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From ancient days India has traditionally been a skill oriented civilisation. Generations passed on skills for thousands of years, till foreign forces invaded the country. Western influence brought in technology, industrialisation and converted the masses as workforce for their administration system or labour force for their industries. Result is that every child who passes out graduation looks for a job.

Over the last 70 odd years of post independence era, country has made tremendous progress in building a model which supplies workforce in the economy. But with country's total population touching whopping 138 crores and more than 50% of this total being youth, the system has not able to match with providing opportunities to the youth force.

Also last few decades, have brought in recessionary trends in the economy due to global slumps. Be it energy crisis in 1980's to 2003, Food Price crisis of 2007-08, Global Financial Crisis of 2007-08 which started with excessive risk taking by banks, subprime mortgage lending and bursting of US Housing bubble, Followed by European Debt Crisis, and now the Covid-19 depression. Many symptoms of recessionary trends are already visible in globe markets in the form of temporary food shortages, spiralling prices and disruptions in many markets.

Following are a few areas where the trouble can be seen coming up due to the covid

situation in our country and the nation should be geared up to face the challenge.

1. Food Crisis

Agricultural industry is one which mainly depends on unskilled seasonal labour force. Hitherto this was in chronic shortage and people found it difficult to get the hands. With the Covid, the migrant population of youth and women have returned to their places and are a huge load on the rural economy.

Efforts should be made to immediately identify the skillsets of the rural inhabitants and necessary support system should be built in the financial system to provide work to these. Underutilised and unutilised land in rural areas should be put to use through measures like Contract Farming, or Cooperative Farming. Existing government schemes like MGNREGA can be tried here. More start-ups are required in food processing industry to augment food shortages.

2. Manufacturing

With the industries, factories and other work forces having remained shut due to lockdowns have taken a hard beating. With disrupted supplies, exodus of migrant workers, disruption of services due to defaults have driven many of hitherto lucrative industries into NPAs.

Urgent efforts are required to supplement these industries with additional efficient financial and logistic management skills to make these industries to bounce back without further delay.

3. Financial Markets

With the everfalling global oil prices in

the global scene and liquidity crunch in regional level has battered economic scenarios in many countries.

Banks are hesitating to provide for working capital needs of economy out of scare of NPAs. This has put increasing load on financial skill needs. Since there needs to be a upgraded version of financial skills to manage the changed scenario, huge opportunities lie for financial skill development industry.

4. GLAM Sector

Most important but unreported impact is on GLAM sector (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) which supports Arts, Entertainment and Sports. As professionals from these segments don't get any direct support from any of the government systems, Alternate skilling for these is urgent need.

5. Publishing

With reduced buffer ability to buy and read, publishing industry has severe impact. However in the interest of society, this sector needs to be resurrected. Upskilling of people to manage cost reduction through technological intervention is an opportunity.

6. Retail

Lockdowns and economic scare has reduced footfalls in retail industry. This industry provides for major job opportunities for young marketers. Digital & direct sales are on the increase impacting this sector.

7. Restaurant

Hygiene, Social distancing has severely impacted the restaurant sector.

8. Science and Technology

Remote operations, working from homes have expanded internet based services market. Since internet usage has been thrust on people, it has opened up more opportunities. It is interesting more and more coding programs been administered to youngsters.

9. Tourism

Travel restrictions have restricted this industry badly. Since this is highly lucrative and opportunities galore exists in India under this sector, vocational training is an opportunity.

10. Event Management

This is worst hit sector, due to cancellations of events, programs and conferences and other international events.

Effectively to contain the evils of the Covid 19 impact and its continued devastation, all the following three opportunities need to be explored to build confidence in the minds of youth

- a. Re-skilling: providing one or two minimum alternative skills to every youth in schools & colleges
- b. Upskilling: Provide advanced exposure in the existing mode for sustainability among currently employed
- c. New Skilling : to provide opportunities to adapt in changed circumstances.

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