Sattva Knowledge Institute SKI perspective

ENABLING CAREER GUIDANCE AND MENTORSHIP FOR SMOOTH SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION

April 2024

Acknowledgements

Authors

Dr Shweta Gaur, Anantha Narayan, Siddharth Rout, Harshita Kumari and **Sarayu Mathur**.

Technical Review

Rathish Balakrishnan

Contributors

Mr Shubham Gupta
Innovation Lead, NITI AYOG and AIM (Atal Innovation Mission)

Mr Divakar Sankhla
Co-founder & Lead, Growth and Strategic Partnerships, Alohomora Education Foundation

Ms Parinita Jain
Co-Founder and Lead of Programme and Impact, Alohomora Education Foundation

Ms Arundhuti Gupta
Founder & CEO, Mentor Together

Ms Pavithra K L
Associate Director - Direct Impact Programme, Dream A Dream

Ms Shubhra Gupta
VP - Ecosystem Engagement and System Adoption, Medha

Ms Purva Parwani
COO, Claylab Education Foundation

Ms Swati Mohan
Director - Programmes, Antarang Foundation

Mr Surendra Surwade
Manager - Youth Development and Partnerships, Antarang Foundation

Ms Shivali Abrol
Mentorship Programme Manager, Freedom Employability Academy

Mr Ayush Bansal
Founder & CEO, iDreamCareer.com

Disclaimer

About Sattva Knowledge Institute

Sattva Knowledge Institute (SKI), established in 2022, is our official knowledge platform at **Sattva**. The **SKI** platform aims to guide investment decisions for impact, shedding light on urgent problems and high potential solutions, so that stakeholders can build greater awareness and a bias towards concerted action. Our focus is on offering solutions over symptoms, carefully curating strong evidence-based research, and engaging decision-makers actively with our insights. Overall, **SKI** aims to shift intent and action toward greater impact by influencing leaders with knowledge. All of our content proactively leverages the capabilities, experience and proprietary data from across **Sattva**.

Design: **Usha Sondhi Kundu**; *cognitive.designs@gmail.com*

CONTENTS

Abbreviations

CG&M	:	Career Guidance and Mentorship
NEP 2020	:	National Education Policy 2020
UN	:	United Nations
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goals
UDISE+	:	Unified District Information System For Education Plus
WEF	:	World Economic Forum
NASSCOM	:	National Association of Software and Service Companies
STEM	:	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
DTE	:	Directorate of Training & Employment
SANKALP	:	Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion
LMIS	:	Labour Market Information System
TVET	:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

The integration of vocational and technical training within the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a paradigm shift, emphasising the role of teachers as career counsellors and mentors, aiming to reflect 21st-century ideals in education.

Yet, a persistent gap exists between the education system and the reality of employability, with the job landscape undergoing dramatic shifts in recent decades. India is on the brink of a significant transformation, especially in the fields of finance, technology, and telecommunications, with projections of a workforce shortage of 85.2 million skilled professionals in these key sectors by 2030.

Approximately 93% of India's youth are aware of only seven career streams out of nearly 250 available in the Indian job market. A smooth school-to-work transition is being recognised as a critical challenge facing India's education system today. In response to this concern, Career Guidance and Mentorship (CG&M) programmes emerge as a vital solution. The significance of career guidance is underscored by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and UN Education 4.0, aligning it with the contemporary educational discourse.

This perspective provides a deep dive into the world of Career Guidance and Mentorship (CG&M) in India. The initial sections provide an in-depth exploration of the world of career guidance and mentorship, tracing its historical roots and examining its status quo in India. The subsequent sections shed light on the challenges in the field of career guidance and mentorship and the organisations and initiatives that are making significant strides in tackling those challenges. We also explore key differentiating factors of successful scalable solutions that have overcome these challenges to provide a comprehensive, end-to-end, technology-oriented career guidance and mentorship solution. These solutions focus on different stakeholders at various levels, aiming to create mindset shifts, build collaborations, and ensure the use of technology in programming.

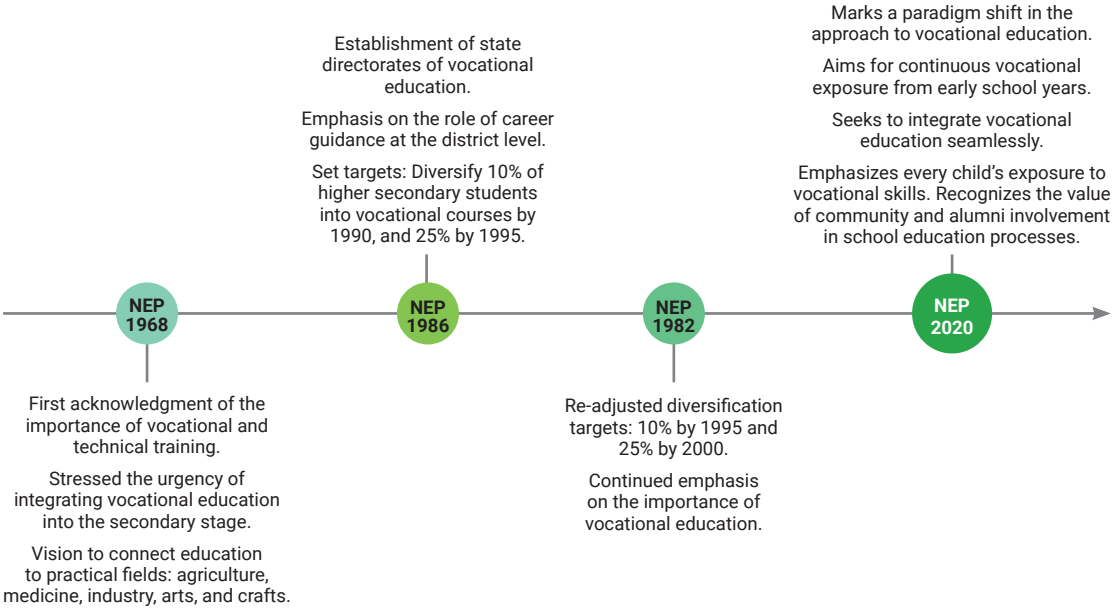
Effective solutions emphasise the '4AQ' principles–Accessibility, Affordability, Availability, and Awareness, all underpinned by Quality, creating a collaborative ecosystem with innovative solutions, and government initiatives that hold the potential to reshape career guidance in India. This calls for increased investment in establishing an open network for Career Guidance and Mentorship (CG&M). An open network holds the promise of addressing prevailing challenges associated with the rural-urban gap and gender stereotypes in career choices.

Such a network would facilitate enhanced outreach and collaboration among stakeholders, enabling the enrichment of content and facilitating the discovery of local career opportunities for students. Moreover, it would bridge the gap between remote/rural students and mentors/professionals across diverse fields, fostering the sharing and integration of hyperlocal career insights, particularly beneficial for girls. These initiatives, coupled with deliberate conversations on reshaping parental and educator roles, are pivotal in equipping the workforce with robust foundational skills and a clear pathway towards future careers.

Overview: Policy and Landscape of Career Guidance and Mentorship

The concept of vocational and technical training first gained formal acknowledgement in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 1968, which recognised the need to link education with the demands of a developing economy.[1] This emphasis on vocational education was further solidified by subsequent policies. By 1986, the vision had evolved with the establishment of state directorates for vocational education, and specific targets for diversification.

Figure 1: Timeline view of policy outline for career guidance and mentorship



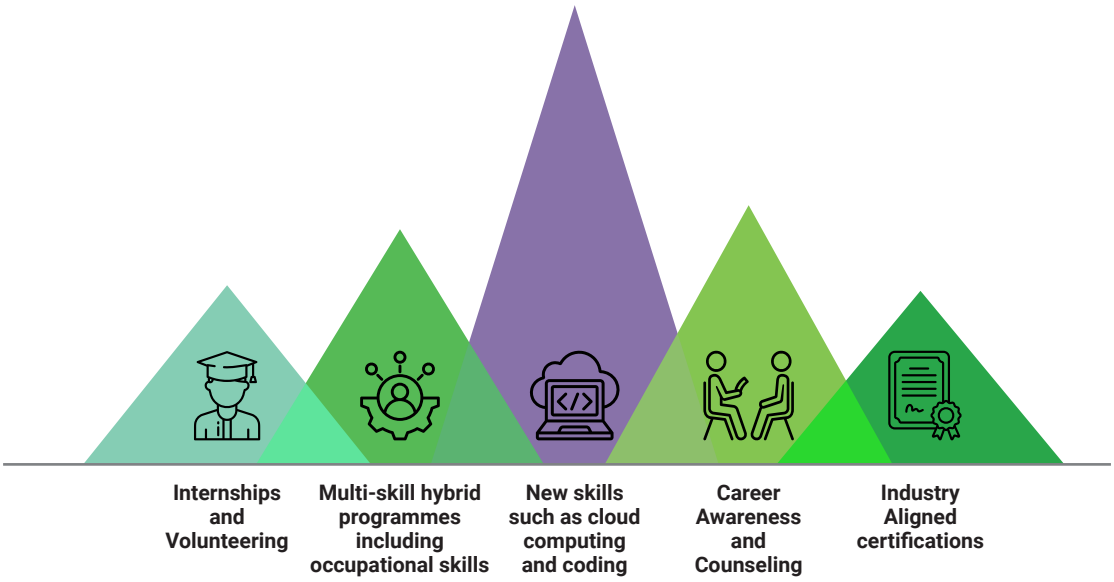
The real paradigm shift came with NEP 2020, which emphasised training teachers to become career counsellors and mentors.[2] The fundamental premise of the NEP 2020 is to broaden the scope of education and align it with modern ideas of the 21st century. In this endeavour, teachers act as the driving force, guiding students according to their talents and choices.

The job landscape has evolved dramatically, with many hitherto unheard-of roles emerging in the past decade. **It is likely that students entering primary school today will eventually pursue careers that have yet to be conceived**.[4] However, despite the emphasis on vocational education, there remains a persistent gap between the education system and real-world employability. While rapidly changing industry requirements can be met with CG&M interventions at the school level, career guidance is glaringly insufficient in India.

Keeping in view the growing demand for a skilled workforce, and at the same time, unemployability of the youth of India, the UN Education 4.0 and the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020, both have given importance to the emerging needs of school students.[2,3] Education 4.0 emphasises holistic learning, life skills, critical thinking, and

vocational training. It also stresses the role of the private sector in providing career guidance and informed resources for students and the industry.

Figure 2: Private sector engagement as per UN Education 4.0

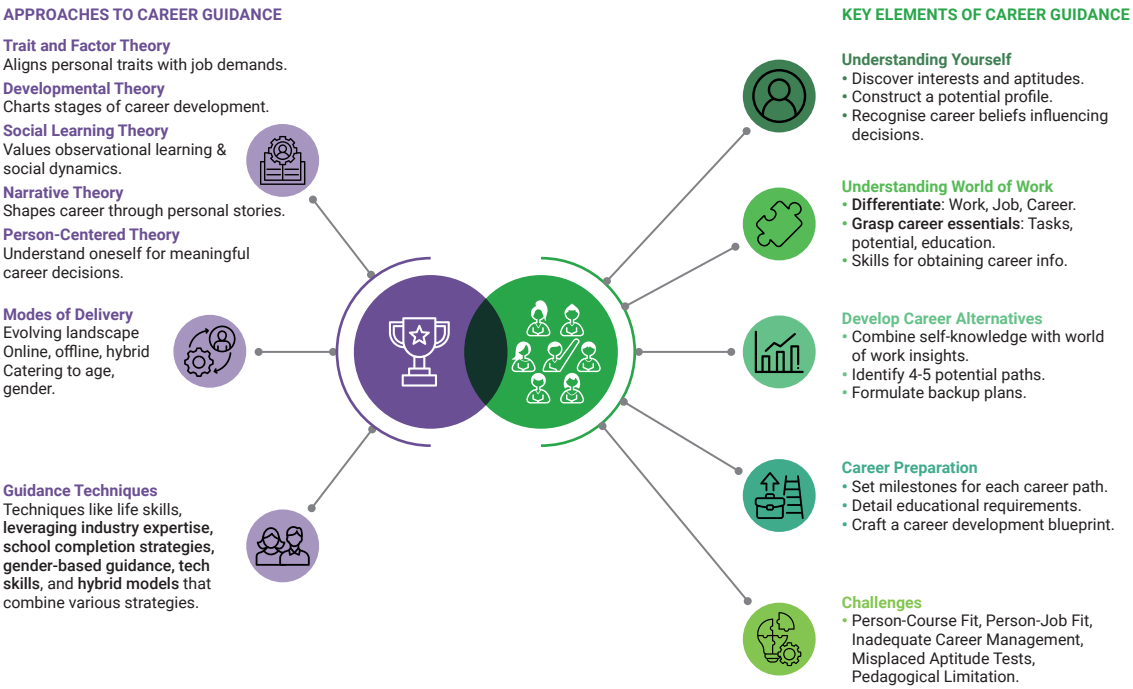


NEP 2020 aims for holistic development, a lighter curriculum, and a smooth school-to-work transition. According to reports from the Ministry of Education and the 2019 EY Report on K12 Education and KPMG market report on K12 education, the market size for career assessment and guidance is currently estimated to be over ₹5,000 crores in India and continuously growing. India's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aligns with the need for a developmental approach to career guidance. Private sector engagement also indicates that CG&M can contribute to quality education, economic growth, and strong institutions, particularly for economically disadvantaged adolescents.

India is on the brink of a significant transformation in the world of school-to-work transition, with several new fields like finance, technology, and telecommunications emerging as new sectors, providing job growth. **However, a workforce shortage of 85.2 million skilled professionals is projected in these key sectors by 2030**.[5] Skilling the youth for the future of work will need not only awareness, but also clear guidance to reach the goal.

The core elements of career guidance involve a thorough understanding of oneself, the nuances of the workplace, the formulation of potential career alternatives, and meticulous preparation for future vocational paths. A deep-dive into the CG&M ecosystem reveals a multifaceted landscape, composed of theoretical foundations, modes of delivery, essential approaches, and pragmatic techniques, juxtaposed with critical phases of career development. Theories like Trait and Factor, Developmental, Social Learning, Narrative, and Person-centred all provide a conceptual bedrock that underpins the practice of career guidance, tailoring strategies to align personal attributes with vocational demands, map career trajectories, and harness the power of personal narratives in shaping career paths.

Figure 3: Landscape of career guidance and mentorship



The evolving modes of delivery – online, offline, and hybrid – reflect the adaptability of the career guidance process, ensuring inclusivity across the spectrum of age, gender, and accessibility. Techniques employed span life skills, leveraging industry expertise, school completion strategies, and gender-based guidance – acknowledging the nuances that technology and hybrid models bring to the fore.

Current Status Quo

India's educational sector is grappling with alarming dropout rates. Most acute instances occur at the higher secondary level (Grades 11-12) and secondary level (Grades 9-10), where rates stand at 22% and 12.6% respectively. This is in stark contrast to the lower dropout rates observed at the upper primary (Grades 6-8) and primary (Grades 1-5) levels, which are 3% and 1.5% respectively.[6]

Although transition rates from primary to upper primary are high, with boys at 93% and girls at slightly higher 93.4%, a significant decline is observed in the transition from secondary to higher secondary education, with boys at 77.6% and girls at 79.3%.[6] Factors contributing to these dropout rates extend beyond socio-economic challenges, to include the absence of adequate counselling, outdated curricular structures, and a need for educators to adopt more contemporary pedagogical and technological training methods.

> *"In the face of rigorous academic expectations and the absence of guiding mentors, numerous students find themselves overwhelmed…. issues such as bullying and continuous academic failures further compound the dropout crisis."*
>
> — **Surendra** and **Swati**, Antarang Foundation

93% of students in India recognise only seven out of nearly 250 unique career paths – spanning 40 domains and including 5,000 job roles.[7] This lack of knowledge narrows their career ambitions, which can lead to restricted aspiration, disinterest in education and eventual dropping out. Retention of students beyond Grade 8 is challenging, because many students are unaware of the range of available career opportunities.

> *"The convergence of the digital divide and restricted career awareness nudges students into informal jobs, which have exploitative environments and limited upward mobility. To counteract this, career counselling and mentorship initiatives can act as bridges, guiding students effectively within the informal sector, transitioning them to formal roles, or fostering entrepreneurial avenues."*
>
> — **Pavithra K L**, Dream a Dream

The pandemic aggravated digital inequality in India, affecting about 24.7 crore students due to school closures, with underprivileged students suffering the most. This led to less-informed career decisions and a shift to exploitative informal work.[8]

Korn Ferry predicts a shortage of 85.2 million workers in crucial sectors like finance, technology, media, and telecommunications by 2030.[9] At the same time, there is an expected surplus of 245.3 million skilled workers by 2030. This talent misalignment could potentially lead to an annual revenue loss of up to $4.2 trillion for India.[10]

Increasing Divide between Education and Employment

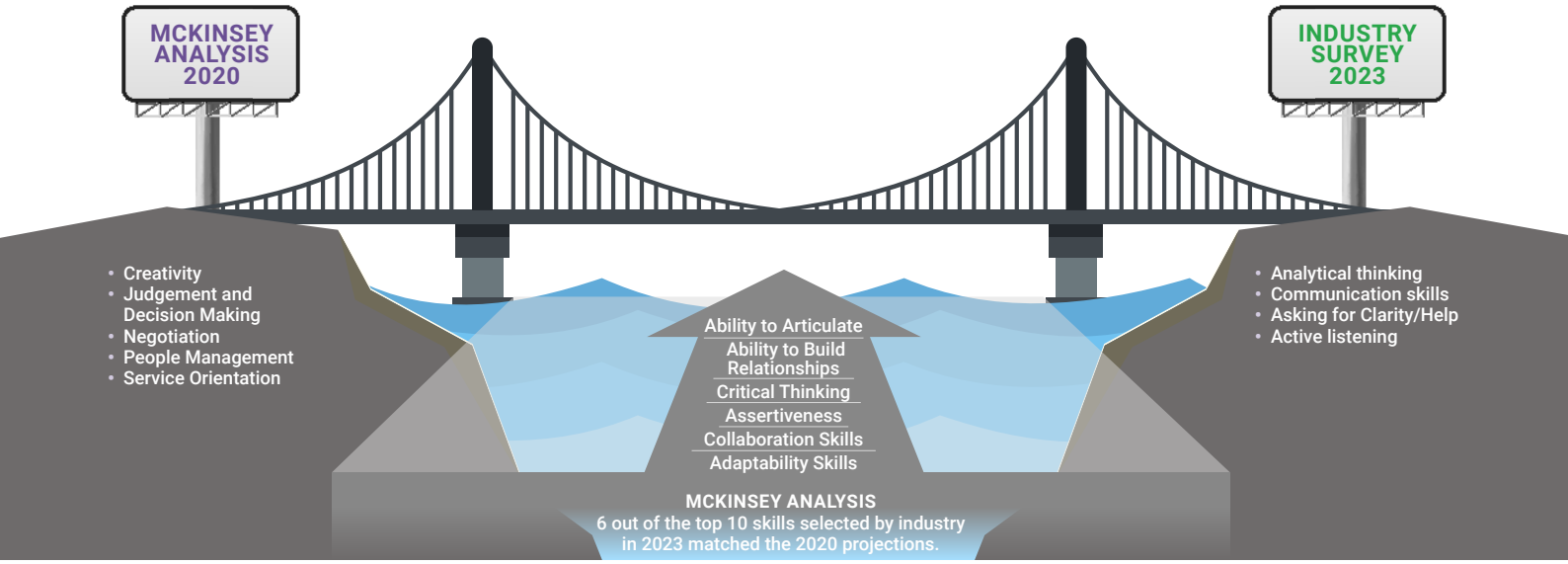
Existing programmes exhibit a disproportionate emphasis on urban settings and formal employment sectors, diminishing their applicability for students, particularly female students who are interested in local job prospects. A pronounced issue arises from the dearth of indigenous mentors capable of empathising with students' backgrounds and aspirations, impeding the efficacy of mentorship endeavours.

> *Today, the digital infrastructure in the country (schools, smartphones with students and internet kiosks) enables students to access career counselling, even in remote areas. Technology has enabled the offering of personalised, contextual guidance in vernacular languages, thus enhancing counselling effectiveness and reach.*
>
> — **Ayush Bansal**, Founder, I Dream Careers

Even urban youth, despite having better resources, are confronted with challenges arising from a lack of apt career guidance, leading to misaligned aspirations and skills.

Over the past five years, six out of every ten skills prioritised by the industry have remained consistent.[11,12] Yet, educational institutions have been slow to adapt their curricula and teaching methods to align with the evolving needs of the industry. A noticeable disparity exists between the skills and training that schools impart to students and the actual demands of the industry. This incongruence has significant implications, resulting in India's most talented individuals facing unemployment due to a deficiency in fundamental life skills and agency-building capabilities.

Figure 4: The skills mismatch: Academic alignment vs. Industry demands



Qualification-Employability Gap

Merely 10-15% of the annual influx of graduates and postgraduates meet the industry's employability standards.[13] Research from CRISIL Foundation and NASSCOM reveals a widening gulf between academic qualifications and actual employability.

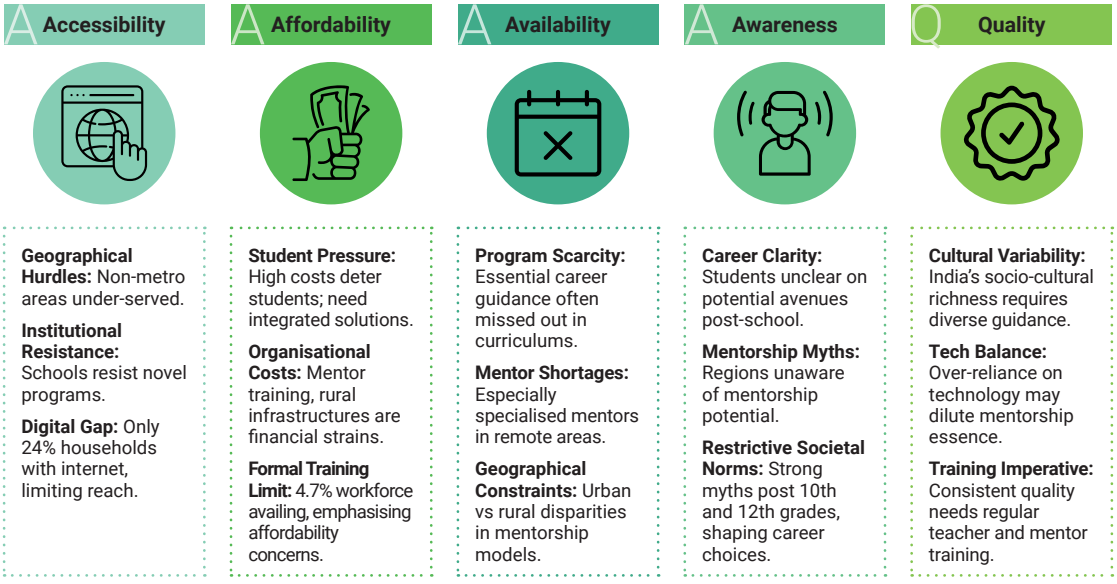
Dire Need for Effective Career Guidance

In stark contrast to the average student-to-counsellor ratio of 1:492 in the US, India's stands at a dismal 1:3,000,000.[5] Career guidance in India is not merely about making informed decisions; it is about empowerment. Whether it is counsellors, educators, mentors, or coaches, each plays a crucial role in this journey. However, for India to truly harness its demographic dividend, it must bridge the existing gaps, encourage industry participation, and innovate its career guidance and mentorship programmes. The road ahead demands collaborative efforts, strategic planning, and a renewed focus on ensuring that every student realises their true potential.

> *"By integrating global best practices with India's profound cultural legacy, a CG&M model can be established that is both efficacious and culturally congruent. The capability of programmes extends to reducing dropout rates, steering students to informed career decisions, and significantly bolstering India's socio-economic progression."*
>
> — **Divakar Sankhla** and **Parinita Jain**, Alohomora Education

Challenges

While the discourse on career guidance has advanced since the 1960s, the core goal remains unchanged – equipping India's youth for real-world employment. Addressing the disconnect between education and employment demands a multifaceted approach, combining insightful policy decisions, active industry participation, and innovative career guidance programmes. As India strides forward, an integrated approach to career guidance can not only reshape individual career paths but also propel national progress. However, the journey is riddled with challenges that span across our proposed framework of **'4AQ' – Accessibility, Affordability, Availability, Awareness, and Quality**. This section, through intensive dialogues with pioneering organisations, unpacks the multifaceted issues that distinguish the career guidance ecosystem in India.



Despite the proven benefits of mentorship, only 13.2% of students have access to professional career guidance.[5] A considerable segment of the nation's youth remains bereft of quality career guidance due to geographical and infrastructural barriers, particularly in rural and non-metropolitan areas. This disparity is exacerbated by a hesitance among school leadership towards embracing innovative mentorship initiatives.

> *"While private entities dominate the career guidance scene, the essential service remains out of reach for many. This private and public dichotomy restricts career guidance to a privileged few."*
>
> — **Shubhra Gupta**, Medha

With internet connectivity reaching only 24% of schools, the gap widens, leaving many students deprived of digital resources necessary for modern career guidance.[6] While initiatives like the DESH Stack signal progress, 85% of schools lack vocational courses, pointing to a substantial gap in providing practical, career-oriented education.

The cost of private career guidance varies significantly, ranging from ₹5,000 to ₹50,000 per programme.[14] This variability underscores the economic disparities that exist, particularly affecting rural areas where affordable options are scant.

The establishment of mentorship infrastructure in less accessible areas requires substantial financial investment, creating a substantial hurdle for initiatives in bridging the urban-rural gap. Organisations striving to scale mentorship programmes face considerable economic pressures, from the expense of training mentors, to the creation of content. While schemes like the grant structure for Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) offer a model for reducing entry barriers in educational institutions, their sustainability hinges on continuous government and external support.

> *"Mentors are connected with all ATL schools. They provide guidance to the students and ignite the desire to be problem-solvers and entrepreneurs. It isn't 100%, but mostly rural school students bring solutions to problems like clean drinking water or health-related issues, whereas urban school children solve traffic or technology-related issues. ATL, with the help of infrastructure and guidance, are creating problem solvers for the future."*
>
> — **Shubham Gupta**, ATL

Insufficient availability of career guidance programmes, highlighted by the mere 13% of schools offering dedicated career guidance.[15] Furthermore, logistical issues such as timetable constraints restrict the integration of career guidance into regular school schedules, underscoring the systemic oversight of its importance.

The deficit of qualified mentors is stark, with a national average ratio of students to qualified mentors standing at 1:3,000,000.[5] The scarcity of specialised mentors and geographical limitations widen this gap, making personal and relevant mentorship the exception rather than the norm.

The sustainability of mentorship programmes is jeopardised by an over-reliance on volunteer mentors, with a 30% annual attrition rate disrupting continuity.[16] This model, while cost-effective, introduces an element of unpredictability and instability to the mentorship structure. Expanding mentorship models to meet the diverse needs of different regions, especially rural India, presents unique cultural, logistical, and infrastructural challenges. Many organisations in the space struggle with scalability in attempting to cater to varied demographics. Additionally, the heavy reliance on external funding for programmes raises concerns about the sustainability and uniformity of access across regions.

50% of Indian students are unsure about their career path after Grade 10, with 72% of graduates feeling inadequately prepared for the job market.[15] The lack of diverse career options within the academic curriculum contributes to this uncertainty. Stories like that of Ravinder Bishnoi, who transitioned from an ATL student to a startup founder[16], demonstrate the transformative impact mentorship can have on individual career trajectories, yet its potential remains largely untapped due to prevailing societal ignorance.

The career aspirations of 60% of students are limited to five traditional professions, influenced by societal stereotypes and a narrow exposure to the vast array of career possibilities.[17] Career decision-making process post the 10th and 12th grades are fraught with myths and parental misconceptions, emphasising the need for accurate career insights. 86.8% of the 5,225 students surveyed by I Dream Careers reported to be trusting their parents, teachers, friends and relatives for career guidance.[18] Societal norms often restrict youth, highlighting the urgency to challenge these conventions and foster a more inclusive understanding of career guidance. Limited interaction with industry professionals furthers this disconnect, necessitating more inclusive and broad-based engagement to widen students' career horizons.

> *"Awareness is the foundation of effective career guidance, helping students understand job realities and industry nuances. Through experiential learning and a supportive network, we nurture this awareness for a successful transition to the workforce."*
>
> — **Divakar Sankhla**, Alohomora Education

Government initiatives like SANKALP (Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion) are vital, yet their reach is limited. It underscores the need for enhanced adoption of platforms like the LMIS and integration of career guidance in educational frameworks.

With 65.5% of the population residing in rural areas, there is a significant quality gap in career guidance services. The presence of 22 official languages and a vast array of cultural norms in India necessitates a highly tailored approach. However, there is limited research on specific guidance methodologies catering to diverse populations.

SANKALP aims to train 1 million youths through apprenticeships by 2026, yet early evaluations have raised concerns about the focus on quantity over quality of mentorship.[19]

As per India SKills Report 2021, only 45.9% of graduates are deemed employable due to skill gaps. This amplifies the urgency for accessible and affordable mentorship and career guidance programmes. NASSCOM (2021) reports that only 23% of industries actively collaborate with educational institutions, with 60% of student internship requests rejected by companies, highlighting the lack of strong industry-education linkages.[20]

Mentor Together's impressive 92% graduation rate and 83% college enrollment for mentored students highlight the potential of structured mentorship. The two pronged approach of mentoring for Life skills and Work Skills, takes a holistic approach to enabling young adolescents make informed choices and pursue their desired careers. Still, lack of standardised life skills assessment tools is a big bottleneck. Despite efforts of Medha, Mentor Together, and Claylab, which have made strides in experiential learning and emotional well-being metrics, the challenge of seamlessly integrating transferable skills into the educational framework remains. Medha's initiative, for instance, has led to a commendable 74% increase in students pursuing higher education, yet the broader integration of transferable skills assessment within schools is still lacking.

A Deepdive into the Solution Ecosystem

The solution landscape of career guidance and mentorship in India is marked by many organisations that are working to create a meaningful impact in the space.

Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) achieved a remarkable milestone with the establishment of 10,000 ATLs, distributed evenly between government and private schools, and between rural (6,000) and urban (4,000) areas, indicating a strategic approach to democratise educational innovation and mentorship in India. This initiative, buoyed by ₹20 lakh grant per school over five years, has spurred success stories of students transitioning seamlessly from education to entrepreneurship, particularly in aspirational districts targeting socio-economically underdeveloped zones.

The Mentor-Mentee Connect Programme, with its 12,000 industry-vetted mentors, is a testament to the robust engagement with the professional world, offering students a window into industry practices through immersive experiences like industrial visits. These labs have become crucibles of innovation, enriching mentorship with industry interactions and integrating curricula in 50 schools to merge theoretical knowledge with practical application. The ambition to scale up, with plans to establish 60,000 more ATLs, echoes the global recognition of the initiative's value, with countries like Australia and UAE expressing interest in emulating this model.

Claylab's focus on economically disadvantaged high schoolers in five major Indian cities, connecting with 700 students across 20 schools through an extensive mentor network spanning 280 professions, showcases an affordable, quality-driven approach. Their 'Super Mentors' strategy and technology-driven feedback mechanisms are innovative leaps toward enhancing mentorship quality. With institutions proactively seeking collaborations, Claylab's impact is tangible, aiming for 80% of students to engage in internships by Grade 11, despite the hurdles of scalability. Early exposure to career guidance significantly bolsters student performance and direction, illuminating the path for a successful school-to-work transition.

The ethos of Dream a Dream (DaD), with its 'Holding Space' methodology, emphasises emotional empowerment and life skills, offering quality guidance at no extra cost. Their scalable, localised curriculum requires additional resources for effective expansion, while maintaining a continuous connection with students even after they join the workforce.

Mentor Together, with its innovative blend of in-person and digital platforms like 'Mentor to Go,' extends comprehensive career guidance, impacting 4,000 mentees with the support of over 700 mentors. This initiative's relationship framework and technology integration address the challenge of career guidance availability, particularly in non-tier-one regions.

Medha revolutionises career guidance by embedding its programme within the public education system, emphasising experiential learning and bridging skill gaps. From its inception with 150 students in Lucknow, Medha has expanded to 147 campuses, with the vision of fortifying 166 polytechnics in Uttar Pradesh, highlighting the scalability and the potential for state partnerships to enhance educational outcomes.

Alohomora Education, through their five-step framework already implemented in Delhi and Jhajjar, Haryana, has reached over 300,000 students, democratising career exploration and facilitating interest-aligned career decisions. With plans for AI integration and collaborations, Alohomora Education paves the way for a future where high school teachers are instrumental in guiding students through career decisions.

In the heart of India's evolving educational landscape, these case studies not only offer hope but also concrete pathways for the nation's school-to-work transition, showcasing a model ripe for global adaptation.

Mentor Together

Solution

- Targets young people, especially those facing economic disadvantages.
- Offers both in-person and digital mentorship models.
- In-person model is for high school students.
- Digital model, "Mentor to Go", is for college students.

Unique Features

Relationship Framework: Combination of relational and goal-focused approaches.

Risk Index: Identifies students most in need of mentoring.

Technology Interventions

Digital platform: 'Mentor to Go'

- Features include data collection, screening, training, matching, and mentoring activities.
- Built in-house, user-friendly, replicates the mentorship experience online.

Scalability and Resources to Scale

Rural Reach: 'Mentor to Go' reached 30,000 mentees, with two-thirds from outside tier-one cities.

Increasing Mentor Supply: The digital platform increased the mentor base from hundreds to 15,000.

KPI's for Success of Programme

- Successfully created and scaled mentoring programme.
- Addresses gaps in career guidance for economically disadvantaged youth.
- Effective even with challenges of scalability, especially at the school level.

Future Plans

- Tapping into large educational institutions and employers for mentor supply.
- Make technology more widely accessible.
- Potential to open the platform for other organisations.
- Address challenges at the school level.
- Ensure security, especially for minors.

Medha

Solution

- Integration within the public education system.
- Industry-agnostic skill training.
- Emphasis on experiential learning.

Unique Features

Addressing skill deficit: Improving soft skills, communication, etc.

Local employer engagement: Building relations with local employers for internships.

Overcoming social barriers: Focus on young women and disadvantaged groups.

Alumni networks for mentorship: Filling the 'network gap' especially for disadvantaged communities.

Technology Interventions

- Digital advancement boot camps for tech literacy.
- Challenges faced during pandemic highlighted limitations in technology access for certain groups, especially young women.

Scalability and Resources to Scale

Modular boot camps: Scalable based on time and resources.

State partnerships: Integration into existing systems.

KPI's for Success of Programme

Life Skills: Confidence, communication, teamwork.

Employability: CV writing, interview preparedness, computer literacy.

Employment: Starting salary and career progression.

Future Plans

- Overcoming social and cultural barriers.
- Engaging employers for valuable internships.
- Holistic career guidance that includes one-on-one counselling, mentoring, and community-building.
- Balancing depth and breadth in the programme.
- Gender-specific challenges: Engaging parents, especially of young women, to be receptive to educational and career needs.
- Leveraging industry bodies for internships and make mentorship hyper-localised.

Claylab

Solution

1-1 mentorship model focusing on:

- Career awareness
- Employability skills
- Instilling values
- Professional exposure

Unique Features

- Meticulous mentor selection and progression process.
- Mentors capacitated with weekly lesson strategies.
- Backed by 'Super Mentors'.
- Functions as a predominantly volunteer-driven entity.

Technology Interventions

- Transitioned from Google forms to a specialised portal for feedback from mentors and mentees after every session.

Scalability and Resources to Scale

- Mentors spread across 42 global cities.
- Module-centric impact evaluation framework for customising the programme per demographic.

KPI's for Success of Programme

- Proactive outreach from schools and organisations wanting to collaborate.
- Feedback from mentor-mentee interactions and calibre of tasks achieved by mentees.
- Scope transcends mere awareness to end-to-end guidance including real-world skills and reflective thinking.

Future Plans

- Ensure 80% students undergo at least one internship before Grade 11 - Extend holistic support from initial awareness to comprehensive guidance and assistance.

Alohomora Education

Solution

- Bridge the gap for underprivileged students in school-to-work transition.
- Explore career options via videos, hands-on projects.
- Core elements include teacher manual, structured training plans, a tech portal, career cards, and student worksheets.

Unique Features

- Career Projects
- Five-Step Framework
- Integration with Life Skills
- Process over Product
- Teacher-Centric Approach
- Holistic Curriculum
- Community Integration

Technology Interventions

- Open Portal
- QR Codes
- WhatsApp
- Website
- Student-Facing Resources

Scalability and Resources to Scale

- Government collaborations
- Tailored content to regional contexts
- Investment in tech tools
- Teachers trained as programme ambassadors
- Facilitator model for 12th-Grade students
- Partnerships with government, teacher nominations, targeting aspirational districts.

KPI's for Success of Programme

- Infrastructure implementation
- Permissions for large-scale pilots
- Balance between life skills and career guidance
- Accessibility in rural areas
- Time constraints
- Equipping educators with necessary and consistent training.

Future Plans

- Dedicated platform section for educators.
- Explore AI's role in learning.
- Strengthen ties with government and potential partners like Piramal Foundation.

Dream a Dream

Solution

- Reimagining the education system for young individuals, particularly from challenging backgrounds, by preparing them for real-world challenges.
- Their involvement varies from the happiness curriculum in Delhi to localised programmes like the Johar curriculum and Patiya Char.
- They have initiatives such as the director part programme, after-classic programme, and driving centre programme focusing on life skills through sports and creativity.

Unique Features

- Strong emphasis on life skills with 45-minute sessions.
- Engagement with all education stakeholders.
- Evolution based on feedback.

Technology Interventions

- Use of digital tools in operations or training.

Scalability and Resources to Scale

- Their adaptable localised curriculum suggests scalability.
- For further growth, they'd need resources for moulding curriculum to new areas, training staff, and establishing new collaborations.

KPI's for Success of Programme

Not explicitly mentioned. Needs more research.

Future Plans

- Pivoting towards influencing whole school systems beyond after-school programmes.
- Fine-tuning programmes for the dynamic needs of their target population.
- Reforming existing systems for a brighter future.

Antarang Foundation

Solution

- Focuses on creating replicable solutions to bridge the gap between school and work (StW). They aim to collate knowledge and make it available to various stakeholders in the sector.

Unique Features

In-school Model: Focus on students from Grades 9 to 12 in public schools catering to vulnerable demographics.

Stakeholder Engagement: Engaging parents and training teachers.

Facilitator Training and Selection: Graduates from the schools they work with are selected and trained as facilitators. They are also screened for student protection.

Technology Interventions

- Uses platforms like WhatsApp to provide additional support to students, ensuring access to resources outside classroom hours.

Scalability and Resources to Scale

Scalability is a challenge: Requires managing balance between quality and quantity. Engaging with government stakeholders is crucial. Operational challenges include hiring the right facilitators and maintaining programme integrity.

KPI's for Success of Programme

Not explicitly mentioned. Needs more research.

Future Plans

Government Engagement: Gain buy-in from government agencies and align with state mandates.

Demographic Specific Challenges: Address unique challenges in different demographics, including the lack of aspirational job opportunities in certain states.

Industry Engagement: Engage industries for job vacancies and support for students.

Vision for the Future: Enabling all youth, especially the vulnerable, to pursue careers of their choice aligned with their interests, attributes, and societal realities.

Atal Tinkering Labs

Solution

Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL): ATLs, initiated to equip students with 21st-century skills, offer platforms for tinkering, challenging, and competing, effectively bridging the school-to-work transition. Established across 10,000 locations, with a balanced distribution between government and private schools and urban and rural areas, they represent a step forward in modernising India's educational approach.

Unique Features

Integration with Mainstream Curriculum: ATLs have begun piloting the integration of their curriculum with regular school syllabi, promoting practical learning.

ATL IIC Linkage: This linkage ensures that Innovation Councils in AICTE universities mentor ATL labs, adding another layer of expertise and guidance.

Mentor Menti Connect Programme: A system where experienced professionals guide students on industry needs, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

Technology Interventions

Digital Prototypes: Special emphasis is being placed on digital prototyping, especially for rural students, addressing accessibility issues.

Digital Feedback Mechanisms: Tools like word clouds are considered for analysing student feedback and refining the approach.

Scalability and Resources to Scale

- Having already achieved the target of setting up 10,000 ATLs, the vision is to further expand, with proposals submitted for the establishment of 60,000 more labs.This strategy of having one ATL for every three schools hints at the envisioned omnipresence of these labs in India's educational landscape.

KPI's for Success of Programme

Student Participation in Competitions: With 86 of the top 100 schools in recent competitions being ATLs, their effectiveness is clear.

Alumni Network: A system is being established to track the journey and success of ATL beneficiaries, offering real-time data on programme impact.

Feedback Analysis: Continuous input from students, mentors, and stakeholders to ensure programme alignment with evolving needs.

Future Plans

International Expansion: ATL has garnered international attention, with proposals from Australia, Dubai, Nepal, and South Africa under consideration.

ATL 2.0: With the foundation laid, the commitment now shifts to refining and elevating the programme, the next iteration being ATL 2.0.

Addressing Aspirational Districts: Special emphasis is on introducing ATLs in districts with historically low educational and socio-economic indicators, further democratising access to quality guidance and resources.

iDreamCareer.com (iDC)

iDreamCareer.com (iDC) is India's largest impact venture in the career guidance space, which is recognised as one of the top 100 EdTech companies in South Asia by Holon IQ.

In the last 12 years, iDC has impacted over 5 million students from government schools, helping them in career & college discovery.

Solution

Comprehensive, end-to-end career guidance solution designed to support students starting from class 9.

The CG&M approach comprises of more than 1047 hours of career curriculum, a tech-enabled doubt-answering chatbot, live counselling sessions, and capacity-building for teachers to act as career counsellors.

Additionally, a project management dashboard supported by a robotics-based monitoring and evaluation platform in vernacular languages to visualise the real-time reach.

Key Objective

To enhance career awareness and college admission rates by systematically delivering information through a tech-enabled dashboard and personalised counselling from skilled professionals.

Unique Features

iDC has a platform for students to log in and access services.

Their distinctive features include:

- Tech-enabled career curriculum and personalised career awareness dashboard
- Evidence-backed intervention with clear & tangible outcome
- Psychometric assessments and career curriculum available in vernacular languages
- Robust monitoring and evaluation indicators
- Comprehensive counselling management system empowering students, counsellors, and project management units
- Deep focus on counselling efficacy via personalised counselling sessions

Technology Interventions

iDC worked on multiple interdisciplinary factors to achieve the Industry benchmark on counselling efficacy while scaling. This includes reworking the impact evaluation method, setting up a Quality Auditing process, tech automation in the student counselling journey, optimising counsellor efficiency, and upskilling programs for counsellors.

Scalability and Resources to Scale

Technology-driven scaling with a deep focus on quality. Quality is enabled by investing in experts in education, technology, and operations for the organisation. A simple technology interface allows students from marginalised backgrounds to access counselling services easily.

Key Performance Indicators

To define program success, iDC uses two key indicators to capture key levers for creating sustainable change from a systemic perspective and understand the impact of their work on students.

1. Positive delta change in the career awareness level of the students.
2. Transition rate of students from grade 10th to 11th and to college/skilling courses post grade 12th.

This enables the redesigning of the counselling efficacy management system, ensuring quality delivery of counselling services.

Future Plans

iDC aims to leverage the digital infrastructure in government schools to provide tech-enabled, low-cost, high-impact career counselling for students.

This approach ensures scaling in large states like Uttar Pradesh and Odisha, where iDC works with 100,000 students. Additionally, iDC is building India's 1st Student Copilot for career discovery that will help scale CG&M to millions of students at economical pricing.

The Way Forward

The journey of Career Guidance and Mentorship in India reinforces the importance of a cohesive strategy to address school-to-work (StW) transitions. While India has made significant strides in this area, the vast demographic advantage, juxtaposed against the challenges of dropout rates, digital divides, and the looming talent conundrum warrants a paradigm shift in our approach to CG&M. **The way forward demands a multi-pronged strategy for innovative approaches using new age technology**.

Acknowledging the existing impediments in the CG&M arena is essential – from the private and public dichotomy restricting career guidance to a privileged few, to the dire need for increased internet connectivity. Equally important is addressing the fiscal constraints that govern the establishment of mentorship infrastructures, particularly in the more secluded rural terrains.

Initiatives must transcend beyond mere establishment to ensure sustainable and quality-driven guidance that can weather the tumults of changing economic climates. The ATL narrative, which has seen a 74% increase in higher education pursuit through experiential learning, must become a common thread woven into the fabric of every educational institution.

We must increase awareness of diverse career possibilities, shattering the traditional career myths that confine aspirations. **This awareness must be cultivated through an ecosystem that promotes understanding of self, nuances of the workforce, and the development of potential career alternatives, emboldened by meticulous preparation for vocational paths**.

As we delve deeper into the landscape of solutions, a collaborative product emerges – a 'Unified CG&M Platform'. This platform could integrate the technological robustness of Mentor Together's 'Mentor to Go', the curriculum depth of Alohomora, the experiential learning facets from Medha, the personalised mentorship approaches of Claylab, and the holistic initiatives of Dream a Dream. Bolstered by state and industry partnerships, this platform could serve as a beacon for CG&M, offering students a comprehensive suite of resources, guidance, and mentorship tailored to their unique needs. Moreover, the adaptive nature of this ecosystem, as exemplified by Atal Tinkering Labs, signifies its readiness to evolve with feedback, ensuring it remains relevant amidst changing landscapes.

Increased investment in establishing an open network for Career Guidance and Mentorship (CG&M) holds the promise of addressing prevailing challenges associated with the rural-urban gap and gender stereotypes in career choices. Such a network would facilitate enhanced outreach and collaboration among stakeholders, enabling the enrichment of content and facilitating the discovery of local career opportunities for students. Moreover, it would bridge the gap between remote/rural students and mentors/professionals across diverse fields, fostering the sharing and integration of hyperlocal career insights, particularly beneficial for girls. These initiatives, coupled with deliberate conversations on reshaping parental and educator roles, are pivotal in equipping the workforce with robust foundational skills and fostering continuous development.

References

1. Ministry of Human Resource Development 1968, 'National Education Policy', Government of India, New Delhi.
2. Ministry of Human Resource Development 2020, 'National Education Policy', Government of India, New Delhi.
3. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2022, 'Education 4.0 India Insight Report', United Nations, UNICEF, New York.
4. World Economic Forum (WEF) 2016, 'The Future of Jobs', World Economic Forum, Cologny.
5. Kundu, S 2021, *Career Guidance Industry Landscape*, iDreamCareer, New Delhi
6. Ministry of Human Resource Development 2022, UDISE+ 2021-22 FLASH STATISTICS, Government of India, New Delhi.
7. Agarwal, S 2020, 'Why is career counselling an urgent need for students today?', Mindler.
8. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Press Release, 2021, COVID-19: Schools for more than 168 million children globally have been completely closed for almost a full year, United Nations, New York.
9. Korn Ferry 2021, *The $8.5 Trillion Talent Shortage*, New York.
10. Sharma, M 2018, 'World to face biggest talent crunch by 2030; India to be only country with manpower surplus', Business Today.
11. Bughin, J, Hazen, E, Lund, S, Dahlström, P, Wiesinger, A, & Subramaniam, A 2018, *Skill shift automation and the future of the workforce: Discussion paper*, McKinsey Global Institute, Washington D.C.
12. Basson, M, Du Plesis, T, Brink, R 2023, 'Visual representation of the mismatch between industry skills demand and higher education skills supply', University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park, South Africa.
13. Sreenanda 2021, *How To Choose The Finest Career Aptitude Test – Find All You Had Missed*, iDreamCareer, New Delhi.
14. Ahuja, S 2018, *Is Career Counselling & Coaching Worth the Cost in India?*, CareerNuts, New Delhi.
15. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2023, *Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report*, UNESCO, France.
16. Pandit, S 2023, *Atal Tinkering Labs have transformed STEM and Electronics Education in Schools across India*, Education 21, Curriculum.
17. The National Mentoring Partnership, 2023, *Prioritising Mentoring In the Workforce, Mentor Recruitment & Retention Toolkit*, Mentoring.org, Boston.
18. I Dream Career 2023, *Bharat Career Aspiration Report 2023*.
19. Mann, A, Denis, V, Schleicher, A, Ekhtiari, H, Forsyth, T, Liu, E, and Chambers, N 2020, 'Teenagers' Career Aspirations and the Future of Work',The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), France.
20. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) 2018, SANKALP Project, Government of India, New Delhi.
21. National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) 2021, *NASSCOM Skill Development Report 2021*, NASSCOM, India.