

## NOTES & COMMENTS

### SKILL DIFFERENTIALS IN INDIA

**Pradeep Kumar Saxena\* and Abhay Kumar\*\***

#### ABSTRACT

*There exists a strong and positive relationship between educated and skilled labour force and per capita Net State Domestic Product (PCNSDP). The skill level of population and the labour force in India is not only very low, but also there exist wide disparities in it by gender, location, social, religious and consumption groups. This paper attempts to highlight such skill differentials in India. It is found that males belonging to urban upper quintile and from General category have better skill attainment in comparison to females from the rural bottom quintile and from SC and ST categories. Muslims are further disadvantaged in terms of skill attainment. To minimize such skill differentials, few initiatives have been taken by the government. But, the newly launched National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 has emphatically aimed to make skill development more inclusive by specifically ensuring skill needs of the socially and geographically disadvantaged and marginalised groups like SC, ST, OBC, minorities, differently abled persons, etc. The need of the hour is to translate these policy goals into executable programmes.*

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\* Dr. Pradeep Kumar Saxena retired as Joint Director, National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (Formerly Institute of Applied Manpower Research), Delhi. He is currently Visiting Fellow at Chetanya Kasyap Foundation, New Delhi.

\*\* Dr. Abhay Kumar works with the Chetanya Kasyap Foundation, New Delhi.  
E-mail of corresponding Author: abhayjnu@gmail.com

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## 1. Introduction

Education and skill development system of a country plays a crucial role in the growth process. Skill enhancement of the population especially of the labour force leading to increasing levels of competence and capability paves the way for achieving higher productivity levels. Sir M. Visvesvarayya highlighted the pivotal role of education in economic welfare of the country way back in 1931 and cautioned: “the economic future of India is placed in grave peril by the slow progress which mass education is making...” There are evidences that the regions or states having low level of skilled labour force also lag behind in achieving rapid economic growth. Regions or states with higher levels of education and highly skilled labour force are not only more competitive, but also could counter emerging challenges and seize opportunities for development. It has become more important since the developing and emerging countries tend to strive for achieving higher and sustainable level of growth (The World Bank, 2010).

The hierarchy of social groups in India has still not changed as the bottom quintile population is still dominated by the marginalized sections of the society (Mutatkar, 2005). In India social group disparities are looked at through two interlinked ways: one as distributional issue and the other as the specific factors underlying these disparities. Some regions/people have a greater access to social resources like education, facilities for skill development, health, etc. This type of unequal access to these resources has resulted in differentials among region/people, social and ethnic groups, religious groups, etc. In the Indian context too, there are evidences of manifestation of growing inequalities and disparities across region, sector, gender and social groups (Awasthi and Shrivastav, 2015).

For any development effort, harnessing the optimum potential of workers leading to their most effective use is of utmost importance. Up to some extent, in many parts of the developing countries, chronic unemployment is due to skill mismatches. The relative fall in the supply of workers with technical and vocational attainments, and their wages, is due to the fact that workers with technical/vocational qualifications do not have requisite skills (often because of the poor quality of training provided) that are demanded in the labour market (The World Bank, 2008).

In India the education and skill attainment of population and the labour force is very low; and there exist wide disparities between male and female, and rural and urban (Saxena and Kumar, 2017). There also exist wide differentials among various social and ethnic groups in terms of education, employment, and income (Desai and Kulkarni, 2008). Although education has been viewed as human rights as well as a means of transformation towards a more enlightened society, still there persists a wide gap in educational and skill attainments across regions, religion, gender and among various social and ethnic groups.

Social stratification in India along the line of caste, ethnicity and religion is also reflected in educational attainment with a vast quantity of literature documenting inequalities therein (Cabinet Secretariat, 2006; Govinda, 2002; Thorat and Newman, 2009).

Human Development Index (HDI) and Higher Education Index (HEI) have also shown wide disparities among various social groups. In the year 2011-12 the HDI for General category was 0.48, followed by OBCs i.e. 0.35, whereas for SCs it was lowest (0.30). Moreover, the HEI for General category was highest i.e. 0.23 and for OBCs it was 0.14. Here also, for SCs it was lowest at 0.09 (IAMR, 2013). These inequalities have been a cause of concern for both the government and civil society.

Even after around 65 years of planning, the glaring education and skill differentials in terms of location, gender, regions, social groups, religion, etc. remain evident. Although a number of initiatives were taken by various governments from time to time, yet the desired impact is still wanting. The country through its development journey has been successful in reducing poverty and improving crucial human development indicators such as literacy level, education, health, etc. However, there are indications that not all religious communities and social groups have shared the benefits of the growth process equally, and many lagged behind. Among these, Muslims, the largest minority community in the country, are seriously lagging behind in terms of most of the human development indicators (Cabinet Secretariat, 2006).

Against this background, the present paper is worked out. The key objectives of this paper are:

- To examine the relationship between economic growth and skill level of the labour force;
- To examine the skill composition of labour force and its differentials; and
- To highlight key emerging concerns and suggest policy measures.

This paper is based on secondary data drawn from various government sources such as National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Census of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment, etc. It is organized into five sections. Besides the introduction section, in section two, the relationship between the economic growth and skill level of the labour force is examined and it is shown how skill attainment is positively correlated with the economic growth. The education and skill differentials in terms of residence, gender, poor vs. non-poor, social group, religion, etc. are examined in section three. In section four, key initiatives of the government to reduce skill differentials have been critically discussed. In the final section, key emerging policy concerns are highlighted and policy measures are suggested to address these concerns.

## **2. Economic Growth vis-a-vis Skill Level**

### ***Economic Growth vis-a-vis Educational attainments***

The economic growth of a nation depends not only upon the material resources at its command, but also to a great extent upon its human endowments. A higher skill level of population particularly the labour force is of utmost importance for achieving higher growth rates. A number of studies also have established the relationship between higher level of education and skills of the labour force and economic growth. On an average, less income inequality is evident in countries with higher educational attainments, while countries having sharp variations in educational levels of population exhibit wide income disparities (Fields, 1980). A higher level of human capital formation has a strong association with higher income level and it could be regarded as an essential prerequisite for the growth process (Saxena, 1989).

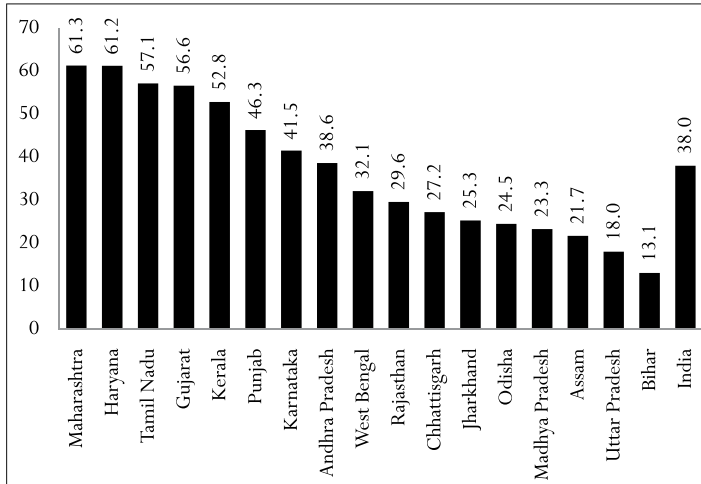
A study examining the causal relationship between education and economic growth for Greece covering a long-term period i.e. from 1961 to 2006 exhibited that changes in primary, secondary, tertiary education and educational public expenditures affect real GDP per capita (Solaki, 2013). In Low Income Countries (LICs), the meta-analysis has demonstrated a positive effect between education/skills and economic growth. In LICs, the national and trans-national organisations investing heavily in human capital development are likely to have a return on this investment in terms of economic development (Hawkes and Ugur, 2012).

In the economic analysis for examining inter-state differentials pertaining to level of development, per capita income could safely be taken as a proxy. The distribution of per capita Net State Domestic Product (PCNSDP) for 17 major states is shown at Figure 1. Interestingly, the per capita income varies widely among the states. For instance, it was as low as just Rs. 13.1 thousand for Bihar, while for Maharashtra it was Rs. 61.3 thousand. Out of the 17 states, in eight states the PCNSDP was above the national average while in nine states it was below the national average.

In regard to the general educational level, among the major 17 states, the relative proportion of educated labour force (15-59 years, and consisting of secondary, higher secondary, diploma/certificate, and graduate and above) varies sharply. For instance, it was as low as 23.8 per cent for Odisha, while for Kerala it was highest i.e. 48.3 per cent (Figure 2). In terms of proportion of educated labour force, certain states namely Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal were well below the national average of 34.5 per cent. On the contrary, some states such as Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu had the proportion of educated labour force much above the national average.

Nevertheless, among the 17 major states, in Gujarat the proportion of educated labour force was just below the national average.

**Figure 1: Distribution of major states by per capita NSDP (Rs. in 000') at constant prices (2004-05), 2011-12**



Source: Central Statistical Organisation

It merits mention here that in terms of per capita income, certain states namely Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal were well below the national average of Rs. 38 thousand. On the contrary, some states such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu had the per capita income much above the national average. A cross reference to Figure 1 reveals very interesting patterns. For instance, states having lower per capita income than the national average, also lagged behind the national average in terms of proportion of educated labour force. On the contrary, states with higher level of per capita income than the national average also had comparatively higher proportion of educated labour force. Nevertheless, among these states, only in Gujarat the proportion of educated labour force was just below the national average. It merits mention here that, between the per capita NSDP and proportion of educated labour force, the coefficient of correlation is +0.86, which is statistically highly significant exhibiting a strong positive relationship between the two.

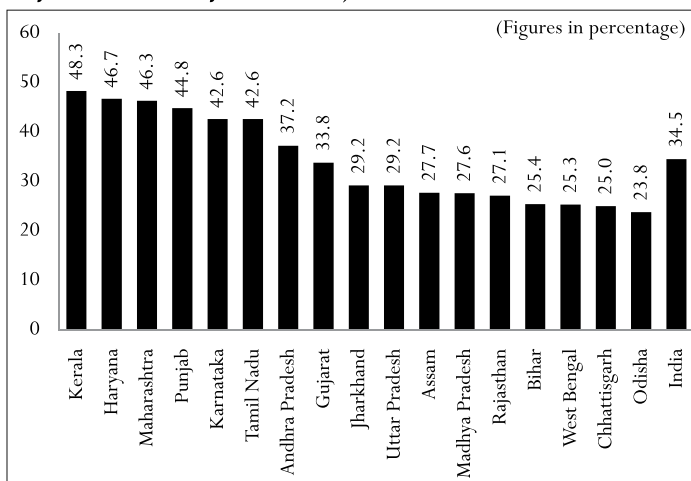
The states with backward labour market eco-systems will witness much of the country's demographic dividend. Between 2010 and 2020, 40 per cent of increase in 15-59 years old age group will occur in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh; but correspondingly, these states will account for just 10 per cent of increase in the income. During the same period, 45 per cent of increase in GDP will occur in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, while a comparatively lower growth rate of 20 per cent in the total workforce will occur in these states (Team Lease & IIJT, 2009).

### ***Economic Growth vis-a-vis Skill Level***

In this sub-section, an attempt is made to examine the relationship between economic growth and skill level of the labour force. The indicators of skill analysed are proportion of labour force (15-59 years), which has acquired technical education, formal vocational training and informal vocational training.

As mentioned earlier, for All India the proportion of labour force with technical education is miserably low at 2.6 per cent. It follows from Figure 3 that among the 17 major states of the country, on the one hand, the proportion of labour force with technical education is very low, and on the other, there are wide inter-state variations. For instance, lowest proportion was for Bihar i.e. just 0.7 per cent, and it was highest for Kerala i.e. 7.2 per cent. Out of the 17 states, six states had higher proportion of labour force with technical education than the national average. A cross reference to Figure 1 reveals that all these six states had higher per capita NSDP than the national average. Out of the 11 states with lower proportion of labour force with technical education, in terms of PCNSDP, nine lagged behind the national average – only exceptions being Gujarat and Punjab. Although these two states had marginally lower proportion of labour force with technical education than the national average, yet these states had significantly higher PCNSDP than the national average. Furthermore, the coefficient of correlation between PCNSDP and the proportion of labour force with technical education for these 17 states comes to +0.78, which is statistically significant and establishes a high positive relationship between the two.

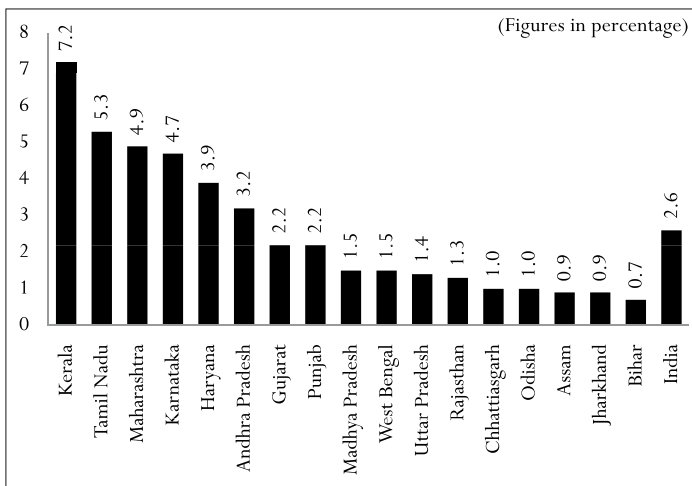
**Figure 2: State-wise distribution of educated labour force (15-59 years, secondary and above) 2011-12**



Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68<sup>th</sup> Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

Regarding the proportion of labour force with formal vocational training, the scenario is more or less similar as that of labour force with technical education. Figure 4 reveals that for All India, the proportion of labour force with formal vocational training is abysmally low i.e. just 3.0 per cent and it varies among the major states. Out of the 17 major states, in 11 states the proportion of labour force with formal vocational training was less than the national average and only six states had such labour force that was more than the national average. The lowest proportion was for Bihar i.e. a bare 0.6 per cent, while for Kerala it was the highest at 12.8 per cent.

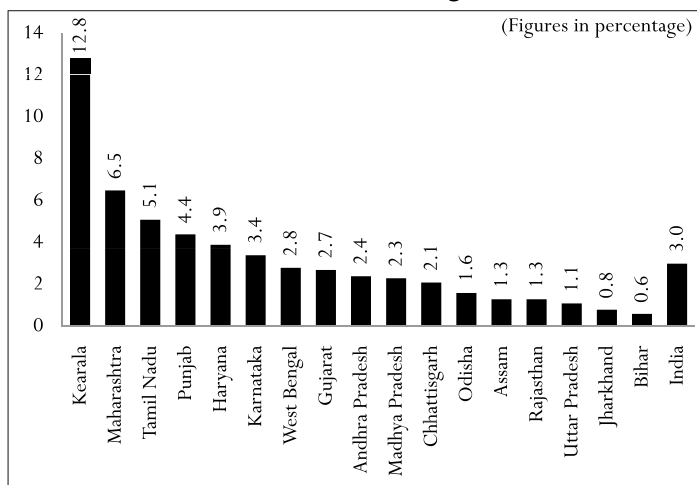
**Figure 3: State-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years) who attained technical education, 2011-12**



Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

Cross-reference of Figure 4 to Figure 1 reveals that all the six states having higher proportion of labour force with formal vocational training than the national average had higher PCNSDP than the national average. Out of the 11 states with lower proportion of such labour force, nine had lower PCNSDP than the national average. The two exceptions were Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat which had marginally lower proportion of labour force with formal vocational training than the national average, yet these states had higher PCNSDP than All India. Thus, there appears a positive relationship between the PCNSDP and proportion of labour force with formal vocational training. It is further strengthened by the fact that the coefficient of correlation between the two is +0.67, which is statistically highly significant.

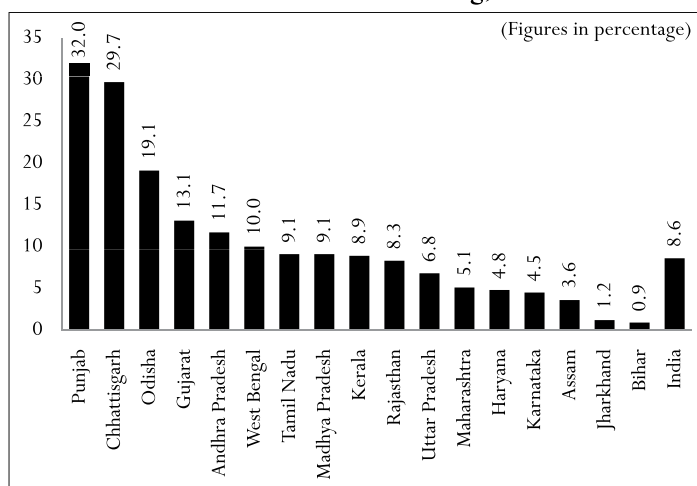
**Figure 4: State-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years), who attained formal vocational training, 2011-12**



Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

Although the skill level of the labour force with technical education and formal vocational training is miserably low, the proportion of labour force trained informally is relatively higher at 8.6 per cent (Figure 5). Here also, among the states, there are sharp variations. For instance, in Bihar just a negligible proportion (0.9 per cent) of the labour force was trained informally, while this proportion was the highest for Punjab (32.0 per cent).

**Figure 5: State-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years) who attained informal vocational training, 2011-12**



Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12



In the preceding analysis, while there existed a significant relationship between the economic growth and education and skill level of the labour force, such relationship does not appear in the case of labour force trained informally. It follows further from Figure 5 that, out of the 17 states, nine had higher proportion of labour force trained informally than the national average, and eight states lagged behind. Cross-reference of this figure to Figure 1 shows that among the nine states having higher proportion of informally trained labour force than the national average, only five had higher PCNSDP than the national average, and four states lagged behind. On the contrary, out of the eight states having lower proportion of informally trained labour force than the national average, three states namely Haryana, Karnataka, and Maharashtra had significantly higher PCNSDP than the national average. Thus, it appears that the level of informally trained labour force does not have direct relationship with the economic growth. It is further reinforced by the insignificant relationship between PCNSDP and proportion of informally trained labour force showing the coefficient of correlation between the two at just +0.07.

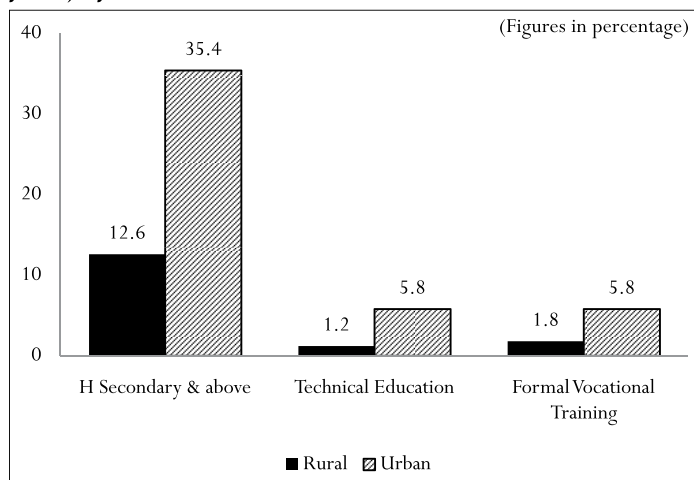
### III. Differentials in Skill Level

In this section an attempt is made to examine the educational attainments and skill composition of the labour force and its differentials. India is a highly diversified country in terms of socio-cultural characteristics. This diversity is also reflected in the educational profile/skill composition of population and the labour force, facilities for skill development, level of economic development etc.

#### *Differentials by Residence*

Regarding skill level of the labour force, there are wide differentials among rural and urban areas. It appears from Figure 6 that in rural areas just 12.6 per cent of the labour force had acquired general education beyond Higher Secondary level and above (consisting of higher secondary, diploma/certificate, and graduate and above). On the other hand, in the case of its urban counterparts, this proportion was almost three times higher at 35.4 per cent. Regarding technical education and formal vocational training the situation is more alarming. It is further evident from the figure that in rural areas a mere 1.2 per cent of labour force was equipped with technical education, while in the case of urban areas around five times of it (5.8 per cent) had technical education. The figure reveals further that regarding vocational training, in rural areas only 1.8 per cent of the labour force was trained formally, while in the case of urban areas more than three times of it i.e. 5.8 per cent was trained formally.

**Figure 6: Skill Level-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years) by residence, 2011-12**



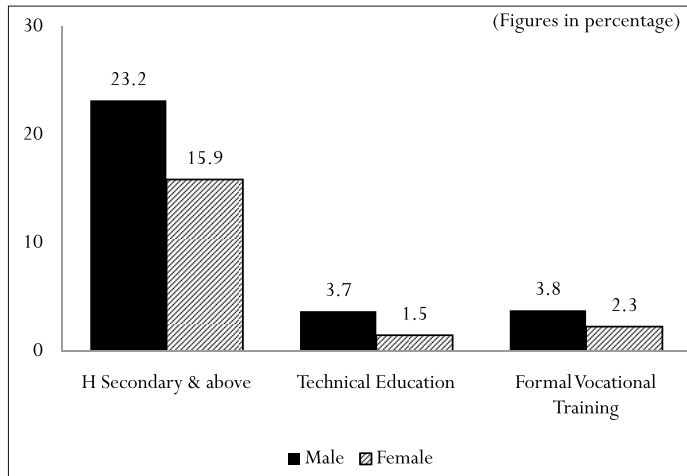
Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

There could be a multiplicity of factors for these differentials. The possible reasons could be lack of educational facilities in rural areas, lack of awareness among the rural masses about education and skill, lack of affordability, social impediments, etc. A majority of formal institutions is located in urban areas as compared to rural areas. It merits mention here that even reluctance is being reflected by the private sector institutions in operating at rural areas with the result that a large chunk of rural population continues to have a limited access to skill development facilities.

### ***Gender Differentials***

As in the case of rural-urban differentials, gender differentials were also there in the skill attainments. However, in comparison to locational disparities, differentials by gender were less pronounced. Figure 7 reveals that among the male labour force, around one-fourth of it (23.2 per cent) had acquired general education beyond Higher Secondary level and above, while among females it was comparatively low i.e. 15.9 per cent. It follows further from the figure that 3.7 per cent of the male labour force had technical education, while just 1.5 per cent of the female labour force could attain technical education. The figure reveals further that 3.8 per cent of its labour force had formal vocational training among males while in the case of females it was comparatively lower at 2.3 per cent.

**Figure 7: Distribution of labour force (15- 59 years) by skill attainment and gender (2011-12)**



Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

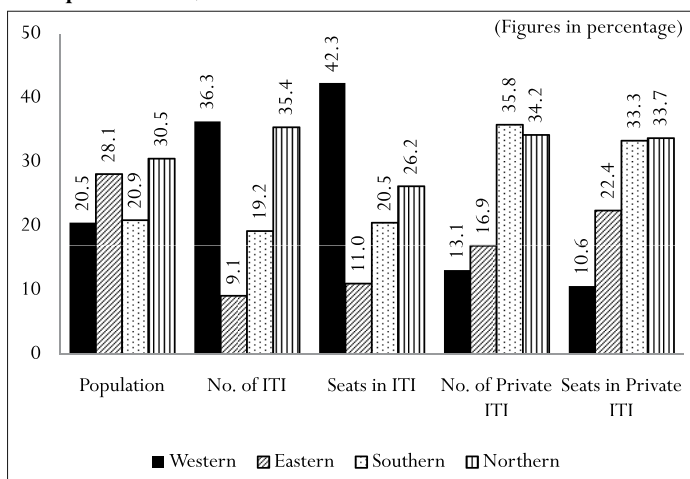
Differentials pertaining to gender in the skill attainment could be attributed to a number of factors such as comparatively high enrolment and attendance rate (per cent) among male, socio-economic barriers, lower educational attainment of parents etc. There is also a paucity of institutions for technical education and formal vocational training exclusively for women. This along with a mix of socio-cultural factors inhibits girls to come forward in attaining technical education and formal vocational training.

### ***Regional Differentiation in Technical Training***

Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Government of India, has categorized four regions of the country namely Northern (Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Chandigarh); Southern (Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Puducherry, and Lakshadweep); Eastern (Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim, 7 North-eastern states, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands); and Western (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, and Daman & Diu) for showing wide regional disparities regarding number and seats in ITIs/Private ITIs (Figure 8). Southern region has only 20.9 per cent of the country's population but has 35.8 per cent of the private ITIs (just as it has a concentration of private professional colleges). Similarly, the Western region has a concentration of industry, and hence, forms 36.3 per cent of the government ITIs, even though it has only 20.5 per cent of the country's population. The proportion of private ITIs is the least in the Western region. Northern region forming the highest share of population of the country has 35.4 per cent of ITIs, but with less number of seats i.e. 26.2 per cent. Interestingly,

it accounts for 34.2 per cent of the private ITIs with 33.7 per cent of seats in these ITIs. In comparison to these three regions, eastern region appears to be at a greater disadvantage. This region forms 28.1 per cent of India's population but accounts for only 9.1 per cent of the ITIs with 11.0 per cent of seats. Owing to private initiatives taken during the recent period, the number of private ITIs has increased reasonably and now its proportion has increased to 16.9 per cent with number of seats rising to 22.4 per cent (MoLE, 2014).

**Figure 8: Regional differentiation in population, number of ITIs/private ITIs, and number of seats**

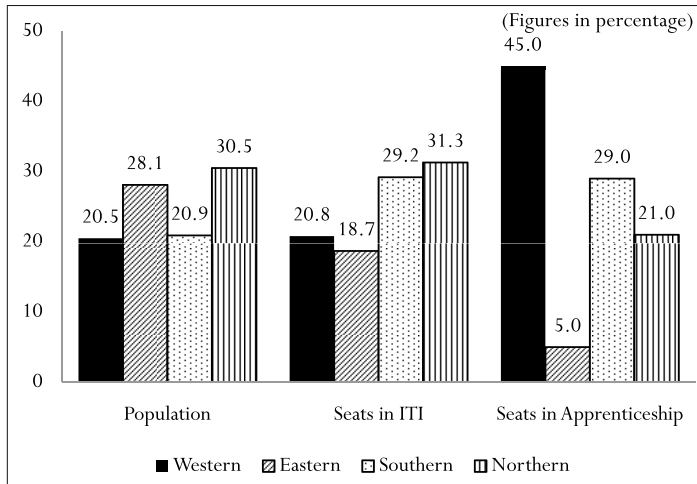


Sources: Ministry of Labour & Employment, Annual Report, 2014; Census of India

### ***Regional Differentiation in Apprenticeship Training***

Regional disparities are also very striking in the case of apprenticeship training (Figure 9). Southern region has a higher proportion of seats i.e. 29.2 per cent in ITIs and 29 per cent of seats in apprenticeship training. The Western region has equated the proportion of seats in ITIs (20.8 per cent) with their population proportion (20.5 per cent) but its share in the total apprenticeship seats is a whopping 45 per cent. It might have been due to large industrial base in the western region, particularly in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The Northern region with the highest share of population of the country has 31.3 per cent of seats in ITIs but its share in seats in apprenticeship training is comparatively low at 21 per cent. In comparison to these three regions, Eastern region again appears to be at a disadvantage in terms of availability of facilities for Craftsman training and apprenticeship training. The total apprenticeship seats in this region are just 5 per cent against a population base of 28.1 per cent. Nevertheless, seats in ITIs are somewhat at a reasonable level of 18.1 per cent.

**Figure 9: Regional differentiation in population, seats in ITIs, and seats in apprenticeship, 2014**

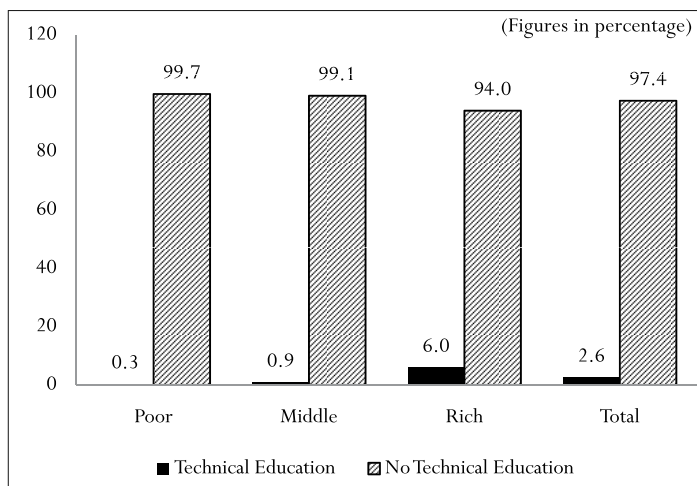


Sources: Ministry of Labour and Employment, Annual Reports for various years, Census of India

### *Skill Differentials by Consumption Tercile*

Owing to income poverty, the households are unable to make adequate investments in education and as a result it further accentuates their poverty. This mutually reinforces their interrelation. The most effective way of breaking this interrelation is to begin 'educational reconstruction' (Education Commission, 1966).

**Figure 10: Distribution of labour force (15-59 years) by their economic level and technical education attainment, 2011-12**

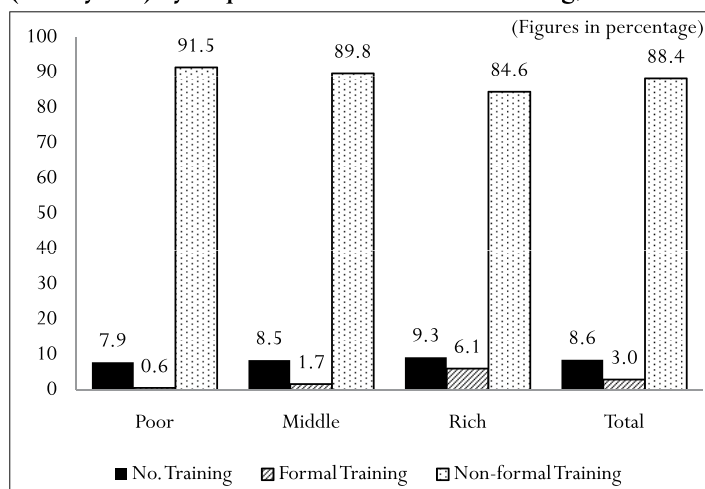


Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

To examine the educational profile and skill composition of the poor vis-a-vis non-poor monthly per capita consumption expenditure of NSSO (2011-12) has been divided into three equal terciles. The bottom tercile is considered as poor and other two terciles have been classified as middle and rich class. Figure 10 shows that large section of the labour force is not equipped with technical education of any kind. Nevertheless, there exist disparities among the poor, middle class, and rich. Among the poor, just a negligible proportion of labour force i.e. 0.3 per cent had acquired any technical education, while among middle class, it was 0.9 per cent. Further, among the rich, 6.0 per cent of the labour force was equipped with technical education. These differentials for rural-urban and male-female are presented in Appendix 1 which exhibit more or less similar pattern.

In the case of acquisition of technical education, the scenario is somewhat better for vocational training. A look at Figure 11 reveals that there exist disparities in attainment of vocational training by economic condition. For instance, 91.4 per cent of the bottom tercile had no vocational training. Whereas, in the case of middle class, this proportion was low at 89.8 per cent and it was further low for rich at 84.7 per cent. It is also observed from the figure that among the poor, just 7.1 per cent had formal training whereas among the middle class and rich it was 16.7 per cent and 39.6 per cent respectively. More or less similar trends are evident for rural and urban and male and female (Appendix II).

**Figure 11: Economic level-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years) by acquisition of vocational training, 2011-12**

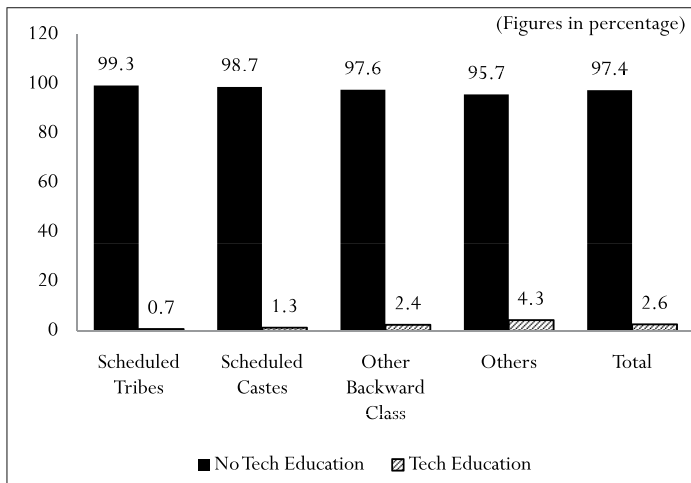


Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

### Social Group Differentials

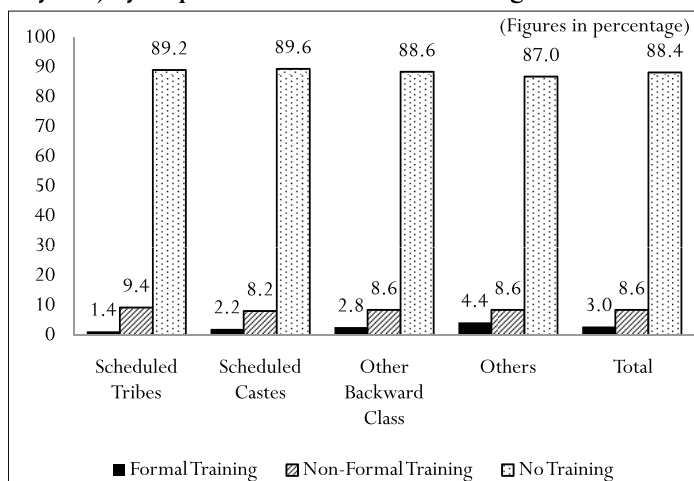
Figure 12 presents technical education differentials by social groups. It shows that among ST, only 0.7 per cent had any technical education, SC being only a few notch higher at 1.3 per cent followed closely by OBC at 2.3 per cent. Others with just 4.3 per cent of the labour force with technical education had the highest proportion among all. Similar differentials also exist between rural-urban and male-female (Appendix III).

**Figure 12: Social group-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years) by acquisition of technical education, 2011-2012**



Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

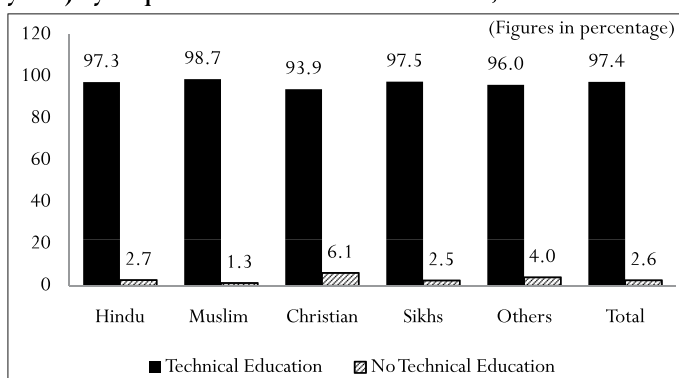
It is further observed from Figure 13 that as much as 88.4 per cent of the labour force did not receive vocational training of any type. Among the social groups, in comparison to OBC and Others, ST and SC appeared at disadvantage. As far as formal training is concerned, labour force among Others had 4.3 per cent formal training, followed by OBC (2.8 per cent), SC (2.2 per cent) and ST at the bottom at just 1.5 per cent. Similar distribution for rural-urban and male-female is presented in Appendix IV.

**Figure 13: Social group-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years) by acquisition of vocational training, 2011-2012**

Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

### ***Religion Differentials***

There also exist religion based differentials in the attainment of technical education (Figure 14). For instance, among Christians, 6.1 per cent had received technical education, whereas for Other religion it is 4.0 per cent, for Hindus 2.7 per cent, for Sikhs 2.5 per cent and for Muslims it is only 1.3 per cent. Such distribution by residence and gender is presented in Appendix V.

**Figure 14: Religion-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years) by acquisition of technical education, 2011-2012**

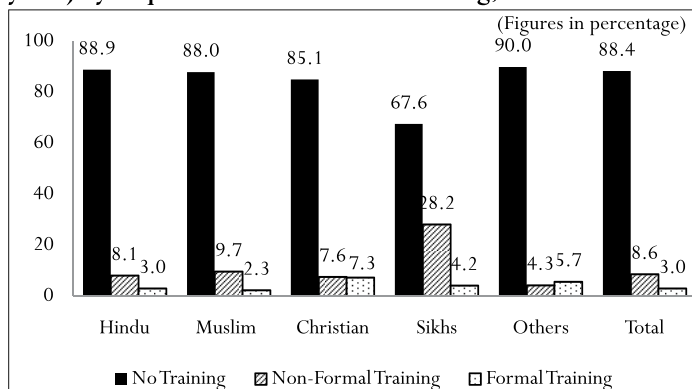
Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

It is further observed from Figure 15 that among all the religious groups, the acquisition of vocational training was the highest among Sikhs at 32.4 per cent. However, 28.2 per cent of such vocational training among Sikhs has been received informally and only 4.2 per cent received such training formally.



The highest formal vocational training has been received by Christian labour force (7.6 per cent) and the lowest by the Muslim labour force (2.3 per cent). Muslims' informal vocational training however is 9.7 per cent. So, Muslims' marginalization in receiving formal vocational education is evident here. Regarding these differentials, more or less similar trends are evident for rural and urban, and male and female (Appendix VI).

**Figure 15: Religion-wise distribution of labour force (15-59 years) by acquisition of vocational training, 2011-2012**



Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

#### 4. Initiatives of the Government for reducing skill differentials

Augmentation of skill attainment and making it equitable to all required specific policies/tailor-made programmes. For instance, to address the regional differentiation, particularly of low skill attainment in the North-Eastern Region, a scheme named Enhancing Skill Development Infrastructure in North Eastern States and Sikkim was initiated. The scheme envisages enhancing the existing infrastructure of skill development in the North Eastern States. It is aimed at (a) upgradation of 20 ITIs by introducing three new trades per ITI, (b) supplementing infrastructure deficiencies in 28 ITIs by constructing new hostels, boundary wall and supplementing old and obsolete tools and equipment, and (c) establishment of 22 new ITIs in eight North Eastern States. Total cost of the scheme was Rs. 298.1 crore and duration of the scheme was up to 31st March, 2017 (MSDE, 2017). *Udaan* programme is a special initiative to address the needs of the educated unemployed in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). The aim is to provide skills and job opportunities to the youth of the state. To provide exposure to the graduates and post-graduates of J&K to get absorbed in the corporate sector, a number of stakeholders are to be involved in the process (MoMA, 2017).

Similarly, in order to obliterate gender differentials in the skill development, Directorate General of Training (DGT) is providing technical guidance and

monitoring progress of Women ITIs in the States as well as at Central institutes. A network of institutes, both under the Central & State governments, has been set up for extending skill training facilities to women, which aims at stimulating employment opportunities among women of various socio-economic levels and age groups. Under the Central sector, the Institutional Network includes 16 Central institutes viz. National Vocational Training Institute for Women at Noida and 16 Regional Vocational Training Institutes for Women. Besides this, Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes are also imparted to women instructors in these institutes. At the State sector, vocational training facilities for women at Craftsmen level (CTS) are also provided through a network of Women's Industrial Training Institutes (WITIs)/Women wings in general ITIs by the State governments. To further promote participation of women in Craftsmen Training, provision has been made by the National Council on Vocational Training (NCVT) to reserve 30 per cent seats for women in general ITIs (MSDE, 2017).

During the XIIth Five Year Plan, the Ministry of Minority Affairs launched a placement linked skill development scheme named, *Seekho aur Kamao* (Learn and Earn) (MoMA, 2017). The major objectives of this scheme are to (a) bring down unemployment rate of minorities during the XIIth Plan period, (b) conserve and update traditional skills of minorities and establish their linkages with market, (c) improve employability of the existing workers, school dropouts etc. and ensure their placement, and (d) generate means of better livelihood for marginalized minorities and bring them in the mainstream. Under the scheme 33 per cent seats are reserved for minority girls/women. The scheme ensures 75 per cent placement after training and 50 per cent has to be in the organised sector.

During the XIIth Five Year Plan the ministry launched another scheme for skill development, namely, Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/ Crafts for Development (USTTAD). It is a 100 per cent Central Sector Scheme (MoMA, 2017). The main objectives of the scheme are to (a) build capacity of master craftsmen/artisans and training of young generation through master craftsmen/artisans for traditional arts/crafts, (b) set up standards of identified arts/crafts and their documentation, (c) establish linkages of traditional skills with the global market, (d) improve employability of existing workers, school dropouts etc. for generating means of better livelihood for marginalized minorities and bring them in the mainstream. The eligibility of the programme is that the trainee should belong to minority community. However, to promote inter-community solidarity, 25 per cent candidates belonging to BPL families of non-minority communities may also be considered. In addition, 3 per cent seats will also be reserved for differently abled persons belonging to minority communities. The age of trainee should be between 14-35 years. Upper age limit may be relaxed for differently abled persons belonging to minorities.

During the XIIth Five Year Plan the ministry launched another scheme namely, *Nai Manzil*, to address educational and livelihood marginalization (MoMA, 2015). It is a Central sector scheme that aims to (a) provide educational intervention by giving the bridge courses to the trainees and getting them certificates for Class XII and X from distance medium stream, (b) provide trade based skill training in four courses at the same time of formal education in the fields of manufacturing, engineering, services, and soft skills, (c) to cover people in between 17 to 35 years of age group from all minority communities as well as Madrasa students, (d) and to provide new avenues for minorities for continuing higher education and also open up employment opportunities in the organised sector employment.

Under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E), National Scheduled Caste Finance & Development Corporation (NSFDC) sponsors Skill Development Training Programme in high impact labour intensive sectors such as Computer Technology, Apparel Technology, Plastic Technology, Manufacturing of Leather Goods, Construction skills etc. (MoSJ&E, 2017). These courses are conducted by reputed institutions. The objective of these programmes is to provide skill development training leading to employability of scheduled caste youths belonging to DPL (double below poverty line). Another agency of the ministry, namely, National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC) also provides 100 per cent grant to the training institutions for conducting skill development training programmes for identified manual scavengers and their dependants. The National Backward Class Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC) under the ministry provides financial assistance for Skill Development Training Programme and Upgradation of entrepreneurial skills to eligible members of the backward classes living below poverty line.

Under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, a scheme namely Vocational Training Centres in Tribal Areas (VTC), is being implemented (MoTA, 2017). The main aim of this scheme is to upgrade the skills of the tribal youth in various traditional/modern vocations depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential which would enable them to gain suitable employment or to become self-employed. As far as possible, a minimum of 33 per cent seats are to be reserved for tribal girl candidates.

The newly launched National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 is a very comprehensive policy and it takes care of skilling needs of the socially and geographically disadvantaged and marginalised groups like SC, ST, OBC, minorities, differently abled persons etc. (MSDE, 2015).

## **5. Policy Concerns**

Based upon the preceding analysis, following policy concerns have emerged.

### ***Economic Growth vis-a-vis Skill Level***

A study of 17 major states shows that the relative proportion of persons with technical education, formally trained and informally trained, varies widely among the states. Interestingly, states having lower per capita income than the national average also lag behind in terms of proportion of educated and skilled persons. In contrast, states with higher level of per capita income than the national average had comparatively higher proportion of educated and skilled persons also. The level of informally trained persons however does not exhibit any positive relationship with economic growth. The regions/states lagging behind in terms of facilities for education are to be given specific packages so that all the states/regions participate judiciously in the growth process leading to inclusive growth. In this context, Enhancing Skill Development Infrastructure in North Eastern States and Sikkim was launched. The scheme envisages enhancing the existing infrastructure of skill development in the North Eastern States. Effort like this is a welcome step and similar efforts also need to be made to eradicate inter-state/regional differentials for other parts of the country.

### ***Inter-state Disparities***

There persist wider gaps in the skill attainment of labour force between the deprived sections and elites of the society. It further accentuates with differentials across regions, religion, gender, and among various social and ethnic groups. These inequalities have been a cause of concern for both the government and the civil society.

As far as the regional differentials are concerned, some states namely Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka appear to be more advanced in terms of economic growth and skill level. On the other hand, a number of states namely Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal are at a greater disadvantage both in terms of economic growth and skill level. It is therefore suggested that specific attention be paid to the states which are lagging behind.

### ***Locational Differentials***

There were glaring disparities between the proportion of educated labour force in rural and urban areas. Multiplicity of factors could be accountable for these differentials. Possible reasons could be lack of educational facilities in rural areas, lack of awareness among rural masses about education and skill, lack of affordability, social impediments, etc. A majority of formal institutions is located in urban areas as compared to rural areas. Efforts are needed to minimise, if not eradicate, these imbalances. There is a need to make the rural

folk aware about the social and economic benefits of education. Educational and skill development related facilities should be strengthened in rural areas as well by evolving appropriate measures.

### ***Gender Differentials***

Akin to the rural-urban differentials, gender disparities in the skill attainment has also been observed. It could be attributed to a number of factors. Some of these could be comparatively high attendance rate among males in comparison to females, higher extent of attending secondary and above level of education among males than females, socio-cultural and economic barriers to education and skill etc., and unavailability of exclusive skill imparting centres for women. Multiple approach ranging from removing socio-cultural barriers to supplying exclusive skill development centres need to be encouraged in order to bridge the gender differentials in the country.

### ***Skill Differentials among Poor, Middle and Rich***

In comparison to middle class and rich, the educational profile and skill composition of the poor is very low. Moreover, these disparities are quite significant between rural and urban, and male and female. A large majority of poor is without technical and vocational education/training. Among the poor and middle class, persons having formal vocational training are quite low as most of them are trained informally. Both availability of skill centres and affordable training facilities are required to bridge the differentials accruing out of income level.

### ***Skill Differentials among Social Groups***

Among various social groups, the extent of illiteracy among SC and ST was quite high. Moreover, among ST and SC, the largest chunk of the labour force was not equipped with technical education of any kind. A large majority of this labour force did not receive vocational training of any type. The education and skill level particularly of SC and ST needs to be enhanced substantially to bring them in the mainstream of development. The technical education and vocational training system should be strengthened to involve youth particularly of disadvantaged groups for enhancing their skills and employability. Periodic evaluation/assessment of education and skill development mechanism must be taken care of.

### ***Skill Differentials among Religious Groups***

As far as the educational attainment is concerned, Muslims have been found to be at disadvantage. Similarly, in terms of technical skill attainment, Muslims were the least trained while acquisition of vocational training was highest among Sikhs. The education and skill issues particularly of Muslims need specific attention. Although National Policy for Skill Development and

Entrepreneurship 2015 touches upon the issue of disparity among various groups yet a concrete package of policy is still wanting. The formal training system should be strengthened in a big way to meet the growing demand of trained and skilled manpower. The Technical Education and Vocational Training system should be expanded largely to take care of this massive task.

## **6. Summing up**

To eradicate or minimize skill differentials among the states, social groups, gender etc., few initiatives have been taken by the government. However, the kind of marginalization being observed in the skill attainment among various groups must be eradicated or minimized so that equity in the skill development may take place. Skill level attainment in itself is so dwindling that it requires a major boost by both Central and State governments. The present government has created a separate ministry to look after the augmentation of skill among the masses with an aim to provide skills to nearly 550 million labour force which appears to be a very ambitious target. Given the wide differentials as observed in this paper, there is an urgent need to launch specific programmes for the marginalized groups so that they too become the part of the mainstream. The need of the hour is to evolve specific tailor-made programmes/schemes to eradicate/reduce all these disparities in a time bound manner. The newly launched National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015 touches upon the aspect of skill development in a very comprehensive manner. The policy is aimed to ensure that the skilling needs of the socially and geographically disadvantaged and marginalised groups like SC, ST, OBC, minorities, differently abled persons, etc. are appropriately taken care of (MSDE, 2015). But, the effort should be to translate the policy goals into action and achieve equity and equality.

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## Appendix I

### Statement indicating Economic Level-wise Distribution of Labour Force by Acquisition of Technical Education, Gender and Residence, 2011-12

T/R/U	MPCE	Technical Education					
		Person		Male		Female	
		No Technical Education	Have Technical Education	No Technical Education	Have Technical Education	No Technical Education	Have Technical Education
Total	Poor	99.7	0.3	99.5	0.5	99.9	0.1
	Middle	99.1	0.9	98.7	1.3	99.5	0.5
	Rich	94.0	6.0	91.8	8.2	96.5	3.6
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>
Rural	Poor	99.8	0.3	99.6	0.4	99.9	0.1
	Middle	99.3	0.7	98.9	1.1	99.7	0.3
	Rich	96.7	3.3	95.2	4.8	98.3	1.7
	<b>Total Rural</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Urban	Poor	99.4	0.6	99.1	1.0	99.7	0.3
	Middle	98.4	1.6	97.9	2.1	98.9	1.2
	Rich	91.8	8.3	89.0	11.0	94.8	5.2
	<b>Total Urban</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>

Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

## Appendix II

### Statement indicating Economic Level-wise Distribution of Labour Force by Acquisition of Vocational Training, Gender, and Residence, 2011-12

Stratum	MPCE	Vocational Training								
		Person			Male			Female		
		Formal Training	Non-Formal Training	No Training	Formal Training	Non-Formal Training	No Training	Formal Training	Non-Formal Training	No Training
Total	Poor	0.6	7.9	91.4	0.8	10.4	88.8	0.4	5.4	94.1
	Middle	1.7	8.5	89.8	2.2	11.8	86.1	1.3	5.1	93.6
	Rich	6.1	9.3	84.7	7.4	13.3	79.3	4.7	4.9	90.4
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>88.4</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>92.6</b>
Rural	Poor	0.6	7.7	91.7	0.8	10.0	89.2	0.4	5.4	94.3
	Middle	1.4	8.3	90.3	1.9	11.1	87.0	1.0	5.3	93.7
	Rich	4.3	9.6	86.2	5.4	12.9	81.7	3.1	6.1	90.9
	<b>Total Rural</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>89.8</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>93.2</b>
Urban	Poor	1.0	9.8	89.2	1.0	13.5	85.5	1.0	6.0	93.0
	Middle	2.8	9.3	88.0	3.2	13.9	83.0	2.3	4.4	93.2
	Rich	7.6	9.0	83.4	9.1	13.6	77.3	6.0	3.9	90.0
	<b>Total Urban</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>91.2</b>

Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

## Appendix III

## Statement indicating Social Group-wise Distribution of Labour Force by Acquisition of Technical Education, Gender and Residence, 2011-12

T/R/U	Social Group	Technical Education					
		Person		Male		Female	
		No Technical Education	Have Technical Education	No Technical Education	Have Technical Education	No Technical Education	Have Technical Education
Total	Scheduled Tribes	99.3	0.7	99.0	1.0	99.6	0.4
	Scheduled Castes	98.7	1.3	98.2	1.8	99.3	0.7
	Other Backward Class	97.6	2.4	96.6	3.4	98.6	1.4
	Others	95.7	4.3	94.0	6.0	97.5	2.5
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>
Rural	Scheduled Tribes	99.6	0.4	99.5	0.5	99.8	0.2
	Scheduled Castes	99.4	0.6	99.0	1.0	99.8	0.2
	Other Backward Class	98.8	1.2	98.2	1.8	99.3	0.7
	Others	98.1	1.9	97.1	2.9	99.1	0.9
	<b>Total Rural</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Urban	Scheduled Tribes	96.7	3.3	95.9	4.2	97.8	2.2
	Scheduled Castes	96.6	3.4	95.6	4.4	97.8	2.2
	Other Backward Class	94.7	5.3	92.8	7.2	96.7	3.3
	Others	92.6	7.4	90.0	10.0	95.4	4.6
	<b>Total Urban</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>

Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

**Appendix IV****Statement indicating Social Group-wise distribution of Labour Force by acquisition of Vocational Training, Gender, and Residence, 2011-12**

T/R/U	Social-Group	Vocational Training								
		Person			Male			Female		
		Formal Training	Non-Formal-Training	No Training	Formal Training	Non-Formal-Training	No Training	Formal-Training	Non-Formal-Training	No Training
Total	Scheduled Tribes	1.5	9.4	89.2	1.9	11.2	86.9	1.1	7.4	91.5
	Scheduled Castes	2.2	8.2	89.6	2.7	11.4	85.9	1.7	4.9	93.4
	Other Backward Class	2.8	8.6	88.6	3.5	12.2	84.3	2.0	4.9	93.1
	Others	4.3	8.6	87.0	5.4	12.1	82.5	3.3	4.9	91.8
	<b>Grand-Total</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>88.4</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>92.6</b>
Rural	Scheduled Tribes	0.9	9.5	89.6	1.2	11.3	87.5	0.6	7.7	91.7
	Scheduled Castes	1.5	8.1	90.4	1.9	11.0	87.1	1.1	5.1	93.7
	Other Backward Class	1.8	8.1	90.1	2.3	11.2	86.5	1.2	5.0	93.7
	Others	2.5	8.5	89.0	3.3	11.3	85.4	1.7	5.7	92.6
	<b>Total-Rural</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>89.8</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>93.2</b>
Urban	Scheduled Tribes	5.4	8.3	86.3	6.1	10.9	83.0	4.5	5.4	90.1
	Scheduled Castes	4.5	8.6	86.9	5.3	12.8	81.9	3.6	4.1	92.3
	Other Backward Class	5.2	9.8	85.0	6.3	14.7	79.0	4.0	4.7	91.3
	Others	6.8	8.7	84.5	8.0	13.2	78.8	5.5	3.9	90.7
	<b>Total Urban</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>91.2</b>

Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

## Appendix V

## Statement indicating Religion-wise Distribution of Labour Force by Acquisition of Technical Education, Gender and Residence, 2011-12

T/R/U	Religion	Technical Education					
		Person		Male		Female	
		No Technical Education	Have Technical Education	No Technical Education	Have Technical Education	No Technical Education	Have Technical Education
Total	Hindu	97.3	2.7	96.2	3.8	98.5	1.5
	Muslim	98.7	1.3	98.0	2.0	99.3	0.7
	Christian	93.9	6.1	93.1	6.9	94.7	5.3
	Sikh	97.5	2.5	96.7	3.3	98.4	1.6
	Others	96.0	4.0	94.3	5.7	97.8	2.3
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>
Rural	Hindu	98.8	1.2	98.2	1.8	99.5	0.5
	Muslim	99.4	0.6	99.0	1.0	99.7	0.3
	Christian	96.0	4.0	95.7	4.4	96.4	3.6
	Sikh	98.7	1.3	98.4	1.7	99.1	0.9
	Others	98.8	1.2	97.9	2.2	99.7	0.3
	<b>Total Rural</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Urban	Hindu	93.6	6.4	91.4	8.6	96.0	4.0
	Muslim	97.5	2.5	96.4	3.6	98.7	1.3
	Christian	90.4	9.6	88.8	11.2	91.9	8.1
	Sikh	94.2	5.8	92.1	7.9	96.4	3.6
	Others	92.6	7.4	90.0	10.0	95.4	4.6
	<b>Total Urban</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>

Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12

### Appendix VI

**Statement indicating Religion-wise distribution of Labour Force by acquisition of Vocational Training, Gender, and Residence, 2011-12**

/R/U	Religion	Vocational Training								
		Person			Male			Female		
		Formal Training	Non-Formal Training	No Training	Formal Training	Non-Formal Training	No Training	Formal Training	Non-Formal Training	No Training
Total	Hindu	3.0	8.1	88.9	3.7	11.2	85.1	2.2	4.9	92.9
	Muslim	2.3	9.7	88.1	3.1	14.1	82.8	1.4	5.2	93.4
	Christian	7.3	7.6	85.1	7.4	10.1	82.5	7.2	5.3	87.5
	Sikh	4.2	28.2	67.6	4.4	36.9	58.7	4.0	18.9	77.1
	Others	5.7	4.3	90.0	6.6	6.6	86.8	4.7	1.9	93.4
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>88.4</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>92.6</b>
Rural	Hindu	1.7	7.9	90.4	2.3	10.6	87.1	1.1	5.2	93.7
	Muslim	1.5	8.5	90.0	2.1	11.5	86.4	1.0	5.5	93.5
	Christian	5.5	6.8	87.8	5.8	8.2	86.0	5.1	5.5	89.4
	Sikh	3.1	30.8	66.1	2.8	40.5	56.7	3.4	20.5	76.1
	Others	3.2	4.2	92.7	4.7	5.3	89.9	1.5	3.0	95.5
	<b>Total Rural</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>89.8</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>93.2</b>
Urban	Hindu	6.0	8.5	85.5	7.1	12.6	80.2	4.8	4.1	91.2
	Muslim	3.4	11.6	85.0	4.6	18.1	77.3	2.1	4.6	93.3
	Christian	10.4	8.9	80.7	10.2	13.3	76.5	10.6	5.0	84.4
	Sikh	7.3	20.9	71.8	8.7	27.1	64.2	5.7	14.4	79.9
	Others	8.7	4.5	86.8	8.9	8.1	83.0	8.4	0.7	90.9
	<b>Total Urban</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>91.2</b>

Source: Computed from Unit Level Data of NSSO 68th Round, Schedule 1.0, Employment and Unemployment, 2011-12