

Skills Masterclasses 8&9: VET opportunities in India's burgeoning industries and transnational education models

Wednesday, 25 October 2023

Note: This transcription is computer-generated; please be mindful of potential errors.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

00:05

Hello and welcome to the Australia India Institute's Skills Masterclass series being brought to you with the support of the Australian Government's Department of Education, and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. My name is Darryl Mohr, and on behalf of the Australia India Institute, I'm delighted to be moderating today's masterclass, titled 'VET opportunities in India's burgeoning industries and transnational education models'. As we commence today, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which I'm hosting this masterclass, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I also acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present during today's masterclass.

Today's masterclass combines classes eight and nine in this series, and continues the work of building engagement networks and practical insights from across the education, training and skill sectors of Australia and India. Today, you will hear from two leading researchers from the education and skilling sector. Firstly, Professor Vineeta Sirohi from the Department of Educational Administration at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, otherwise known as NIEPA, based in Delhi, and Ujjwal Krishna, Education Researcher with the Australia India Institute. Our guest researchers will explore opportunities for Australian vocational and education training providers in niche and emerging industry sectors across five Indian states. Additionally, the webinar will share valuable insights from international providers of transnational skills training models within India's VET ecosystem, bringing to together the findings of two research projects. This will be the ultimate masterclass webinar in a series designed to build a deeper understanding of India's skill system across the Australian VET sector.

Just a reminder that at the conclusion of the presentations from our two speakers today, we will have the opportunity to engage in question and answers with our guests. So please feel free to enter questions in the chat function during the seminar, and we will gather those and share with

our speakers later in the program. prior to commencing our master class, I would now invite Kim Holthouse, Director of International Vocational Education and Training from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to make a few opening remarks. So thank you and welcome, Kim to your department and early comments.

Kym Holthouse, Director of International Vocational Education and Training, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations 03:02

Thanks very much, Darryl. Pleasure to be here and taking part in another one of these fantastic master classes. I think it's a terrific initiative, the series has been extremely rich and extremely varied in the content that's been presented. And it's fantastic that it's a resource that will continue to be available for people to access whenever they can. I think that with this particular session today, given how large and diverse India is. Understanding where the opportunities for Australian VET providers might be is extremely challenging, both in a geographic sense and obviously across a whole range of sectors. And I think it's really important for providers to have that intelligence from the ground, so to speak in India about where those best those opportunities lie, and how they can best go about taking advantage of them. For government to we're really working very closely with our Indian Government counterparts to try to prioritise some sectors to identify where those key sectors are, where we can really get the best returns from our efforts. So this work really feeds into that really supports what we're trying to do, including through the Australia India Education Skills Council meeting coming up in a couple of weeks. So thank you very much to Professor Sirohi, really appreciate the work that you've done on this and looking forward to hearing all about the findings from your research. My team and I will certainly be tuning in to have a close listen to all of your results. Thanks very much.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute 04:56

Thank you, Kym. Thank you for your Department's support of this valuable research and something that will continue to be available online for others to learn from over time. So now to formally commence our seminar and webinar today, I would like to formally welcome Professor Vineeta Sirohi to present. Professor Vineeta, as I mentioned earlier is from the Department of Educational Administration at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), in New Delhi. Vineeta is also an Academic Fellow with the Australian India Institute. She has more than three decades of experience, encompassing teaching, research, training for curriculum and material development, project and program coordination, administration and counselling. So she brings a wealth of experience to share with us today. So a warm welcome to Vineeta, and over to you for the next 15 minutes or so.

Professor Vineeta Sirohi, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) 06:07

Thank you, Darryl. And I would like to first thank Australia India Institute for giving me an opportunity to share my research with the distinguished audience. Before I begin to share my findings, I would like to provide a glimpse of the Indian scenario. India offers immense potential and a plethora of opportunities for vocational education and training. This is primarily because India boasts a youthful demographic with a striking 54% of its total population being under the age of 25 years. However, globally, there are several mega trends that present both challenges and opportunities for vocational education and training in India. The ageing of world population is a significant trend. By 2025, it is estimated that one out of every 10 people in the Western world will be over 65 years of age. And in contrast, India has a surplus of 47 million people in its working age population. So this demographic difference offers a unique opportunity for India in terms of workforce availability.

Besides this rapid technological advances are reshaping the job market, some existing occupations are becoming obsolete and some are new ones are emerging. So this dynamic landscape creates a demand for upskilling and rescaling programs to ensure that the workforce remains relevant and adaptable. Furthermore, there is a growing trend towards hyper localisation, facilitated by the integration of automation, virtual reality and artificial intelligence. So these innovations present opportunities for the VET providers to equip the individuals with skills needed to thrive in these evolving sectors. Nevertheless, we also know that COVID 19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation of work processes, underscoring the critical need for digital skills in the modern workforce. So in the light of these trends, the vision of vocational education and training in India is to strive for the attainment of skills that meet global standards, positioning India as the skilled capital of the world. This involves increasing the productivity of the current workforce through upskilling rescaling and realignment with the changing industry demands, and effectively addressing the existing and anticipated skill gaps to ensure that workforce remains competitive in the global market.

The present research study titled scoping demand for niche Australian VET in select Indian states was conducted with the objectives to understand the national and state skills ecosystem in India. To provide insights on the niche industry sectors in the selected five states of India examined the barriers and opportunities to entry of foreign VET providers and suggest recommendations for Australian VET providers interested in investing for VET in India. The study delves into specific opportunities that Australian VET providers can explore with burgeoning sectors and industries in selected Indian states. These prospects cater to Australian which providers aiming to end invest in vocational education in India facilitating the preparation of the youth for employment routes. Our

primary focus was on the priority sectors identified within the five selected states and the states were Delhi, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. While originally pinpointing on the five key sectors per state, there was overlap across the states culminating in a total of 12 priority sectors including automotive banking, financial security, insurance, and capital goods sector, the construction sector, electronics healthcare sector, information technology and information technology enabled services, life sciences logistics media and entertainment retail tourism and hospitality. Notably the IT and IT sector stands out to be the priority sector unanimously identified by all the five states. The data was collected by primary sources through interviews, consultations, and focus group discussions with stakeholders. Information was also gathered from the secondary sources.

Now coming to the key findings of the research, highlighting and the various sectors in the automotive sector that was identified as a priority sector in the state of Gujarat. According to the sector skills councils representatives who consulted the skilling courses experience are experiencing significant demand in this stage are on two pillars and three Villiers technicians in the service domain. Additionally, there is a growing need for skilled professionals in areas such as manufacturing vehicle fitters, CNC machining, and welding technicians as well as auto component assembly features.

Now regarding the banking, financial security and insurance, the job areas of financial technology, AI cybersecurity analytics and cloud computing technology was found to be commonly identified by the skill gap areas by both states that is Delhi and Maharashtra which needs more training in these areas. The capital goods sector in the Gujarat state ICT sector Skills Council Representative stated that there is a greater demand for Computer Numerical Control Operators, the tuning and CNC VMC operators and training needs to be additionally done in the trades of welding programming and draughtsman design amongst others. With respect to CNC training, the employees of the engineering goods company were consulted and interacted with and they expressed that there was a need for more in depth six month duration program training that includes AutoCAD and graphics as these practical skills are crucial for better performance in their roles. The construction sector has also been identified as a priority sector in Kerala, though it was also in demand in Tamil Nadu state but they stated that most of the people who are coming to the construction sector migrants from other states. So, it is difficult to push the youth of the state towards this sector. And for the one area of focus in structural design training which equips employees with the knowledge and skills to create safe and effective structural frameworks for buildings and infrastructure objects projects was felt and additionally there is a need for training in electrical distribution and circuits enabling employees to design and install efficient electrical systems in the construction sector.

In the construction industry, it was also felt that the handling of old AC air conditioners and refrigerant systems troubleshooting the preventive maintenance practices are also to be looked into which require more training and employees express that there is a need for comprehensive training in creating accurate and detailed architectural and structural drawings. Hands on practical training opportunities simulating real world construction scenarios. The coming to the electronics sector, which in the state of Delhi, it was highlighted that surface mounted technology, its hardware were quite demanding. And in the state of Kerala there are been expressed that the machine repairing and electrical connections also needs training by the trainees and employers also felt that there are certain kinds of soft skills that are lacking, like the communication skills, problem solving abilities, adaptability and management skills, which require improvement in employees.

The health sector in Kerala did also indicate that there are certain kinds of a soft, soft skills component that is lacking and effective communication adopting a technological perspective. Engaging in hands on practical training is very important in the health care sector. In Tamil Nadu state, the employers can wage a concern regarding the absence of fundamental first stage skills and job related expertise particularly at the levels of three four and five of the SQF and they emphasise that there is a necessity for specialised training in the areas such as diabetic and genetic counselling. Furthermore, there is a notable deficiency again which has been marked here that there is lack of skills in the communication technical nursing and proficiency. The IT and IT sector was identified by all the five states as priority sector though there is a lot of being done in this sector in all the states. But it was expressed that the upcoming trades include the 3D printing and modelling artificial intelligence, big data analytics, Blockchain, cloud computing, cybersecurity and the Internet of Things that where there is a lot of training and upskilling required and the emerging fields represent the cutting edge technology, where there are more prospects of career growth and innovation. Then coming to the or life sciences sector that was identified in the state of Gujarat. There are near training needs for product and machine operators and training programs needs to be upgraded to enhance the quality.

Currently, there seems to be a lack of emphasis on the computer usage and the use of latest machinery in the training programs as felt by the trainees. And with more focus there is more focused on the manual training. The logistics sectors sector experienced high demand for scaling courses related to courier services, ecommerce, warehousing and transportation, export import and in plant logistics, these courses are sought after due to the significant growth in the logistics industry driven by increasing e commerce activities and globalisation. Then there's another aspect towards the media and entertainment sector where it was in the state of Maharashtra. They stated that content related skills like content creation editing, data visualisation multimedia reporting to the animation and 3D animation, there is a lot of training requires intensive training

required in these areas and the retail sector expressed and that there is the area of assessment, design and development and training, design and development, trainer training, assessor training and training and processes assessment delivery and training delivery operations. They these are the areas where more of the training is required and the skills are lacking. And in Maharashtra, they have expressed that again, the soft skills are more required in the retail sector, the tourism and the hospitality sector. It has also laid emphasis on the soft skill component that is lacking and the skill training needed for the basic hygiene, self grooming, marketing skills and language proficiency I've felt in the deli in the state of Delhi, while Kerala has emphasised on additional training in specific culinary skills, such as garnishing and continental food. And they have also emphasised that there needs to be additional language skills to be developed particularly in languages like German, French, Russian and Mandarin. And employers have identified in this sector that there is a skill significant skill gap in practical experiences among trained individuals that are coming out of the training programs on three specific trades, food and beverage service, front desk, executives, and housekeeping. So these are the three areas where a lot of skill gap is noticed.

Then overall, key findings from the study revealed a demand for sectors specific training across various domains we can see. And there is a consensus that specific sectors require more diverse job roles and an enhancement in the training could potentially lead to the emergence of new job roles. Despite certain barriers to the entry of foreign VET providers, including the social, cultural, linguistic, technical, and the legal challenges that are there. The opportunities for Australian VET providers in India are promising, I must say. And they have the potential to make a substantial contribution to the skill development stage. And Australian VET providers can leverage the strengths in providing specialised training, practical experience, and robust stakeholder engagement to effectively bridge the skill gaps and fulfil the evolving needs of the Indian labour market. Thank you so much.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

22:22

Thank you, Vineeta for that very comprehensive overview of, as you say, skill gaps, sector specific training, and a really in depth insight into a broad range of industries across the five Indian states that were the subject of that research. So thank you very much for starting our webinars so well today. I also learned a new phrase that you use "hyper localisation" is certainly one that I think I'll circle back with you and study a little bit further.

Before I move on to our second speaker today, I do just want to formally acknowledge the significant work done by Dr. Karen Barker from the Australia India Institute who has been

synonymous with the education program, and has been at the forefront of designing these programs to really optimise a deeper understanding of the educational skills and jobs opportunities between Australia and India. And I just want to shout out to Dr. Karen Barker, who has been leading the way for a long time in this space. So without further ado, now, it is my great pleasure to welcome our second speaker, Ujjwal Krishna who is an Education Researcher at the Australia India Institute, where he focuses on transnational models of vocational training. Ujjwal is also a PhD candidate in international development, and he has worked on skills development, labour technology, social policy issues in India, across a whole range of organisations including India at ICRIER, Brookings, J-Pal South Asia, UNDP, NITI Aayog and EY. So I issue a very warm welcome to you Ujjwal and welcome to our webinar today.

Ujjwal Krishna, Education Researcher, Australia India Institute 24:33

Thank you so much. So I have a presentation. So I'll share my screen right away. And hopefully, you can see my first slide. Right, so I'm also very thankful to Professor Sirohi for providing such a great context to India's skill development scenario and the landscape more generally, it saves me a lot of work and I can jump in straight to what I want to talk to you about today. And so this, this project is focused as focused on the theme of transnational VET in India. And it's intended to be a knowledge product for us for the Australian tech sector, with the aim of promoting new in market activity by Australian VET providers, the approach we've taken in this project is to identify various foreign transnational VET models that are currently operational and have seen varying degrees of success in India, and also to get a sense of the kinds of motivations and opportunities that that they have the data expressed, and some of the barriers to entry and some of the operational and regulatory challenges that they have faced in their attempts to operate in India.

But before we go any further, it's important to sort of get a sense of what the ambit of transnational VET actually is. So it's quite natural to for the concept of transnational education to be instinctively associated with any talk of transnational VET. And since we are talking about India, transnational education as a concept can be understood quite clearly as the candidate being based in India and the awarding institution being based in a foreign country, right, that's the, that's the conservative and rather traditional understanding of what transnational education is, and there are various modes of delivering transnational education models. So, they can be through online or distance learning modes, which can involve you know, local support, and also, there are instances where it doesn't need to, it can also be delivered to local delivery partners and this can take the form of franchise delivery, it can also take the form of joint and dual degrees. There are many instances of cleaning arrangements, and also a variety of validation and quality control and quality assurance arrangements that are used through this route. And they can also be delivered by way of foreign institutions actual physical presence in India and this can be

through a branch campus in India or a study centre in India or also by flying in specialised faculty to India for specific to deliver specific programs and courses. However, what we find in the global literature and also the India specific literature, the academic literature or grey literature policy literature is that any discussion on transmission models tends to be skewed in favour of the higher education sector and not to the VET sector in general.

So, as such, given the fact that in how transnational models in architecture are typically understood, that it finds itself in a rather obscure position, but at the same time, since that is the case, we need to take a broader interpretation of what we mean when we discuss transnational VET. And in the Indian context, it's especially salient because transnational education models even at the higher education space are still an emerging area. And traditionally speaking, government initiatives and private industries operations have largely been focused on domestic skills development goals, and the government of India's domestically oriented skills agenda, as opposed to focusing solely on or, you know, focusing on internationally on internationally oriented VET delivery. And at the same time, the India specific literature on international VET has a skew towards talking about international mobility as the prime factor instigating you know, international models in VET delivery, and taking advantage of the demographic dividend VET because it's it already mentioned, and, and also at the same time, identifying opportunities in Western markets based on ageing populations. So in our effort to expand our understanding of what India's transnational VET ecosystem entails, it's important to include within this ambit, the participation of foreign capital and expertise in the delivery of domestically oriented skills development initiatives in India as well.

So, I'll go over the different types of models of funding and partnership that that are that are mainstay or the other also emerging in the transnational dead space in India. And we see, you know, three broad buckets of public funding, private funding and various hybrid models and blended models in between. And these sort of degrees of public private partnership or equity sharing or viability gap funding that that belie these, these different models vary depending on the context and the record. omics in the public funding sphere, you know the they can be either bilateral donor or Multilateral agency funded models. And they can also be national government or state government schemes or through institutional arrangements as well. And in the private sphere, you can have purely market led for profit initiatives, at the same time those that are supported by their philanthropic or corporate social responsibility funding targets that Indian companies are mandated to spend by law. And as a result of this, the partnership ratios between foreign VET providers and Indian VET providers tends to vary as well. Now, when we talk about the two ends of the spectrum, so, one is the mobility oriented market, where the ultimate aim is labour export, and in this situation, much of the curriculum and the trainers tend to be oriented

more towards the foreign markets to where, where skilled, Indian workers are headed. And at the same time, in terms of the of the domestically oriented market, where the candidate remains in India, we see a greater degree of adaptation of foreign VET models to the Indian context.

So, I'll, I'll just give a quick sense of the of the kinds of moves in the policy space that have occurred in India at the national level as well as some at the state level, in in the in the direction of transnational VET, more generally. So, one broad bucket where there has been considerable progress is the creation of transnational skill standards. Now, these efforts have been made between India and various countries. But the most prominent example of this is the UK India transnational skill standards, which were agreed upon in back in 2016. And this protest was led by Indian sector skill councils, and when they created assessment and certification standards, and, and this process involves the recognition of, of these standards by UK awarding bodies such as City and Guilds and peers and, and it was aimed mainly at, you know, highlighting some of the gaps in the Indian standards and providing that bridge training that's required to cover them. And the main aim of this was quite pragmatic in the sense that it recognise the fact that the largest market for skilled Indian labour mobility is, is the Gulf, our Middle Eastern countries, and most Gulf States recognise because certification so in that sense, this emerged as a pragmatic partnership between government efforts as well as, you know, private awarding bodies and sector skill councils.

Now, the other category of policy of policy movement in the transnational space are the international labour mobility focused initiatives that the government is is enabling. One of them is the establishment of NSDC International, which is essentially a platform that is aimed at in that international workforce, workforce mobility and supporting those initiatives as well as to a limited extent outsourcing Indian skilled workers while they're based in India, but working for foreign entities. And what we see as a result of these movements, and you can see this you know, newspaper clipping on the right here, that there is in terms of the policy discourse in India excuse ecosystem, we see that there is a there is an increased shift towards considering labour mobility as a serious element of India's skills development ambitions. And we also see a movement in the in the transnational higher education space as well, where the integration of trade has been given an impetus by India's national education policy which was released in 2020 and which envisions the integration of wet with what it calls mainstream education, which is a commonly used Indian term, but which essentially means higher education. But what the fact is that this provides an impetus in this move in this direction. But the framework for for enabling this is already well established, established in India through the National Skills Qualification Framework, which has been in existence since 2013, which allows for, for a seamless bridge crossing between higher education and vocational education subjects. We also see movement in mainstream technical

education programs such as the BTech engineering degree where there's an increasingly increasing number of vocational subjects which are integrated into that course curriculum, as well as skills focused vocational education focus degree programs, such as the BS program.

Now we'll come to some of the operating models that that have found that we found to be particularly effective. And again, we break these down into the international mobility oriented models as well as those which cater to a domestic demand. So on the on the international mobility front these can be either supported by foreign governments. So, in the case of the India Japan Technical Intern Training Program, which is an excellent example of the government providing funding and supporting private sector led initiatives where NSDC as I mentioned, serves as the monitoring agency and till date more than 1000 technical interns have been sent from India to Japan to this mechanism by sending organisations which are largely private organisations, across a range of sectors in manufacturing, healthcare, construction, textiles, agriculture, food processing, and, and many of these technical interns have found, you know, residency status through the Specialised Skilled Worker Program that Japan has and it has evolved into quite a mature model of skilled migrants from India to Japan. At the same time, the study conducted by EY and NSDC found that, that many that among Western countries, Germany and Sweden are those which are which are particularly have apprenticeship systems that are particularly open to migrants being integrated into them. And the iMove program which took advantage of the new skilled immigration act of 2020, which was enacted in Germany and created many opportunities for Indians to move to Germany through the apprenticeship route. And in this, they provided German language training and bridging post preparation support, they can also be market led models, where which is the recruitment agent model, this has been supported by NSDC International and the report that I mentioned recommends this for countries which it considers to have mature migration systems which are mostly focused in countries including Australia and Japan and the UK.

So, while this is the mobility side of the story on the on the domestic demand side, again, there are many foreign government supported programs and those which are funded by bilateral donors particularly salient examples here are India, Germany, Germany agreements, such as the BMBF funded dual back project in north India, which caters to specific industry clusters, as well as a partnership between Zed and Siemens, which enables electronics trainees at internet and industrial training institutes across the network of industry training institutes throughout India to acquire skills through the blended and online training route in as part of the government of India's craftsmen trading service. And there are also market led initiatives which incorporate foreign wear models. A prime example is the is Porsche's rather excellent infrastructure in Bangalore, which trains which provides training in the automotive sector based on the German dual German dual

system where I've just found a great deal of uptake in India. There are also India UK university level partnerships are good example is the partnership between IBM and the University of London which is a joint BSC offered in the hospitality management space. So, this is the mainstream degree which has a high vocational component. And there are also CSR and philanthropic supported initiatives such as Tata Strive's partnership with Siemens on dual VET in India, the industrial training institutes and this is this is supported by the Tata Trusts.

So, as a result of all of this some of the emerging findings at this stage since this is an ongoing project are that there is an increasing comfort among Indian policymakers on the question of increasing the international mobility focused VET models initiatives and initiatives in India and as a result, that there needs to be greater comfort among policymakers and the private sector in Australia in in pursuing these mobility oriented pet models, in addition to models that cater to domestic demand. So, both need to be pursued in the but in the there are challenges in the international mobility space, there are price sensitivities, in in acquiring important skills, qualifications and price points are a slightly sensitive issue and they tend to be rather high and in the domestic space. It has been noted that the that the trainee that the trainer demand for highly skilled trainers in certain niche areas is has been found to be quite high. And the flying in model seems to be seems to be quite inelastic in certain sectors.

And also at the same time it needs to be recognised that there are certain cultural and social aspirations that young people have in India, and there is a man have revealed preference for higher mainstream education as opposed to VET this is a clear and deeply rooted social phenomena. And as such, it may be worth working with the grain where we incorporate that into higher education degrees and initiatives. Rather than pursuing that only degrees. This appears to be at this stage a more competitive proposition. But this does not mean that universities in Australia with a dual sector expertise and focus that they should that they should not pursue partnerships with Indian skills universities, they very much should do that simultaneously. And there is great scope for private sector led Indian schools universities to acquire a greater popularity in the Indian higher education and VET space, particularly when they are able to offer as part of their course offerings, transnational education models that have that have a very strong VET component and the prospect of a foreign university, awarding them a joint degree. So I think I'll stop there. And I'd be very happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you, again, for the opportunity.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

41:08

Thank you, thank you Ujjwal for that comprehensive set of insights, that your research is exposing the diagram around model types, the recognition of mobility orientated markets, some of the policy directions, labour mobility, and that notion of VET integration into the transnational education system really, really stood out as key insights there. So thank you. It's now an opportunity to ask our researchers any specific questions, and I'll pick some out of the chat function in a moment. Just to get us started though. Professor Sirohi, I'll ask you the first question, when you're conducting your research, did you get a sense that the technology integration was being prioritised in VET programs across the key sectors given the strong emergence, I guess, of digital and IT in most industries today?

Professor Vineeta Sirohi, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) 42:14

Yeah, yes, of course, I could see that there was a strong need for technology integration. Unanimously it draws the key sector almost all the sectors by the employer sector, skill, council representatives, and even the trainees. And technological integration has always been an important component when we are talking of vocational education and training and skills. But in the past decade, it has become much more significant and challenging, for obvious reasons, because the technology in many industries are changing rapidly and unpredictably. Take for the example the construction sector. As per our research findings.

Also, it was evident that the construction industry is rapidly evolving with advancements in technology and digital tools we know and keeping in view India's rapid urbanisation and infrastructure development needs. There is a pressing need for the industry to embrace digital transformation which involves the integration of digital technologies into all aspects of the design and construction process. From planning and design to construction and maintenance. The VET providers can contribute by integrating technology focused training modules into their programs. This can include training on building information modelling, for construction managers, and for the efficient HVAC systems for technicians. Even the smart technology is now upcoming and the trades of smart technology based on new generation technology is also required keeping in view the upcoming projects like smart cities in India. And now coming to the health sector. If you see the research revealed a need for healthcare professionals to be proficient in utilising healthcare technologies and electronic health records. So the training programs may be offered with a focus on computer system use digital health literacy and telemedicine platforms in the tourism and hospitality sector. Also it was quite evident that the training programs that cover computer systems software applications, digital marketing and an online reservation systems would help in staying updated with the latest technological advancements and help the employees there. And in a sense, you can say that technology has the potential to augment every facet of skill training. And

this is not I mean, this not only prepares professionals for the digital first world, but also positions them as trailblazers in shaping the scaling landscape. So I feel the integration of technology is very important. Yeah.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

45:33

Thank you, Professor. And just before I pass to Ujjwal for a question, we've had a question in the chat function that just relates to health care. And it asks, Are there any needs or opportunities in the psychological counselling area of health care? I know your research touched on health care. So I just thought I'd ask you that question.

Professor Vineeta Sirohi, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

(NIEPA) 45:56

Yes, yes, of course, there are opportunities in psychological counselling in healthcare, because there are issues related to stress and other problems that are coming up. So I think there is a scope of counselling in the healthcare sector, of course, that did come over. Yeah.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

46:18

Thank you. Thank you, Professor. The next question is for yourself, Ujjwal, could you share some views of the what's emerged from policymakers on a drive towards greater internationalisation in the Indian skills ecosystem?

Ujjwal Krishna, Education Researcher, Australia India Institute 46:37

Thanks, Darryl, and this has been, I think, one of the very interesting sets of findings through this process, you know, it's research, he spoken to people in government, as well as private providers, and unanimously there is an understanding on both sides of the coin, that the government particularly the Indian government of India, at the centre has shown a great deal of openness in, in expanding its focus towards internationalisation. So, if you sort of trace the history of when India is sort of really taken up in the skills development agenda, so somewhere in 2008 and 2009, when an intensified focus began on skills, but at that time, the naturally the focus was on domestic targets. And since 2014-5, and this is somewhat coterminous with the change in government and, and the Modi government getting elected, there was there was a greater impetus sort of, given to this to this move and, and the, through the creation of the Skill India Program, the mission we did was there was a greater drive towards understanding that, that, you know, skills development is not simply core domestic skills requirements, but also that the mobility space and, and clear comfort with the, with the kinds of the range of remittances that

could, that could come as a result of opportunities that lay in the mobility space, are to be taken seriously. And this is, in one way, this was a very pragmatic thing to do, because, as we know, that the Gulf had, which I mentioned in the presentation, as well is, is one of the largest markets where Indian skilled labour and skilled workers have moved. And, you know, there's a very strong stream of remittances that that come from the Gulf to India and, and the recognition that is that there are markets even beyond that very proximate mark, you know, region are particularly relevant. So, you know, newer countries in Eastern Europe and Central Europe are being increasingly considered as viable destinations and where mobility is being encouraged of skilled workers. So, this has been a very interesting, you know, discussion, and it's been encouraging to see that there is greater comfort with mobility oriented skills development.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

49:11

Thanks for Ujjwal thanks for sharing some of the insights into the what is quite a fundamental shift around mobility and internationalisation of the workforce. Professor, I might pass back to you for this next question. Perhaps could you share? What are some of the key recommendations for Australian VET providers that have emerged from your research?

Professor Vineeta Sirohi, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) 49:34

Yeah, the some of the recommendations key recommendations that have emerged from the research. I would like to point out that first, the regulatory compliance is a critical aspect of foreign companies entering into offering for vocational education and training programs in India. And given the complexity of the regulatory compliance and it is recommended that foreign which providers engage legal experts, consultants and local partners to navigate the process effectively. Then, second, the collaborations and partnerships are very important with local educational institutions are businesses, which could help the Australian VET providers look into the Indian market more, more deeply understanding the specific industries prevalent in India and tailoring their courses accordingly, which would be vital to ensure the courses offered are relevant and in demand.

So by working closely with the local industry experts, educational institutions and regulatory bodies, the Australian vet providers can successfully align their curriculum to the Indian context, providing valuable training that prepares learners for meaningful careers in the local job market. The third recommendation would be the stablishing of international equivalents of vocational education and training courses, and ensuring that mobility through mutual recognition of which would these would be crucial steps towards creating a globally competitive workforce. The fourth

recommendation relates to the Australian VET providers who may get involved in training as NCVET has recognised which is a regulatory body in India. And this recognition can be as an awarding body or as an affiliating training body or an assessment agency. The fifth recommendation is on the exchange programs and internships that have been really expressed while we were interacting with the sector, skill council representatives, the employers, even the trainees, so, the Australian VET providers establish exchange programs and internships with Indian companies. And these programs can provide students and trainers with opportunities to gain practical experience, work alongside industry experts and apply the acquired knowledge in the real world settings. And the even the sector skills council may also benefit from the expertise of the Australian VET providers in the areas of curriculum development, curriculum transaction, pedagogy, and assessment. And such programs would not only bridge the skill gaps, but also foster cultural exchange and international collaboration. So I think these recommendations would serve a strategic guide for the Australian VET providers, offering a roadmap to navigate the Indian vet a landscape effectively and addressed the challenges seize the opportunities presented by India's dynamic and rapidly evolving skills ecosystem. Thank you so much.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

53:13

Thank you. Thank you, Professor, you've listed five very clear opportunities for the sector. So we appreciate that. I've had another question popped into the chat that I might ask you to tackle Ujjwal. The question goes, are we seeing some examples of skill universities offering VET qualifications in partnership with foreign providers? And you also mentioned the importance of price points and understanding those opportunities? Could you elaborate at all on that?

Ujjwal Krishna, Education Researcher, Australia India Institute 53:48

Thanks. And I note that question from Manish Mishra. So, okay, what we are seeing is that there are sort of the,, I'll hop back to the example I took off of that hospitality management joint degree between an Indian higher education institution a private institution and the UK university. So, we see that in that there are transnational education partnerships already existing in the higher education space, where the most competitive you know, where they have been generally more competitive are when they have been able to incorporate the higher VET element into those higher education degree programs, then in skilled University and skills only a vocational program. So, there has been the experience of the B Voc program for example, in India, which is a domestically focused program is that uptake for the direct the B Voc has often been challenging. As I mentioned that, you know, there are issues around how aspirational skills development and VET are seen in India and this is and this is a long standing phenomena. Now, there are many green shoots and things are changing in this direction, which is very encouraging. But at the same

time, we see that examples of skills universities offering transnational VET, in VET only joint degrees is a nascent space. And there aren't many examples that at the moment, but since Manish has also asked about price points, I would like to say for the for the example that I had the hospitality management course, the fees are in the in the ballpark of around 2000 to 3000 pounds. And if you opt for the UK joint degree option, then it's an additional 7000 pounds per annum extra. So it is it is an expensive proposition comparatively. And there needs to be greater thinking on how price points can be controlled and effectively brought down to make them more competitive.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

55:54

Thank you. Thank you, and thanks for addressing that question in the chat, there is there's another question and thank you to our audience who have been fantastic providing lots of questions today. Professor, I'll pass this one to you. And it goes, Is there a central portal or information hub on the Indian labour market demand by sector or by state? So somewhat of a sort of statistical research question.

Professor Vineeta Sirohi, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

(NIEPA) 56:29

Is it addressed to whom it is addressed to the question?

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

56:34

I just wondered Professor Sirohi in establishing your research whether you are sourced labour market demand data from particular areas within the sector.

Professor Vineeta Sirohi, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

(NIEPA) 56:50

No we did not go into that detail, yeah.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

56:53

Thank you. Thank you. Good. Ujjwal would you have anything to add to that before I pass back to one final question?

Ujjwal Krishna, Education Researcher, Australia India Institute 57:00

Yeah quickly. So NSDC International provides the portal where matching between candidates and providers can happen in the mobility oriented space and NSDC also has supported the creation of labour market information systems. So, there are portals which provide this data on the on the statistical research side, you know, you will probably have to go into labour data but and call out the skills elements from there. But I think I'll stop there, yeah.

Darryl Mohr, Senior Strategy, Partnership and Program Advisor, Australia India Institute

57:32

Thank you and look that just starts to bring us up towards the end of the hour. So, it is with great pleasure and honour that I would like to thank our researchers today for sharing such detailed insights into VET opportunities in India's burgeoning industries and transnational education models. This will conclude our masterclass for today. But I would remind our audience that there will be a full transcript and web link posted on the Australia India Institute website in the coming days. And I thank you all for your participation and terrific questions today. Thank you very much for attending. And that formally closes this masterclass. Thank you.

Ujjwal Krishna, Education Researcher, Australia India Institute 58:17

Thank you so much. Thank you