethical and transparent international recruitment of skilled Indians.

Other recent initiatives are - the PM Internship Scheme 2024 under the MCA, aiming to empower youth aged 21-24 years by providing practical experience through a one-year internship opportunity in India's top 500 companies; Pradhan Mantri Vikshit Bharat Rozgar Yojna -Employment Linked Incentive to encourage employers to generate additional formal jobs; recently launched national scheme for upgradation of 1000 government ITIs and setting up and capacity augmentation of five National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) which will host five National Centres of Excellence (NCoEs) for skilling with an outlay of 60,000

crore for 5 years and proposed Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Mudra Yojana to fund skilling of the country's growing workforce.

In addition, several national Policies and Acts- such as the CSR Act 2013, the National Education Policy 2020, National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act 2021 and the MSDE Vision Document 2025 - offer significant opportunities to strengthen and expand the skilling ecosystem. Together, these frameworks provide clear policy direction, open new avenues for partnerships, and create an enabling environment for large-scale, future-ready skilling interventions.

### **New Labour Codes**

India's labour code reforms represent a major structural overhaul aimed at modernising and simplifying the country's fragmented labour regulatory framework. By consolidating 29 existing labour laws into 4 comprehensive labour codes – the Code on Wages (2019), Industrial Relations Code (2020), Code on Social Security (2020) and Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (2020) - the reforms seek to improve ease of compliance for employers while strengthening protection, welfare and social security for workers.

The new framework notified on 21<sup>st</sup> number 2025 provides uniform definitions, digitised compliance, and wider social security coverage, including for gig and platform workers. It also aims to promote formalisation, enhance worker safety, and create a more flexible labour market that encourages investment and job creation.

Some key changes which have potential to impact the entry level jobs in positive ways are mandatory appointment letters to all workers, social security coverage for all workers including gig workers, statutory minimum wage payment for all workers, free annual health check-up for workers above 40 years, timely wages payment mandatory for employers, women participation in all jobs and shifts, ESIC coverage and benefits extended pan-india including gratuity payment for all one year fixed term employment.

### **Self-employment & Entrepreneurship**

Exploring self-employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, especially for the youth from rural areas, can unleash the potential of millions of youth. The Indian government has launched many programs to promote the same including the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme and Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme. There are also schemes like PM Mudra Yojana, Stand Up India that facilitate bank loans to encourage the setting up of enterprises. Furthermore, the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) is providing training in entrepreneurship (*Economic Survey 2023-24*). Numerous private sector companies are investing their CSR funds in providing entrepreneurial skills in sectors like technology, telecom and apparel (*Telecom Sector Skill Council, 2023*). The renewed focus of government, private agencies and non-profit-organizations in promoting entrepreneurial thinking among the youth is a positive change.

### **National Credit Framework (NCrF)**

NCrF is a landmark meta-framework introduced by the Government of India (via the National Education Policy 2020) with the objective of creditising learning across general education, vocational training, skilling and work experience, thereby enabling seamless mobility, flexibility and lifelong learning. Under the NCrF - one credit is equivalent to 30 notional learning hours; learning is organised into levels from 1 to 8, covering school, higher education, vocational and skill domains; it supports multiple entry-exit pathways, horizontal and vertical mobility between streams (academic ↔ vocational), and recognition of prior and experiential learning. Its implementation is operationalised through the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) mechanism, which acts as a digital repository of credits earned by learners. NCrF offers a powerful tool to align programmes, design hybrid learning tracks, measure and creditise competencies beyond traditional degrees, and thereby enhance the employability and lifelong learning outcomes of learners in their respective skilling programs.

### **Technology Advancement**

India's technology industry is projected to generate a revenue of USD 254 billion in FY2024, with an annual growth of 4.3 per cent. Despite challenging market conditions, the industry remains a net hirer, adding 60,000 new employees, bringing the total workforce to 5.43 million, with a 1.1 per cent year-on-year growth. (*NASSCOM, 2024*). There has been a rising demand for tech-savvy professionals skilled in emerging fields such as big data, AI, machine learning, cybersecurity, and cloud computing. To foster an AI-enabled ecosystem and engage the youth with AI, the government has launched several initiatives (such as Future Skills Prime; YUVAi: Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI; Responsible AI for Youth 2022). Furthermore, a budget allocation of ₹10,300 crore for the India AI Mission in 2024 marks a critical step toward strengthening the country's AI ecosystem. (*Economic Survey 2023-24*)

By leveraging technology there is also an immense scope of innovation in skilling delivery such as app-based self-learning, digital classrooms and new age high-end technical courses. These innovations can help improve quality, cost effectiveness and scalability of skilling initiatives and enhancing overall laborforce productivity.

### **New Labour and Employment Policy**

The draft policy envisions a technology-driven, work-centric framework that redefines the role of the Labour Ministry from a traditional regulatory authority to a proactive employment facilitator. This shift reflects India's ongoing structural transformation of labour markets, influenced by digitalisation, the green transition, and the emergence of new employment models such as gig and platform work. The policy is designed for implementation in 3 phases, supported by a robust monitoring mechanism: Phase I (2025–2027): Focus on establishing institutional structures and integrating social security mechanisms. Phase II (2027–2030): Expansion towards a nationwide rollout of universal social security accounts, skill credit systems, and district-level employment facilitation cells. Phase III (2030–2047): Consolidation and optimisation of all related initiatives to ensure long-term sustainability.

## **National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2025**

The Draft policy seeks to build a future-ready, inclusive, and high-quality skilling ecosystem aligned with India's rapidly evolving economic and technological landscape. It emphasises a demand-led and industry-aligned approach, integrating emerging areas such as AI, green technologies, platform work, and digital services. The policy proposes major reforms in governance, quality standards, financing, and data systems, including digital credentialing, a national skills registry, expanded apprenticeships, and strong employer engagement. A central goal is to ensure that by 2035, 50 per cent of India's workforce becomes formally skilled, with equal participation from women and under-represented groups.

### **Skilling as a Path to Dignity and Productivity for Multi-level Disadvantaged Groups**

Last but not the least, there a huge opportunity to support multi-level disadvantaged group through skilling, as significant segment of India's potential workforce comprises individuals who experience multiple and intersecting disadvantages-particularly women from rural areas or smaller town who have not completed even grade 12 and dropping out. These women face compounded barriers stemming from limited foundational education, constrained mobility, restricted access to information, gender norms and socio-economic vulnerabilities. For them, skilling is not merely a pathway to employment; it is a critical enabler of agency, confidence, and socio-economic participation and a path to dignity and hope.

To ensure meaningful inclusion, skilling programs need to offer enhanced, holistic, and context-sensitive support that addresses both educational and structural challenges.

This support must include bridging foundational skills - literacy, numeracy, digital basics, communication, and confidence-building - before or alongside technical training and workforce readiness which will help them to join formal or semi formal jobs in the economy in future. Without looking at immediate job focus

as key or the only priority of current skilling programs, focus should be on at least providing access of quality skilling to all – like a right to education.

Providing residential support for skilling centers situated in urban areas can be one way out to enhance rural youth participation (especially women) and introducing courses where academic qualification is not the barrier - such as hand based skills. Another option can be enabling every ITI as a hub of AI enabled learning, where nearby youth (other than the regular ITI students who are enrolled for long term trade based courses) can learn plumbing, tailoring or such hand skill based jobs using augmented reality/virtual reality simulations and skill/reskill/upskill on their own pace, in their laungauge and with pride in their craft. This will not just bridge the skilling gaps but also the dignity divide and they will be more prepared to navigate the workforce challenges.

### **Skilling opportunities in agriculture sector<sup>6</sup>**

India's agriculture sector - employing over 45 per cent of the workforce but contributing only over 15 per cent of GDP - presents a vast opportunity for skilling that can boost productivity, technology adoption and rural incomes. Studies by the Ministry of Agriculture and NSDC indicate that over 60 per cent of farmers lack formal training, and nearly 80 per cent of agri-enterprises face skill shortages in areas such as farm mechanisation, precision agriculture, post-harvest management, food processing, and agri-marketing. With India's farm machinery market expected to grow at 8-10 per cent annually and is projected to unlock USD 65 billion by 2026. And with demand rising for skilled roles like drone operators, agri-technicians, soil testing assistants, FPO managers and cold-chain specialists, the sector is poised for a major skills transformation.

### **Growing Gig Economy**

Gig, platform, and aggregator workers are now formally recognised as a distinct labour category under the new labour codes, rightly so, given the meteoric rise of this segment and the growing

<sup>6</sup> DRF has a separate Regenerative Arriculture Strategy – which

has components of agri and agri allied skilling

proportion of youth engaged in such work. For rural youth, schemes such as Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rojgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act 2025 (earlier MGNREGA) which now guarantees 125 days of wage employment per year offer an important safety net but do not provide a long-term pathway to productivity, skill growth, or upward mobility. In contrast, in urban and peri-urban areas, a rapidly expanding gig, platform, and aggregator economy, covering food delivery, e-commerce logistics, mobility services, home services, and more has emerged as a major source of livelihood. As per NITI Aayog, India already had 7.7 million gig workers in 2020-21 (around 1.5 per cent of the workforce), a number projected to reach 23.5 million by 2030, accounting for about 4.1 per cent of the workforce.

For youth skilling pathways, this shift presents both a compelling opportunity and a set of strategic questions. On one hand, gig and platform jobs can offer quick entry for young people with limited formal education, provided they possess foundational digital literacy, access to a smartphone and bank account, mobility (a vehicle and licence), and essential soft skills such as communication, customer handling, and digital problem-solving. On the other hand, evidence shows that most gig workers operate within informal arrangements, experience income volatility, and have limited career progression unless they transition into more skilled and productive roles.

Given the rapid rise of this labour category, it is essential to deepen our understanding of how the gig economy will evolve and what it demands from youth. We must ask: what does it take for a young person to enter gig or platform work safely and for how long? Who is it suitable for, and who may be at risk? What skill sets and safeguards are required not just for entry but for long-term growth and mobility? And how will the expansion of gig work reshape the expectations, design, and outcomes of traditional skilling programmes?

<sup>7</sup> Youth from age group of 14-45 years

<sup>8</sup> Segmentation based on gender, age, qualification, rural/urban

## DRF SKILLING STRATEGY

In light of the evolving challenges and emerging opportunities in the skilling landscape, Dr. Reddy's Foundation (DRF) has developed its Youth Skilling Strategy for 2026-2030. The strategy can be summarised as "Equip youth<sup>7</sup> from low-income households with market-aligned foundational and technical skills for better employment or self-employment through a segmented<sup>8</sup> and innovation-driven approach."

The purpose of this strategy is to enable DRF to contribute meaningfully to India's national skilling priorities while also: (a) Guiding the Foundation's future direction and priorities in skilling; (b) Sharpening the design and effectiveness of existing skilling programs; (c) Enabling agile responses to emerging opportunities; and (d) Strengthening alignment with the priorities of DRF's partners and the broader skilling ecosystem.

The strategy is structured around three core sections: (1) Principles – the foundational values guiding all skilling initiatives (2) Strategic Priorities – the key focus areas shaping DRF's skilling approach, and (3) Strategic Components – the operational pillars translating the strategy into action.

### 1. PRINCIPLES

All our skilling work will be guided by the following seven principles. We will focus on:

- 1.1 **Inclusivity and Equity<sup>9</sup>:** We will focus on empowering youth from low-income communities, with a strong emphasis on promoting equitable access and opportunities.
- 1.2 **Women participation:** We will focus on programs which will enable equal (or more) participation of women.
- 1.3 **Demand-Led Skilling:** All programs will be employer-driven, developed through deep engagement with industry partners to ensure strong labour market linkages and improved job outcomes.

<sup>9</sup> DRF also works extensively with Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and has a separate PwD Skilling Strategy Paper

- 1.4 Alignment with National Credit Framework (NCrF):** We will align our courses and certification models with the NCrF, enabling learners to gain credit-based recognition, ensure portability of learning, and create clear pathways for progression into higher education or employment.
- 1.5 Collaborative Problem Solving:** We will foster a culture of collective inquiry, bringing together teams and partners to pressure-test ideas, and continuously refine solutions based on feedback.
- 1.6 Culture of Innovation:** We will embed innovation across all areas - from program design and training delivery to process improvement - ensuring scalability, efficiency, and adaptability to emerging industry needs.
- 1.7 Data-Driven Decision Making:** We will rigorously measure, evaluate, and learn from program outcomes, leveraging data for evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement of our skilling models.
- 1.8 Ecosystem and Transformative Impact:** We will prioritise initiatives that have the potential to influence the larger skilling ecosystem and enable transformative change in the lives of young people by expanding their access to sustainable livelihoods.

## 2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### 2.1 Focus on 'Core Employability Skills' and 'Technical Skills'

Building on our learnings over the last two and a half decades, DRF's skilling strategy rests around two complementary pillars - 'Core Employability Skills' and 'Technical Skills' - to ensure that youth are future-ready in an era that will be shaped by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation.

'Core Employability Skills' are foundational, transferable competencies essential across all domains and job roles. They include - Communication Skills, English Proficiency, Digital Literacy, Financial Literacy, Digital

Problem Solving, Life Skills, Entrepreneurial Thinking, Career Readiness, AI Modules and Interview Skills. As AI continues to automate routine tasks, these human-centered skills—creativity, adaptability, and emotional intelligence will be critical to ensure that youth can work alongside technology and thrive in evolving workplaces.

'Technical Skills' are sector-specific, demand-driven skills linked to defined job roles with long-term relevance in the evolving job market. Key focus sectors include Healthcare, Information Technology, Green Sectors, Pharma Sector. Each technical skills program will integrate components of life skills, digital readiness, and AI-awareness, ensuring that learners are equipped not just for today's jobs but also for the jobs of the future.

### 2.2 Blended & Digital Training Model

We will keep innovating to transition from a classroom-only training approach to a blended model that combines physical and digital modes of learning, especially trying pilot projects on AI Agents/ AI Tutors in our delivery process.

The focus will be on developing effective, interactive, and adaptive digital delivery methods that preserve learning quality and engagement. Beyond blended formats, DRF will also focus on fully digital (virtual) and 'do-it-yourself' learning models to reach youth who prefer flexible, self-paced learning, especially to address the unmet need of upskilling.

### 2.3 Age Group: 11-45 Years

For placement-linked and self-employment programs, the primary focus will remain on youth aged 18-45 years. For school-based skilling and career awareness programs, we will engage learners aged 11 years<sup>10</sup> onward (after primary level) and above, integrating early exposure to emerging careers and AI awareness.

### 2.4 Economic Empowerment of Families

Through our placement-linked skilling, upskilling, reskilling and self-employment

<sup>10</sup> DRF has a separate education strategy where vocational education is integrated grade 6 onwards

programs, we aim to enable youth and their families to significantly improve their economic well-being.

### 2.5 Investing In International Mobility

DRF will explore ways to contribute to international mobility by forming partnerships with NCVET and NSDC International and similar organisations who are working in the area of international mobility.

*In line with DRF's long-term vision to create scalable, impactful, and future-relevant skilling models, we will consciously avoid pursuing initiatives that do not align with our guiding principles. Specifically, we will not:*

- *Implement Skilling Models That Are Not Scalable [avoid very high-cost or resource-intensive models that may deliver quality outcomes but cannot be replicated or scaled across geographies and target groups]*
- *Implement Programs That Are Not Impactful [Steer clear of interventions that do not lead to measurable outcomes such as employment, income improvement, or life transformation for the youth]*
- *Offer Courses Misaligned with Labour Market Demand [Refrain from introducing training programs that are not validated by employers or not mapped to NSQF/NCrF, or lack long-term relevance in the evolving job market]*
- *Neglect Data, Learning, and Accountability [Not implement programs without robust monitoring, data-backed decision-making, and evidence of effectiveness. Continuous learning and feedback loops will remain essential to every model we scale]*
- *Prioritise Activity Over Outcomes [Avoid spreading resources thinly across too many initiatives. Instead, we will focus on deep, outcome-oriented implementation that demonstrates proof of impact and potential for scale]*

## 3. STRATEGY COMPONENTS

### SC 1: SKILLING FOR INDUSTRY AGNOSTIC 'CORE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS'

#### Intervention Objective

To provide high-quality training in core employability skills to 12<sup>th</sup> graders and graduates who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) with equal participation of women. The program aims to enhance their workplace readiness and facilitate their entry into semi-formal and formal sector jobs aligned with local market opportunities.

#### Key Strategic Components

- Regular revision of 'core employability skills' modules to align it with market's changing requirements
- Integration of AI-enabled modules into core employability curriculum to build future-ready skills
- Deployment and regular handholding of certified trainers with standardized competencies to ensure quality delivery
- Strong emphasis on learning outcomes, measured through pre- and post-assessments to track skill progression.
- Promotion of entrepreneurial thinking as a complementary mindset for career growth.
- Structured mentoring opportunities to strengthen real-world career readiness.
- Ensuring placements in formal and semi-formal sector jobs with a focus on long-term employability.
- A strong monitoring and data veracity check system for quality impact.

#### Preferred Delivery Model

Implementation through dedicated skilling centres.

### SC 2: SKILLING INFORMATION & ACCESS SUPPORT - TO WOMEN AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT AFTER SECONDARY EDUCATION

#### Intervention Objective

To ensure that young women who have completed grade 10 and are enrolled in Class 12 but are at risk of discontinuing their education receive timely guidance, personalised

counselling, and structured pathways that empower them to make informed decisions about future learning, skilling, and productive career options.

### Key Strategic Components

- Develop and deploy tools and processes to systematically identify and track girls who are likely to drop out from secondary government schools, using school-level data, attendance patterns, socio-economic indicators, and teacher inputs.
- Design a robust, personalised counselling framework that helps each learner understand academic, vocational, and skilling opportunities. The process will support young women in choosing pathways aligned with their aspirations, abilities, and contextual realities.
- Create and disseminate clear, accessible information on skilling options - including courses, certifications, trades, emerging job roles, bridge programmes, and progression pathways - ensuring that all identified students can access credible and market-aligned opportunities.
- Engage parents and guardians to build supportive environments that encourage the continuation of education, reduce dropout risks, and promote informed decision-making for girls' future transitions.

### Preferred Delivery Model

Implementation through government secondary schools/intermediate colleges to ensure early reach, seamless last-mile access, and integration with existing student support systems at scale.

## SC 3: SKILLING FOR HEALTHCARE SECTOR JOBS

### Intervention Objective

To equip youth, particularly women from low-income families, from rural areas, with industry-relevant skills for employment in the healthcare and allied sectors, which continue to offer strong and resilient job opportunities. The program aims to build a skilled, compassionate, and digitally capable healthcare workforce that meets the growing demand across private hospitals, diagnostic centres and home healthcare services.

### Key Strategic Components

- Focus on roles such as General Duty Assistant (GDA), Geriatric Care, Home Health Aide, and Hospital Support Staff,

aligned to NSQF/NCrF.

- Incorporate modules on AI-enabled diagnostics, electronic health records (EHR), telemedicine platforms, and digital patient management, to build awareness of emerging technologies
- Deliver hands-on learning through lab-based simulations, virtual reality practice modules, and on-the-job training (OJT) in healthcare facilities to strengthen technical and interpersonal competencies.
- Integrate communication, empathy, ethics, digital literacy, and work readiness modules to enhance service quality and patient-centric care.
- Provide clear pathways for learners to upskill into advanced roles (e.g., nursing assistants, paramedical technicians) through credit-linked, modular learning under NCrF.
- Establish strong systems and processes for quality assurance, data validation, and outcome tracking, ensuring transparency and continuous improvement.

### Preferred Delivery Model

Implementation through dedicated healthcare skilling centres equipped with simulation labs.

## SC 4: SKILLING FOR GREEN ECONOMY JOBS

### Intervention Objective

To equip youth, especially from low-income communities, with future-relevant green skills that prepare them for employment in emerging sectors contributing to environmental sustainability and climate resilience. The program will focus on building technical competencies that enable young people to participate in India's transition to a green economy.

### Key Strategic Components

- Identification of high-growth green sector job roles in the areas of renewable energy, electric mobility, sustainable agriculture etc. guided by demand assessments and employer inputs.
- Integration of core employability skills and AI modules to build holistic competence
- Industry engagement for demand validation
- Promotion of entrepreneurial thinking as a complementary mindset for career growth

- Provision of exposure visits, OJTs, and structured mentoring opportunities to strengthen real-world career readiness.
- Ensuring placements in formal and semi-formal sector jobs with a focus on long-term employability.
- A strong monitoring and data veracity check systems for quality impact.
- Set-up quality skill lab for activity based learning.

#### **Preferred Delivery Model**

Implementation through dedicated skilling centres

### **SC 5: SKILLING FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR JOBS**

#### **Intervention Objective**

To impart placement led training to unemployed graduates (B.Sc and B.E) in the information technology (IT) and digital services sector, tech courses will focus on building both core technical competencies enabling participants to secure sustainable careers in the changing IT ecosystem.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- Market-aligned courses co-designed with IT industry partners covering domains such as software development, cloud computing, data analytics, cybersecurity, and AI/ML.
- Hands-on experience through virtual labs, live projects, and industry-led sessions to strengthen applied learning and job readiness.
- Integration of communication, problem-solving, teamwork, aptitude etc. to enhance overall employability.
- Strategic partnerships with IT firms, startups, and digital enterprises to facilitate smooth employment transitions.
- Focus on youth from low income household, rural catchment.
- Strong system and processes for quality assurance, data validation, and outcome tracking, ensuring transparency and continuous improvement.

#### **Preferred Delivery Model**

To be implemented through skilling centres with quality Computer/AI labs.

### **SC 6: UPSKILLING FOR CAREER GROWTH**

#### **Intervention Objective**

To create upskilling opportunities for currently employed youth and DRF alumni, enabling them to enhance their competencies, pursue career advancement, and remain competitive in an evolving job market.

#### **Key Strategic Components**

- Develop upskilling courses based on inputs from employers, industry partners, and alumni, ensuring strong alignment with emerging skill needs and workplace relevance.
- Deliver courses in multiple Indian languages to ensure wider reach and inclusion across regions and learner profiles.
- Integrate AI-driven adaptive learning tools for personalized content, progress tracking, and continuous engagement.
- Onboard all DRF alumni and working youth onto a dedicated self-learning app, enabling continuous, lifelong learning and professional development.
- Micro-Credentials and Recognition: Offer modular, credit-linked certifications aligned with NCeRF, allowing learners to accumulate and showcase their achievements for career growth.

#### **Preferred Delivery Model**

To be implemented through a self-learning digital platform, offering flexible, mobile-first learning that is accessible anytime, anywhere - complemented by assessments and certification.

### **SC 7: SKILLING FOR INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY**

#### **Intervention Objective**

To prepare Indian youth - particularly from low-income and semi-urban backgrounds - for global employment opportunities by equipping them with internationally benchmarked skills, language proficiency, and cultural adaptability. The program aims to bridge global talent gaps in high-demand sectors such as healthcare, hospitality, other service sector jobs, thereby enhancing India's role as a trusted global workforce hub.

### Key Strategic Components

- Focus on skill development aligned with countries experiencing workforce shortages, particularly in GCC nations, Europe, Japan, and ASEAN regions, guided by international labour market intelligence and government MOUs.
- Align training curricula with international occupational standards (e.g., NSQF–ESCO mapping, ILO guidelines, or destination country frameworks), ensuring portability and recognition of skills.
- Foreign language modules (German, Japanese, etc.), and intercultural orientation to improve employability and adaptability abroad.
- Establish collaborations with foreign employers, recruitment agencies, embassies, and skill councils to validate course design and facilitate direct placement opportunities - through NSDC or NCVET - of experienced candidates.

### Preferred Delivery Model

Through specialised Centres or partner institutions, or online language courses through self-learning app.

### SC 8: NEW PILOTS FOR EMERGING SECTORS' JOBS

#### Intervention Objective

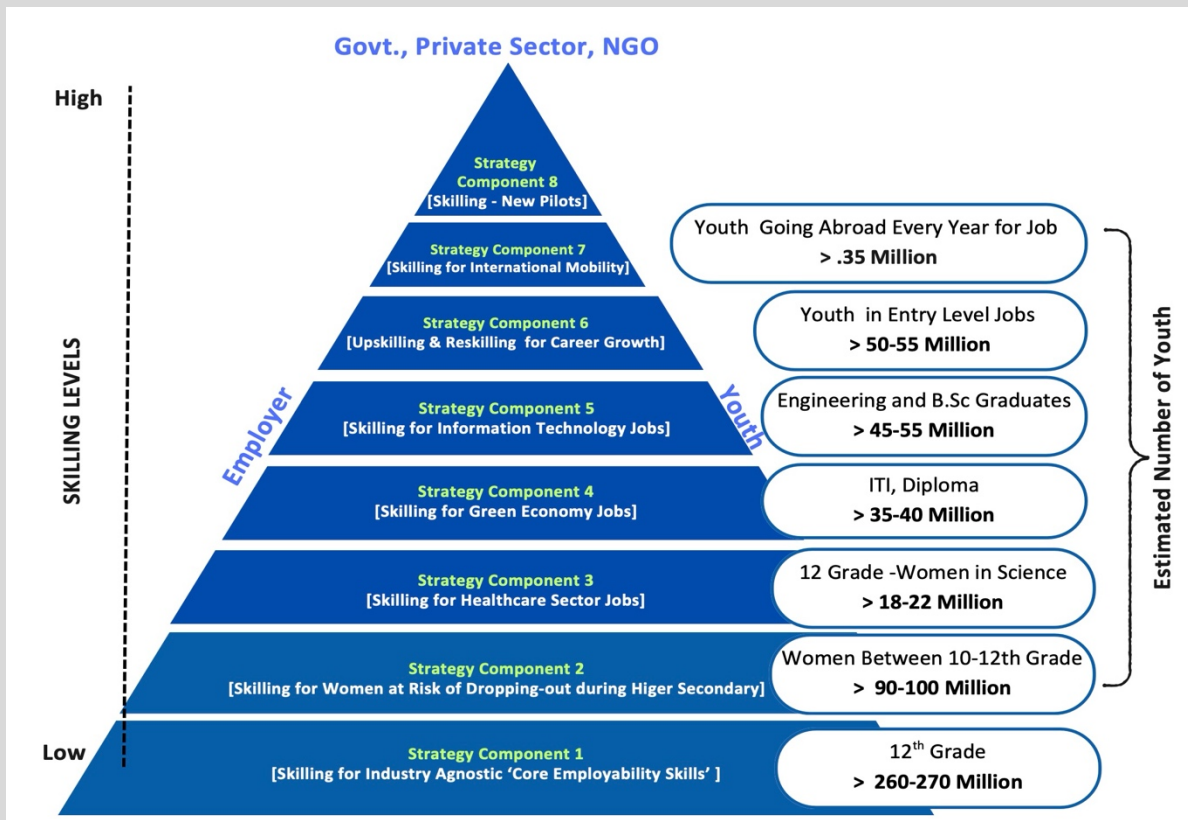
To drive the next wave of innovation by addressing the emerging impact of AI and automation on employment and exploring new emerging sectors. The program seeks to understand evolving workforce requirements and design pilot interventions that prepare youth for the future of work.

#### Key Strategic Components

- Establishing 'Centre for Future Ready Skilling and Innovation' as innovation hub
- Curriculum development in collaboration with industry, focusing on skilling, reskilling, and upskilling
- Ongoing market research to track trends and align interventions with changing industry needs
- Dissemination of learnings from pilots into mainstream skilling programs for scale and replication

### Preferred Delivery Model

Implemented through Centre for Future Reday Skilling and Innovation



[Figure 2: Estimated Figures From UDISE+, Economic Survey, World Bank & PLFS Reports]

## PARTNERSHIP

We recognize that the successful execution of this strategy will be possible only through the continued support of our partners and onboarding new long term partners who have similar vision.

Over the years, our partnerships with Government, Corporate CSRs, Foundations, and NGOs have been instrumental in shaping our skilling initiatives and creating impact at both community and systemic levels.

We firmly believe that this strategy will not only deepen our collaboration with existing partners but also open avenues for forging new partnerships, enabling us to amplify our collective impact in the skilling ecosystem.

## SYSTEM ENGAGEMENT

Engaging with the larger ecosystem will be a critical lever in realising our goal, ensuring that our work meaningfully aligns with and contributes to national and state-level reforms. We will proactively engage with state governments, particularly on emerging initiatives aimed at enhancing women's labour force participation, to amplify pathways for young women to enter and remain in the workforce.

At the national level, we will explore collaboration with NSDC, NCVET and similar agencies on the growing agenda of international mobility, especially in sectors where global demand is rising.

We will also work closely with NCVET and similar agencies for securing recognition of course awarding body under the National Credit Framework, enabling us to design innovative courses and enabling learners to accumulate credits and progress across education and skilling pathways.

Further, we will draw structured learnings from the ITI ecosystem to assess which elements DRF can contribute to the larger ITI ecosystem, especially learning from scheme for upgradation of 1000 government ITIs and setting up and capacity augmentation of five National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) which will host five National Centres of Excellence (NCoEs).

Last but not least, we will also explore system engagement opportunities to extend skilling support (not immediately linked with placement) to large section of youth who face multi-level disadvantages such as school dropouts, coming from rural or urban suburbs, especially women.

Together, these engagements will enable DRF as a strong ecosystem partner driving scalable, systemic and forward-looking skilling solutions for all segments of youth.

## CONCLUSION

We envision our skilling strategy as a guiding framework to contribute to system strengthening, through evidence-based advocacy, need-driven technical assistance, knowledge sharing, and strategic partnerships.

The strategy is designed to enable us to impact the lives of at least **half-a-million** youth equipping them with skills to participate meaningfully and productively in the economy between 2026-30.

To ensure relevance and adaptability, we will undertake a mid-term strategy refresh in December 2028 to: (a) review progress against the stated purpose, (b) assess ecosystem shifts and their implications for our work, especially the impact of AI and Automation on jobs, and (c) integrate new insights and learnings emerging from implementation.

## **ABBREVIATIONS USED**

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
AI: Artificial Intelligence  
CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility  
DRF: Dr. Reddy's Foundation  
DRL: Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Limited  
EV: Electric Vehicle  
ESCO: European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations  
FLN: Foundational Literacy and Numeracy  
FLN&EL: Foundational Literacy, Numeracy and English Language  
GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council  
GDP: Gross Domestic Product  
GER: Gross Enrolment Ratio  
ITI: Industrial Training Institute  
LABS: Livelihood Advancement Business School  
ML: Machine Learning  
MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act  
MoRD: Ministry of Rural Development  
MSDE: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship  
NCoE: National Centre of Excellence  
NCrF: National Credit Framework  
NCVET: National Council for Vocational Education and Training  
NEET: Not in Education, Employment or Training  
NGO: Non Government Organization  
NSDC: National Skill Development Corporation  
NSDC-I: National Skill Development Corporation – International  
NSQF: National Skill Qualification Framework  
NSTI: National Skill Training Institute  
OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development  
OJT: On Job Training  
PMKVY: Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana  
TFP: Total Factor Productivity  
UDISE+: Unified District Information System for Education Plus  
USD: United States Dollar  
VB-G RAM G: Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rojgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act

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