

QS World Future Skills Index 2025

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Context : India has made a significant mark in the **QS World Future Skills Index 2025**, ranking **25th globally** and excelling in the "Future of Work" category by securing the **2nd position**, only behind the United States. This achievement highlights India's progress in preparing its workforce for emerging global job trends.

To understand this ranking and its implications, it's essential to explore the **QS World Future Skills Index**, India's strengths and weaknesses, challenges in skill development, and opportunities for improvement.

About the QS World Future Skills Index

The **QS World Future Skills Index** is a global ranking system developed by **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)**, renowned for its university and education rankings.

Purpose:

The index evaluates how well countries are preparing their workforce for rapidly evolving job markets, focusing on key future skills like:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
- **Digital transformation**
- **Green technologies**

Assessment Criteria:

The index measures readiness across **four key dimensions**:

1. **Skills Fit:** Alignment between workforce skills and employer demands.
2. **Academic Readiness:** Capability of education systems to prepare graduates for the future.
3. **Future of Work:** Adoption of skills and technologies relevant to emerging industries.
4. **Economic Transformation:** Adaptability of economies to thrive in new paradigms.

India's Performance: Key Highlights

Rankings and Achievements:

- **25th overall globally**, classified as a "contender" in future skills readiness.
- **2nd in the "Future of Work" category**, with a standout score of **99.1**, reflecting its strength in digital roles and emerging industries.

Strengths:

- **Youth Advantage:** India's large and dynamic youth population forms the backbone of its economic potential.
- **Thriving Start-Up Ecosystem:** A vibrant innovation culture aids its global competitiveness.
- **Digital Readiness:** India, along with Mexico, is among the most prepared nations for integrating talent into digital roles.

Weaknesses:

- **Low Sustainability Scores:** Poor performance in sustainability and forward-looking innovation.
- **Academic Gaps:** A disconnect between academic training and industry requirements in areas like AI, green technologies, and digital skills.
- **Low R&D Investment:** Spending on research and development is **0.6% of GDP**, far below the global average of **2.7%**.

Challenges in Skill Development

1. Skilled Workforce Gap:

- A **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** study reports a **29-million worker shortage**, particularly in sectors like healthcare, AI, and green jobs.

2. Low Employability Standards:

- Only **25% of management professionals**, **20% of engineers**, and **10% of graduates** meet employability benchmarks.
- The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** notes that **47% of workers**, including **62% of women**, are underqualified for their roles.

3. Access to Higher Education:

- Limited access to tertiary education in skill-intensive fields continues to hinder youth opportunities.

Opportunities for Growth

1. Leveraging Demographics:

India's youthful workforce offers a chance to become a global leader in skill-intensive industries, especially as many nations face ageing populations.

2. Policy Initiatives:

- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** Emphasizes modular education and skill-based learning pathways.
- **ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society):** Seeks to make education and training accessible nationwide.

3. Technology Integration:

Utilizing **AI** and digital tools in education can bridge skill gaps and align curricula with industry needs.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Align Academia with Industry Needs:

Focus on delivering future-oriented skills in **AI, green technologies, and digital sectors**.

2. Increase R&D Investment:

Boosting funding in research and development will foster **innovation and sustainable practices**.

3. Expand Education Access:

Address regional disparities through **flexible, modular learning pathways**.

4. Strengthen Collaboration:

Build stronger partnerships between the **government, private sector, and academia** for targeted skilling and innovation.

Conclusion

India's performance in the **QS World Future Skills Index 2025** showcases its immense potential and ongoing progress in adapting to future job markets. With strengths in its **youth population, start-up ecosystem, and digital transformation readiness**, India is well-positioned to lead in global skills development.

However, challenges in **education alignment, sustainability, and R&D investment** must be addressed. By leveraging **policy support, technological advancements, and collaborations**, India can unlock its full potential and emerge as a global leader in future-ready skills.