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Research study:
Trainer effectiveness in the Indian skills ecosystem

Study undertaken by DEFT Advisory and Research, New Delhi and supported by the Alliance of Skill Training Partners
June 2020

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Foreword

The unprecedented challenges facing the world today remind us that it is the strength of human capital, people and their skills, that go a long way in dealing with and overcoming current and future challenges. Skill India, a government initiative which began in 2015, has committed to the skilling-up of India's growing young population to unlock their potential. Nearly 400 million people are to be trained through this initiative by 2022, and in a decade's time, we can expect to find a third of the world's working population to be from India.

It is well recognised that quality training and learning is largely dependent on the trainers and how they can teach and equip students for the future. Trainers themselves need to be adequately supported to develop their own knowledge and skills so that they can effectively teach, be it new technical knowledge, pedagogical approaches or digital solutions. The relevance of this needs no emphasis in the present circumstances and against this backdrop, I am pleased to present the 'Research study on trainer effectiveness in the Indian skills ecosystem.' This is the outcome of a collaborative partnership between the British Council, Alliance of Skills Training providers (ASTP) and Nationals Skills Development Corporation (NSDC). The research was undertaken by DEFT Advisory and Research with key contributions from Judith McGrath, Director Education and Skills, Elmvine Ltd.,UK.

This report is specially designed to provide stakeholders involved in planning and implementation of skills training with insights on challenges and examples of international practices for trainer development. The study explores causal links around trainer effectiveness, focussing primarily on trainers from private sector providers who deliver public funded skills training.

We have been working with policy makers and practitioners, bringing together experts from India and the United Kingdom to support the Technical Vocation and Education Training sector. More information about the UK India Education Research Initiative collaboration, World Skills India-UK partnership along with other insight and research reports are available on our website.

Barbara Wickham OBE
Country Director
British Council India

Foreword

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is delighted to support this research study by British Council and Alliance of Skill Training Providers to address one of the most pertinent questions - *'What training exists for trainers currently and how can we make trainers more effective in developing the skills we need, using examples of international practice?'*

At NSDC, the quality of delivery in our programs is of paramount importance. This is at the core of the overall skilling agenda which aims at empowering the youth of this country through acquiring skills. We must take advantage of the demographic window of opportunity, a phase in which India has already entered and may not last for too long. The challenge is to operate at a large scale while ensuring high quality of delivery. I firmly believe that the capacity of the skill development sector to provide relevant programs of high-quality depends largely on the quality of its trainers. This assumes even greater importance as structural and technological changes alter job markets, and skilling strategies adapt to meet the emerging needs of a changing work environment. Trainers will be at the forefront driving these pedagogical changes, and therefore building their capacity and developing effective and innovative professional development programs for trainers are critical. I am glad to see that this research study takes a step forward in understanding more about trainer effectiveness.

In addition, some of the emerging recommendations of the report are lifelong learning for trainers and collaboration with industry and the private sector. These, among others, are expected to be fundamental in ensuring the relevance and quality of skill training and for building the required institutional structures in India. I look forward to collaborating and strengthening vocational education and training systems in India.

Dr Manish Kumar
Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer
National Skill Development Corporation

Acknowledgements

The team is grateful to all who actively participated in this study and the information they provided. First and foremost, the trainers across India who actively participated in web-surveys and Focus Group Discussions, all senior officials from Training Providers and representatives of the Sector Skill Councils for their valuable participation in the interviews. Without such enthusiastic and holistic contributions from all participants the study would not have achieved its goals.

The team expresses gratitude to the full support, exemplary cooperation and consultation inputs received from the NSDC team led by Ms. Rekha Menon along with Ms. Bhumika Malhotra, Ms. Soma Sharma and their colleagues at NSDC Head Office and in the States. Their continuous and valuable guidance has ensured that the study remains relevant and in line with its objectives.

We are thankful to ASTP for providing guidance and efficient operations support to the study.

Last, but not the least we are extremely grateful to British Council for their constant support and valuable guidance and to Judith McGrath (UK expert) for her high-quality contributions that has enriched the research outputs manifold.

With all research there are inevitable limitations. Research participants and/or institutional representatives aren't responsible for the conclusions and/or the limitations of this report.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

A

ASTP
Alliance of Skill Training Partners

C

CPD
Continuous Professional Development

D

DEFT
DEFT Advisory and Research (British Council appointed research agency)

DDU-GKY
Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana

E

ETF
Education and Training Foundation, United Kingdom

F

FGD
Focus Group Discussion

G

GoL
Government of India

I

ICT
Information and Communication Technology

ITE
Institute of Technical Education, Singapore

ITI
Industrial Training Institute

J

JISC
Formerly Joint Information Systems Committee, now Jisc

M

MoRD
Ministry of Rural Development

MSDE
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

N

NCVET
National Council of Vocational Education and Training

NSDC
National Skill Development Corporation

O

OJT
On Job Training

P

PMKVY
Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

Q

QA
Quality Assurance

S

SME
Small and Medium Enterprise

SOP
Standard Operating Procedure

SSC
Sector Skill Council

T
TC
Training Centre

ToT
Training of Trainers

TP
Training Provider

TPCK
Technological, Pedagogical, Content,
working Knowledge (Singapore model)

TVET
Technical, Vocational Education and
Training

U
UK
United Kingdom

UNEVOC
Combined word UNESCO and VOCational
education, formerly

"International Project on Technical and
Vocational Education"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The British Council India in partnership with Alliance of Skills Training Partners (ASTP) developed this project to study effectiveness of trainers with private sector training providers delivering skill training public-funded by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). This comprehensive study aimed to examine the systemic factors that affect (a) motivation of trainers and their satisfaction with enabling and emolument factors that influence the teaching and learning process; (b) pedagogical aspects (viz. trainers' views on importance of domain and platform skills, perception on ToT programmes, handling differential pace of students' learning); (c) evaluation processes of trainers' performance; and (d) need for further training and professional development opportunities available to them. Benchmarking of trainers' remuneration and evaluation of pedagogy was out of study purview. The findings led to recommending appropriate measures that could address gaps and support improve effectiveness of trainers.

Primary data for the study was collected through three tracks: (i) a large-scale national web-survey of trainers registered with NSDC (3,275 valid responses were received) along with small-scale recent alumni students web-survey (498 valid responses were received); (ii) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with 180 trainers in 15 cities; and (iii) interviews with 25 senior officials of Training Providers (TP) and 26 Sector Skill Councils (SSC). Findings from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected across the three tracks were synthesised. Insights drawn from the synthesised findings are summarised below.

Key findings

1. *Profile of web-survey respondents:* In general, the trainers are young with 82 per cent being less than 35 years of age. Their average overall experience was 6.46 years, and average training experience was 3.08 years. About 63.1 per cent of trainers were with large TPs having more than 20 Training Centres (TC) and multi-state operations, while the remaining 36.9 per cent trainers were with Small and Medium (SME) TPs having below 20 TCs in one state or adjacent states.[1]

2. *Ensuring trainers' quality at entry is of paramount importance*: Although eligibility criteria for recruitment of trainers exist which defines educational qualification, professional qualification, industry and training experience for each Qualification Pack (QP) / job role, it has not assured high-quality of recruited trainers. Almost all SSCs and senior officials of TPs interviewed admitted to the paucity of high-quality trainers in the system; they were particularly concerned about the quality of industry knowledge and domain experience that the less-experienced trainers (who were higher in number) brought in. A majority of the SSCs also stated emoluments offered to trainers were inadequate to attract talent, and attributed this as a reason for low quality of trainers existing in the skill ecosystem.

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[1] *This threshold of 20 training centre classification between large and SME TPs was done by the research team for the purpose of this study*

3. *Training of Trainers (ToT) courses*: A summary of findings amalgamating trainers' perception of ToT courses, TP and SSC views is set out below.

- In the FGDs, trainers reported that the present three days duration of domain training within the overall ten days of ToT was not being useful. In comparison, the seven days duration of ToT platform training component was found more useful, but by the less-experienced trainers. The more-experienced trainers suggested improvements in the ToT platform training component as well such as including of "teach-back" sessions which could extend the duration of the ToT but would be beneficial for trainers.

- Overall, the demand for ToT sessions exceeded the number of ToT sessions organised by the SSCs, leading to a long waiting time for trainers to join the courses. While ToT batches are periodically published by SSC on the Skill India portal along with training calendar, in the FGDs the trainers asserted that the ToT sessions were arranged at a short notice. The SSCs separately reported their constraints to aggregate ToT demand and periodically conduct ToT at locations. At times the inter-state location of the courses was quite distant from the TCs; traveling long-distances was cited as a challenge by some women trainers in the FGDs. Linguistic incompatibilities with the master trainer during the ToT sessions were also cited, requesting state-wise ToT programmes be conducted to overcome both logistics as well as linguistic difficulties.

- ToT assessment outcomes by third party agencies were not view favourably by even certified trainers; the assessments seemed to have fallen short of standards anticipated by the trainers. The assessment outcomes were questioned in almost all FGD locations, giving experiential examples. One of the oft quoted examples were the third-party agencies administering questions to trainers for ToT assessments leveraging question banks earmarked students' assessments, thus compromising on the degree of difficulty that needs to be there for a ToT assessment. Another example repeatedly cited by many trainers was assessors doing a hurried job and barely giving few minutes to each trainer during the ToT assessment process.

- Though NSDC's common norms stipulated provisioning of the ToT expenses as the TP's responsibility towards their trainers; the TP's looked to optimise on this. One of the expectations was ToT sessions being conducted closer to the TCs to minimize the expenses of trainers' travels.

- Validity of ToT certification: All trainers either sought lifetime validity or at least a five-year validity of the ToT certification. The ToT renewal process was also critiqued for improvement. Instances were also cited of clubbing trainer candidates appearing for the first time ToT certification in the same batch with those seeking bi-annual renewal of their certificates, thereby leading to repeated learning of the same curricula by the more experienced trainers leading to potential conflict and disagreement between them.

4. *Differential learning ability of trainees*: Trainers expressed the challenges of handling differential learning ability of trainees. A common estimate of such students in a typical class was reported as 25-30 per cent. However, the trainers felt that ToT curriculum did not delve deeper into adult learning principles, active learning, objection handling and other "remedial" aspects. Consequently, the ToT did not adequately equip them to handle such heterogeneity in their classes, leaving the trainers to adopt training methods, which they, at an individual level, thought could work in these situations. At the same time, the use of digital resources to facilitate active learning (apart from using audio-visuals to support didactic learning) is limited.

5. *Professionalism of trainers*: Besides training, there seem to be issues affecting the professionalism of trainer such as: mobilising students, ensuring placements, working at low salary levels for comparable roles (at times below minimum wages), lack of benefits and social protection, and irregularity in salary payments. The uncertainty of scheme target allocations to training centres, resulting in lack of longer-term business continuity visibility for TPs, percolates to create persistent job-security concerns among many trainers.

6. *Continuous Professional Development (CPD):* Most trainers reported their need for advanced technical training and periodic refresh of domain knowledge. Presently, they sought to keep their domain knowledge updated through self-study, keep themselves updated with current development and advancements in their field of work, and avail online freeware to prepare their lesson plans. Most TPs, especially the SMEs, have no in-house systems to support their trainers CPD needs. However, some large TPs have virtual forum of trainers moderated by their in-company Master Trainers who responded to trainers' queries and provided study material.

7. *Evaluation of Trainer performance:* Most TPs evaluate trainers' performances based on biometric attendance of the batch of students and placement success rates, both of which are linked to training batch commercials. Some TPs take informal feedback from students on the quality of training imparted. But there is no comprehensive evaluation of trainers' performance, especially pedagogy, which is core to the Teaching and Learning process.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the insights drawn from synthesised findings, which have then been blended with good international practices and established frameworks.

1. There is a need to evolve a *structure for lifelong learning for trainers*. One way could be to adapt the Singapore model of 3-level vocational pedagogy framework (illustrated in Section F, Figure 9), and incorporate a range of relevant international practices. This could lead to establishing a new 'Professional Trainer Development Framework', together with a set of detailed criteria, to assess the quality of outcomes at each stage. This framework, along with the set of detailed criteria, could then dovetail with the new guidelines on Training of Trainers (ToT) and Training of Assessors (ToA) that were developed in collaboration with Singapore Polytechnic [2] and released by NSDC.

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[2] *Training of Trainers and Assessors, Guidelines for Short-Term Skills Development Programmes v2 August 2019*

2. *Ensuring trainers' quality at entry:* The TPs should use a standardised set of performance criteria as a part of their recruitment and initial training process. These could be used to measure trainer's quality before certification and kept active throughout their career to ensure: (a) consistency across TPs; (b) establishing an industry mentality of measurement and evaluation; (c) creation of a sustainable quality assurance process; and (d) raising the overall quality of trainers and the training profession in India. One such recruitment criteria could be the trainer taking a 30-minute video-graphed class of an on-going batch, the quality adequacy of which could be certified by the TP and subsequently be audited by the SSC as a pre-screening measure when the trainers get nominated for their ToT courses. These criteria could be consultatively evolved between NSDC, SSCs, TPs, and references could be made to Ceputec Trainer Competency Checklist (Australia), Quality Assurance Framework Scotland, University of Leicester UK and others.

3. *Online domain certification at entry:* As a part of the post-recruitment trainers' induction process, the first domain certification (essentially two-day orientation of the Qualification Packs (QP), model curriculum and related lesson plan) could be delivered digitally as a curated online material. The trainers achieving certification on this course would be allowed to register batches and commencing training classes. This would ensure minimum consistent understanding of the QP by the trainers at the point of entry across the country. The longer duration (ten days or more, if revised) on-premise ToT courses could be scheduled subsequently. Over a longer period, and trainers will need periodic refreshing which could happen through the periodic industrial attachments and/or supplemented by curated on-line learning and its certification.

4. *Management of the pedagogical learning process:* Trainers need to examine their own practice and pre-conceptions about what they think a student understands, and what they do actually understand. Accordingly, the set of recommendations made are:

- Components from the British Council's CPD Framework could be adapted and made relevant for the trainers. A selection of training modules can also be developed from the Education and Training Foundation's (ETF) Advanced Practitioner Toolkit cards to address pedagogical needs which trainers can use for their development activities.

- It may be beneficial to introduce a short duration On-Job-Training (OJT) within the three month (typical) short term course to begin familiarising students with prospective workplaces. Trainers felt this could supplement their efforts and improve the overall quality of training imparted. In the UK, students in many vocational courses undertake work placement, and for many this is now a mandatory component in their course.

- A pre-identified proportion of class or laboratory lessons taken by trainers (which can vary by sector and job roles) can be video-recorded and included in the trainer's service record. The SSC could evaluate these sessions (on a sample basis), either as a part of the certificate renewal processes or while handling any grievance. In the UK there is a standardised 'observation of teaching and learning' which is a part of the overall Quality Assurance process that each TP follows and is monitored by a national agency.

- It is imperative to increase the use of digital resources in skill training across all sectors, although some more than others. Knowledge from Government of India's National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) in technical education, run by the Indian Institutes of Technology, and the six digital capabilities of UK's Jisc 'Digital teaching professional framework' can be used to develop training modules.

5. *ToT courses:* The recommendations being made to improve the ToT courses are:

- *Inclusion of about 40 hours "teach-back" sessions* in the future ToT courses to create scenarios and make trainers actively practice everyday situations, such as those emanating from differential pace of learning among students. The ToT courses could include demonstrating practical techniques, giving instructional aids of how to apply adult learning principles (andragogy), active learning[3] and objection handling. Keeping in view such augmentation, the ToT course duration should also be increased, as deemed necessary.

- *ToT assessments* at present are being conducted by third-party assessment agencies. Almost all the SSCs suggested, and is hereby recommended, that ToT assessments be made an in-house responsibility of the SSCs to be done in collaboration with the industry. This would improve assessment quality. The study found examples of SSCs who have started the practice of conducting ToT assessments by their own staff.

6. *Professionalising the trainers' occupation*: The role of a trainer is not currently seen as a professional role. In order to create perception that a trainer is a professional and valued career option it would be appropriate to create standards to support trainers to maintain and improve their teaching and learning as well as outcomes for their students. This could include (a) professional values and attributes, (b) professional skills, and (c) professional knowledge and understanding as developed by stakeholders involved in training in the UK. In Thailand there is a standard for TVET competencies that can also be considered when developing a set of standards within the overall trainer development framework for India.

7. *Professionalising TPs, quality assured and developed:* For the skills system in India to become more effective it needs to be ensuring that all TPs are quality assured and developed i.e. ensuring sure that senior leaders provide necessary conditions for effective professional development to take place. It is also essential each training institution that delivers publicly funded courses has guidance and support for leadership and management and effective governance if applicable. This will ensure consistency across the training sector and that TPs are taking responsibility for managing the training process that is staff CPD and student outcomes. The UK's Association of Employment and Learning Providers have produced a 'Good to Great' programme for private TPs delivering public funded courses, using a mixed model of workshops, webinars and support activities with a strong emphasis on peer support to improve management.

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[3] *Felder and Brent (2009). Anything course-related that all students in a class session are called upon to do other than simply watching, listening, and taking notes is called active learning.*

8. *Addressing trainers' emolument concerns*: While professionalising the trainers' occupation, major barriers to trainers' motivation also need to be addressed. Foremost among these barriers is low levels of emoluments. It is imperative that TPs are encouraged to ensure fair income (such as industry benchmarked salaries) to trainers, achieving regularity in the disbursement of remuneration, extending social protection cover to their trainers. All of these combined that can become motivators and attract talent to this profession. Further, the scheme guidelines could provide a better target allocation pipeline visibility which could create an environment of business continuity for TPs and, in turn address trainers' engagement continuity concerns.

9. *Continuous Professional Development* set of recommendations being made are:

- Trainers welcomed the idea of undergoing *industrial attachments at a fixed periodicity* which could be made mandatory according to norms such as: one week attachment annually for "fast" moving job-roles while one / two weeks attachment bi-annually for other job-roles (or as may be decided by NSDC / SSC for such job-roles). These attachments could be undertaken at companies who are member of SSCs, employers where trainees get placed, other registered enterprises and advanced technical training institutes approved by the SSCs. The timing of the attachments could be flexibly decided between the TP and the companies (anytime within the stipulated period of one or two years) keeping in view trainer's workload. On completion, a *joint certification by the industry and TP* which would form a part of the trainer's service record and get audited by the concerned SSC during ToT certificate renewal.

- The Teach Too programme in UK shows how working in partnership with employers and employer networks can be used to develop a shared approach to delivering quality technical and vocational education. Teach Too approaches look to support trainers who combine occupational and pedagogical expertise and are given the time to develop partnerships and curricula with employers, and access to industry-standard facilities and resources reflecting ways in which technology is transferring work.

10. *Comprehensive Evaluation of Trainer Performance*: It is recommended that a composite set of metrics be evolved for a comprehensive evaluation of trainers' performance during the intervening period of their first certification and renewal. These metrics, inter alia, could include biometric students' attendance and feedback, students' performance in their assessments, placement success rates, completion of industrial attachments, evaluation of pedagogy, and completion of curated on-line refresher courses. If a framework like the UK's 2019 Ofsted regulatory framework with specific criteria was set for recruiting and developing trainers through to becoming a master trainer, it would support TPs and SSCs to get higher quality, lower costs, and further professionalise the skills training sector.

11. *National System to Recognise Trainers' Excellence*: The role of a professional trainer could be made more aspirational. One of the ways this could be done is by instituting a National System to Recognise Trainers' Excellence. Annual awards recognizing training excellence, one for each of the sectors, could be given away at the national level. Trainer nominations for the award can be filled in by the TPs and the winners could be selected by a jury. The process could be managed by the respective SSCs. Once this National System to Recognise Trainers' Excellence becomes operational, it could be extended to interested states for instituting their State-Level recognition systems and awards.

SECTION A: STUDY CONTEXT

In an era of expansive knowledge and rapid technological development, industry and employers are demanding that the workforce continuously upgrade their skills to maintain their labour market relevance and help the enterprises sustain in their competitive worlds. Consequently national Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems across the world are, inter alia, facing unprecedented challenges to (a) keep pace with technology advancements and maintain relevance of content, (b) in a resource-scarce world, achieve and sustain efficiency gains, (c) assure quality and effectiveness of delivery.

The quality of TVET teachers / trainers is a salient factor (among several other factors) that affects TVET delivery quality. A seminal UNEVOC conference (2012)[4] to strengthen TVET teacher education summarized the need to focus on the "importance of TVET teachers' relationships with industries, with key related factors including the relevance of teachers' knowledge and teaching content, the effectiveness of pre-service training, and the importance of continuing professional development." Majumdar (2014)[5] argued that the permeation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) leading to the emergence of knowledge societies, and global trends of climate change and sustainable development have rendered the usual value and outcome of conventional teacher education models obsolete. Thus, the definition of what makes an effective teacher / trainer in today's context is essential.

One of the first studies on skill trainers in India[6] was commissioned by the NSDC in 2011. It surveyed 360 trainers in 71 training institutes (government, private and not-for-profit societies) across eight states and six sectors: (i) Textiles and Apparel, (ii) Building Construction, (iii) Gems and Jewellery, (iv) Organised Retail, (v) Tourism and Hospitality, and (vi) Banking, Financial Services and Insurance. The study identified key issues, some of them being on: the sourcing and recruitment of trainers, their skill and career path development, assessment and evaluation. Subsequent, and more recent, studies[7,8] have also identified similar issues indicating their persistence over a long time, and thereby continued relevance.

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[4] *UNEVOC (2012).* "Strengthening TVET teacher education" *report of the UNEVOC online conference 25 June to 6 July 2012 moderated by Dr. Masiram Bukit*

[5] *Majumdar, S. (2014).* "Teacher education in TVET: Developing a new paradigm", *International Journal of Training Research, 9:1-2, 49-59, DOI: 10.5172/ijtr.9.1-2.49*

[6] *National Skills Development Corporation (2011).* "Need Assessment Report on Building Trainers' Skills In Vocational Employability" *can be accessed at http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/183550*

[7] *British Council India (2018).* "Future Skills in India – Foundation Report" *page 15, can be accessed at https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/future_skills_in_india_foundation_report_march2018.pdf which states ""Employers have reported as the main flaws in the training system a lack of practical experience and good quality trainers".*

[8] *As stated in the NSDC Skill India Training of Trainer and Assessor Guidelines for Short-Term Skill Development Programmes (August 2019, page 1, Table 1)*

RESEARCH STUDY: TRAINER EFFECTIVENESS IN THE INDIAN SKILLS ECOSYSTEM

According to Government of India's Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (an UNEVOC centre in India), the country needs to improve the quality of vocational trainers. It sees the shortage of trained vocational trainers as a major obstacle to the growth of skills development activities. It seeks that specialized sector-level institutions should introduce pre-service training programmes to develop master trainers and trainers and encourage them to undertake mandatory On-Job-Training (OJT) programmes.[9]

The National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015) set out capacity building of trainers as one of its objectives. NSDC has defined entry level requirements for trainers, standardised trainers' experience requirements and put in place an on-line system[10] for the management of Trainers and Assessors in the short-term skill ecosystem. However, the public-funded skilling ecosystem in India is large and improving trainers' effectiveness need to be facilitated systemically to support the continued growth and streamlining of the skilling ecosystem in India.

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[9] *UNEVOC TVET Country Profile: India November 2018*

[10] *Can be accessed at https://nsdcindia.org/national-portal-trainers-and-assessors*

SECTION B: STUDY AIMS AND SCOPE LIMITATION

The British Council India in partnership with ASTP developed a project to examine trainer effectiveness within private sector training providers delivering publicly funded training in the skills sector in India. This comprehensive study, delivered by DEFT Advisory and Research (hereinafter DEFT), aimed to:

To examine:	• The systemic factors that affect motivation of trainers and their satisfaction with enabling and emolument factors that influence the teaching and learning process;
	• pedagogical aspects (viz. trainers' views on importance of domain and platform skills, perception on ToT programmes, handling differential pace of students' learning) and evaluation processes of trainers' performance; [11]
	• need for further training and professional development opportunities available to trainers to improve quality of training;
And recommend:	• appropriate measures that could address the gaps and support improvement in effectiveness of trainers.

The *scope of this research* was limited to study the trainers' effectiveness in private training institutions delivering public funded short-term skill development programmes (up to 600 hours) under the aegis of NSDC, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). However, some of the study findings could be relevant for short-term skill development programmes being conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) through its Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY); as well as for the long-term skill development programmes being delivered by the privately owned and managed Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) regulated by the non-statutory regulator National Council of Vocational Education and Training (NCVET).

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[11] *Evaluation of pedagogy, examining the quality of ToT assessments and evaluating the TP's systems of trainers' performance evaluation was out of study purview.*

SECTION C: METHODOLOGY USED

The methodology of this study was sequenced in four stages. The key activities in each of these stages is depicted in Figure 1 and briefly discussed thereafter.
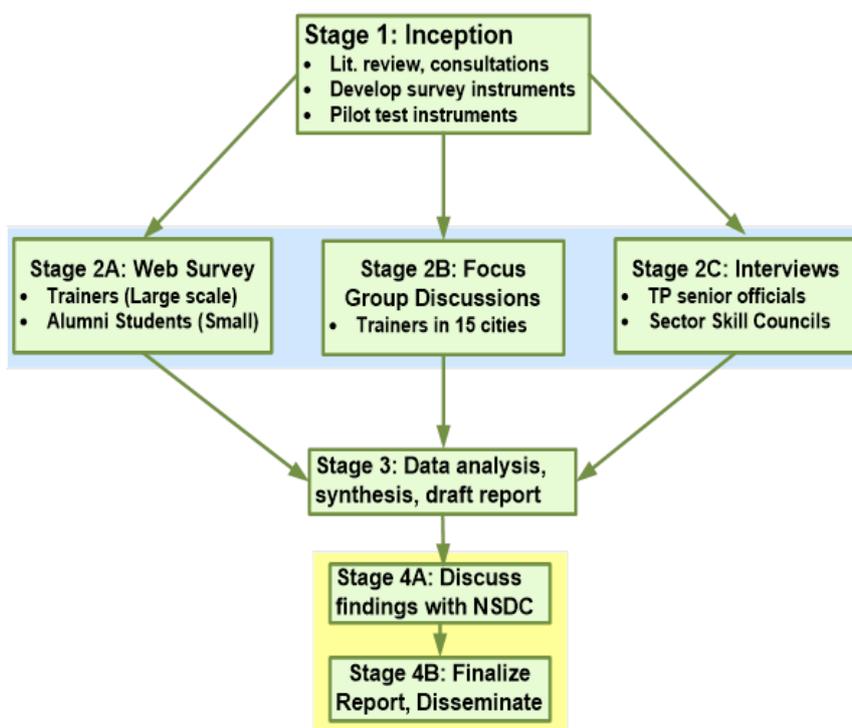
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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Stage 1: Inception              │
│ • Lit. review, consultations    │
│ • Develop survey instruments    │
│ • Pilot test instruments        │
└─────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Stage 2A: Web Survey │  │ Stage 2B: Focus      │  │ Stage 2C: Interviews │
│ • Trainers (Large    │  │ Group Discussions    │  │ • TP senior officials│
│   scale)             │  │ • Trainers in 15     │  │ • Sector Skill       │
│ • Alumni Students    │  │   cities             │  │   Councils           │
│   (Small)            │  │                      │  │                      │
└──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘

          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
          │ Stage 3: Data analysis,         │
          │ synthesis, draft report         │
          └─────────────────────────────────┘

          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
          │ Stage 4A: Discuss               │
          │ findings with NSDC              │
          └─────────────────────────────────┘

          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
          │ Stage 4B: Finalize              │
          │ Report, Disseminate             │
          └─────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 1: Our staged approach to this study

Inception stage (Stage 1)

- Desk research, study of international literature, secondary data analysis. Seek inputs from international expert through consultations.

- Developing the web survey questionnaires for trainers and alumni students; formats for FGD with trainers in multiple cities and questionnaire for key informant interviews. This done in consultation with the British Council, ASTP, and the international consultant appointed by the British Council.

- Pilot testing of the web questionnaires (configured on Survey Monkey platform), FGD formats and in-person interview instruments were conducted during November 2019. Findings from the pilot testing were discussed with the British Council, ASTP and NSDC; feedback and suggestions received were incorporated into the final set of web survey questionnaires and other instruments.

Web surveys and stakeholder consultation (Stages 2A, 2B and 2C)

- NSDC supported the study by rolling out the trainers' survey nationally to all trainers registered with them and the students' survey to alumni students of 2019 batches. DEFT team monitored the response levels and reported progress.

- Simultaneous missions to 15 cities were undertaken for FGD with trainers. The qualitative data from the FGDs not only supplemented that coming from web survey, but also provided new insights. The FGD findings from all the missions were consolidated and suggestions received from the trainers were noted.

- As a part of the missions, the study team also met management representatives and key officials of the TPs. The in-company policies of TPs (both Large and SME), affected a large number of trainers, and hence their inputs were obtained on the study areas.

- Industry-led SSCs is an important constituent of the skilling ecosystem. The study team interviewed 26 SSCs to obtain their views on quality of trainers, training of trainers and their certification, and need for continuous professional development. These were important inputs in the overall data collection process.

Data analysis and synthesis (Stage 3)

- Data quality assurance processes were adopted to ensure reliability of data. The data compilation / extraction formats and interpretive frameworks were undertaken.

- Analysis of the qualitative data obtained during missions gave deeper and more nuanced contextual understanding on some of the research questions. Statistical inferences from quantitative surveys were synthesised with findings from qualitative data obtained through FGDs and key informant interviews. Corroboration between the two sets of data broad-based some of the findings leading to more robust conclusions.

Reporting (Stages 4A and 4B)

- Meetings were held with ASTP and NSDC to discuss findings from the study and possible recommendations. The international expert joined over a digital medium.

- Feedback and suggestions received from the participants / stakeholders were considered for incorporation into the report.

- A set of dissemination meetings were planned with key stakeholders such as NSDC State Engagement Officers, SSCs, and a cross-section of Large and SME TPs to conclude the study. In each of these meetings, the study team shared research findings and discussed the recommendations of the study.

Limitations of our study: Social research studies of this nature have some limitations. The limitations of our study are acknowledged below:

- The web-survey questionnaire was administered in English. Though most trainers know English, it may have excluded some trainers.

- Data collected through web-survey came from trainers and alumni students having internet access and were willing to respond to the survey. Though this may have introduced some sampling bias, it is expected to have been small.[12]

- In all 15 cities spread over all regions in India including North Eastern India and Jammu & Kashmir were covered through multi-city missions within available time and study resources. These were mainly metropolitan, Class A, Class B cities and few small towns. Coverage of other small towns and rural agglomerates were limited by trainers coming from training centres in those locations to participate in the FGDs at the nearest place where it was conducted.

- The aspects of pedagogy covered in this study was limited to managing the teaching and learning process, trainers' views on importance of domain and platform skills, their perception on ToT programmes, and handling differential pace of students' learning. Evaluation of pedagogy was out of study purview.

- The numbers of key informant interviews with the senior management of TPs were limited by their availability at the mission cities at the stipulated time.

- The study did not undertake any survey or benchmarking of trainers' emoluments.

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[12] *Pew Research Centre estimates that size of the bias caused by excluding the non-Web respondents is quite small. Across 406 separate survey items of Pew Research, only nine yielded estimates that differed by 5 or more percentage points. More than two-thirds of the 406 items yielded estimates with a 0 or 1 point difference. https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2015/09/22/coverage-error-in-internet-surveys [accessed on 23 March 2020]*

SECTION D: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The analysis of primary data collected from each of the tracks namely, web surveys (trainers and students), FGDs with trainers, and Key Informant Interviews are presented below. Thereafter, findings from all the tracks are synthesised to draw insights (Section E), which are then further integrated with international good practices to develop recommendations (Section F).

D.1: Web survey of trainers

There were 3,275 valid responses to the web-survey from trainers across India. Sizeable responses were received from trainers in 21 states, making it a broad-based national survey. Of the trainers who responded, 69.5 per cent were ToT certified.

D.1.1: Profile of respondents

Age and experience profile: Overall, it is a young profile with 81.96 per cent (i.e. about 82 per cent) being less than 35 years age. NSDC also confirmed that the sample profile reflected the demographics of the population of trainers registered with them.
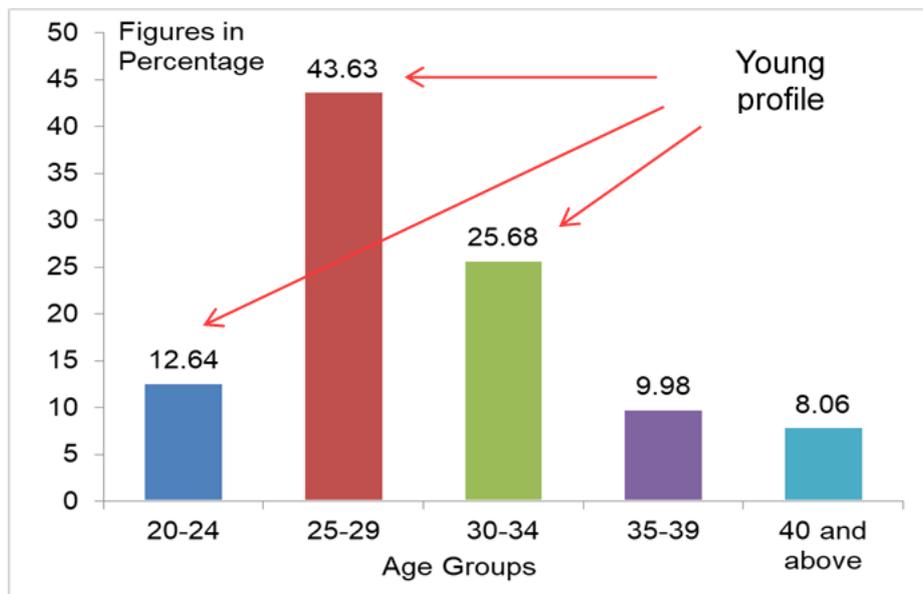

Figure 2: Trainers' age profile

The average experiences of trainers were 6.46 years (mean of the sample) of which 3.08 years' experience were as a trainer or teacher. While the maximum experience recorded was 49 years, most respondents (mode of the sample) cited 5 years' experience of which 2 years' experience were as a trainer or a teacher.

Table 1: Trainers' experience profile

	Mean	Mode	Maximum
Total experience (years)	6.46	5	49
Experience as a trainer (years)	3.08	2	40

Gender analysis: About 74.8 per cent of respondents were male and 25.2 per cent were female. A gender analysis of the trainers' age profile showed a drop in female workforce participation in the trainers' workforce in the 25 – 34 age group, which seem to reflect the general labour market trend of female labour force participation rates. This further potentially confirmed the broad representativeness of the web-survey sample.
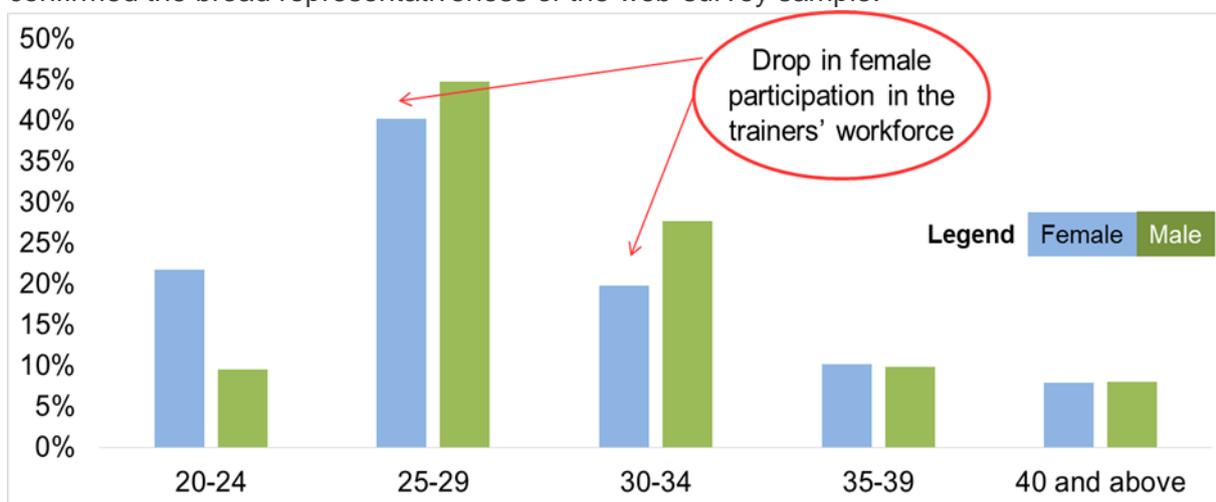
Figure 3: Gender analysis of trainers' age profile

Size of employer (TP) operations: About 63.1 per cent of trainers were with large TPs (multi-state operations having more than 20 training centres) and the remaining 36.9 per cent trainers were with SME TPs (having below 20 centres, most of them being present in one state or adjacent states). This threshold of 20 training centre classification between large and SME TPs was done by the research team for the purpose of this study.

Taking another view, the sample comprised 70.5 per cent trainers who were regular salaried employees of TPs registered with NSDC; and the remaining 29.5 per cent trainers were either employees hired on term contracts by the registered TP or employees of sub-contractors of larger TPs. Further analysis based on these classifications were expected to provide insights if employment conditions and professional development opportunities for trainers with larger TPs were significantly different from those with SME TPs.

The Margin of Error for this web-survey, collecting 3,275 valid responses from a population of about 20,000 trainers, was ± 1.45 per cent at 95 per cent confidence level.

D.1.2: Analysis of motivating factors: multiple views

At the onset, the study explored if earnings from job were the sole motivator for them to "come for teaching / training every-day". Almost half of the respondents (47 per cent) affirmed they were motivated to be in the training profession for earnings only, explicitly ruling out any other reason. The remaining respondents (53 per cent) stated earnings as well as other reasons motivated them to continue in the training profession. This corroborated findings from trainers' FGDs, where participants voiced a similarly equal division of motivators.

Further open-coding and tagging of the textual data provided as 'other reasons' by web-survey respondents who stated earnings as well as other reasons motivated them to continue in the training profession (i.e. 53 per cent of the sample) was carried out. This analysis showed that 92 per cent within this group cited one of the following reasons as their motivational driver in addition to earnings:

- social recognition associated with teaching / training (48 per cent)
- their own love for teaching / training (27 per cent)
- self-learning as a part of the teaching / training process (17 per cent)

Trainers' satisfaction data was collected through the web-survey instrument on eight motivating factors that were derived from the Terms of Reference and initial study of trainers at the design stage. The level of trainers' satisfaction on these eight factors is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Trainers' job satisfaction on the eight enabling and emolument factors

#	Job satisfaction: Enabling factors	Satisfaction percentage	Remarks
1	Career Progression Opportunities	68.3%	There could be a scope for improvement
2	Reward and Recognition by employers	62.1%	
3	Job stability (triggered by uncertainty of target allocation to training centres)	63.5%	This could be improved by providing visibility on longer term target allocations
4	Grievance handling	76.6%	Indicates a good level of satisfaction
5	Work environment, Discipline	90.5%	Indicates favourable impact of common norms, infrastructure, operational discipline
#	Job satisfaction: Emolument factors	Satisfaction percentage	Remarks
6	Salary amount	50.9%	Half of the trainers were not satisfied; this could become a motivational barrier at systemic levels
7	Benefits / Social Protection / Insurance	59.8%	This could be improved by interventions
8	Salary payment regularity	63.0%	Though it is a TP issue, it could be a concern

The data collected on the enabling and emolument factors of trainers have been further analysed by age, sector and employer (viz. TP) sizes and discussed below.

Job satisfaction, by age: The above trainers' satisfaction data was further analysed by trainers' age groups to see if there were any significant differences between the younger cohort of trainers (less than 35 years of age) and the senior cohort in the trainers' workforce. While there were some differences in satisfaction levels between these cohorts on the five enabling factors, such differences were within 5 per cent and none of them were found statistically significant.

However, there was a difference in satisfaction levels on emolument factors. On the salary amount factor 49.8 per cent of trainers less than 35 years reported satisfaction compared to 55.7 per cent satisfied older trainers. An even higher, statistically significant, difference in satisfaction levels was found on the salary payment regularity factor; 61.9 per cent of trainers less than 35 years reported satisfaction vis-à-vis 68.1 per cent of satisfied older trainers. This difference in satisfaction levels was also noted in FGD findings, thereby corroborating web-survey findings. In most FGDs, the younger cohort reported being paid lesser than "market rates".[13] They were more vulnerable than their senior peers to deferment of their salaries whenever their employer TPs faced any liquidity crunch.

Job satisfaction, by gender: While four key enabling factors showed significant statistical difference between gender groups (Table 3), only one emolument factor "benefits / social protection / insurance" was significantly different (has not been separately tabulated).

Table 3: Trainers' job satisfaction, by gender, on selected enabling factors

#	Job satisfaction: Enabling factors	Female	Male	Remarks
1	Career Progression Opportunities	74.1%	66.3%	Men recorded lower satisfaction scores on factors. It could either be their expectation levels were higher leading to lower satisfaction levels or women were more accepting of the present situation and moderated their views accordingly.
2	Reward and Recognition by employers	69.5%	59.5%	
3	Job stability (triggered by uncertainty of target allocation to training centres)	71.1%	61.0%	
4	Grievance handling	82.3%	74.7%	

Job satisfaction, by sectors: The eight motivational factors for trainers' job satisfaction were analysed by sectors to understand if there were any sector-wide deviations from the all-sector (national) average. The 19 sectors which received more than 1 per cent of valid trainer responses (i.e. 33 or more responses out of the total sample size of 3,275) were analysed for deviations.

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[13] *Salary survey and related benchmarking exercises were out of study purview*

Of these 19 sectors, ten sectors showed a deviation. The five sectors where at least one factor was between 5 per cent and 10 per cent lower than the all-sector average are reported in Table 4; and the five sectors where at least one factor was 10 per cent lower than the all-sector average is reported in Table 5.

Table 4: Trainers' job satisfaction, sectors at least one factor between 5-10 per cent lower than average

#		Healthcare	Mgmt.	Retail	Telecom	Elect. & HW	All-sector
Job satisfaction percentages: Enabling factors							
1	Career Progression Opportunities	77.7%	67.2%	64.3%	63.3%	67.6%	68.3%
2	Reward and Recog. by employers	72.6%	60.9%	58.9%	56.1%	62.0%	62.1%
3	Job stability (triggrd. by uncertainty of target allocation to trg. centres)	72.0%	54.7%	58.1%	62.9%	62.7%	63.5%
4	Grievance handling	85.1%	74.6%	75.3%	70.5%	78.5%	76.1%
5	Work environment, Discipline	92.6%	93.8%	91.5%	89.9%	85.2%	90.5%
Job satisfaction percentages: Emolument factors							
6	Salary amount	59.1%	53.1%	46.0%	48.7%	51.9%	50.9%
7	Benefits / Soc. Prot. / Insurance	68.6%	65.6%	56.5%	58.1%	62.1%	59.8%
8	Salary payment regularity	56.6%	64.1%	54.4%	55.6%	68.4%	63.0%

*Note: **Amber cells** indicate deviation between 5 per cent – 10 per cent lower than average*

Table 5: Trainers' job satisfaction, sectors with at least one factor lower than 10 per cent of average

#		Agri.	BFSI	Cap Good	Const.	G'Jobs	All-sector
Job satisfaction: Enabling factors							
1	Career Progression Opportunities	56.4%	67.3%	68.0%	61.2%	64.7%	68.3%
2	Reward and Recog. by employers	59.6%	51.9%	51.5%	51.5%	49.0%	62.1%
3	Job stability (triggrd. by uncertainty of target allocation to trg. centres)	46.6%	59.6%	60.8%	57.1%	58.8%	63.5%
4	Grievance handling	74.9%	67.3%	72.2%	63.6%	68.0%	76.1%
5	Work environment, Discipline	90.3%	86.5%	87.9%	85.2%	86.3%	90.5%

#		Agri.	BFSI	Cap Good	Const.	G'Jobs	All-sector
Job satisfaction: Emolument factors							
6	Salary amount	49.8%	51.0%	49.5%	36.2%	44.0%	50.9%
7	Benefits / Soc. Prot. / Insurance	49.1%	59.6%	54.1%	51.8%	54.9%	59.8%
8	Salary payment regularity	48.5%	71.2%	64.6%	55.5%	54.9%	63.0%

Note: Amber cells indicate deviation between 5 per cent – 10 per cent lower than average

Brown cells indicate deviation more than 10 per cent lower than average

Some sectors, namely telecom (Table 4), agriculture, construction and green jobs (Table 5), had four or more deviating factors. As our study was not designed to explore sector-specific issues, we have not presented any causal analysis of the above findings. The SSCs may be in a better position to study the trainers' employment conditions and motivational factors in more detail for the respective sectors.

However, one observation can be drawn from the findings of the ten sectors presented in Table 4 and Table 5. Rewards and recognition has consistently been lower than the all-sector average in nine of the ten sectors. This brings forward the need to institute better recognition systems of trainers' performance at the national-level. Effective implementation of a national system to recognise excellence in trainers' performance could drive the TPs to follow better systems at their firm levels.

Job satisfaction, by size of Employer TP: The eight motivational factors for trainers' job satisfaction were also analysed by size of TPs (as employers of trainers) to understand deviations between these cohorts. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Trainers' job satisfaction (trainers' percentage), by size of TPs

#	Job satisfaction: Enabling factors	Trainers with Large TPs	Trainers with SME TPs	Remarks
1	Career Progression Opportunities	70.00%	65.20%	FGD show SME trainers are more worried about career progression
2	Reward and Recognition by employers	62.20%*	62.00%	Large TPs could improve their Reward & Recognition system
3	Job stability (triggered by uncertainty of target allocation to training centres)	65.70%	59.80%	Statistically significant, FGDs also show SME trainers are more uncertain about their job continuity
4	Grievance handling	77.50%	75.00%	
5	Work environment, Discipline	91.20%	89.20%	Similar impact of common norms

#	Job satisfaction: Enabling factors	Trainers with Large TPs	Trainers with SME TPs	Remarks
6	Salary amount	51.30%*	50.20%	No difference. TP senior officials cite margin pressure & churn as reasons
7	Benefits / Social Protection / Insurance	61.80%	56.40%	
8	Salary payment regularity	61.80%*	65.20%	Trainers salary vulnerable to "cash crunch": large TPs could improve

* these are further discussed below

While, on the one hand, the trainers' satisfaction on job stability factor (understandably) was higher with larger TPs, on the other hand the larger TPs are in a relatively stronger position to institute better in-company Rewards and Recognition system. However, the trainers in these two cohorts reported no difference on this factor leading the researchers to infer that the larger TPs could further improve their firm-level performance on this factor thereby differentiating them to attract quality trainers into their fold.

The trainer cohort with the larger TPs reported similar levels of satisfaction on the salary amount factor vis-à-vis the trainer cohort with SME TPs. Further, the trainers with larger TPs recorded lower satisfaction levels on the salary payment regularity factor. Both these findings together indicate the larger TPs do not differentiate themselves in the market on emolument factors, which could be a possible reason for them reporting similar challenges like SME TPs of retaining quality trainers when such trainers are offered better emoluments in a competitive market that is continuously seeking to source talent.

Some participants in the FGDs shared their knowledge of trainers' salary amounts being less than the prescribed minimum wages for the State. This reporting by trainers at the FGDs was not independently verified by the study team. However, this could prompt a policy question: should compliance by TPs to wage regulations for trainer's salaries be mandated in future public-funded programmes? This stipulation is already in place for students' placements.

Intent to continue with present employers: Though 88.5 per cent of trainers want to continue with their present employers, a majority of them expressed their continuity was subject to better career opportunities, terms and conditions (Figure 4).
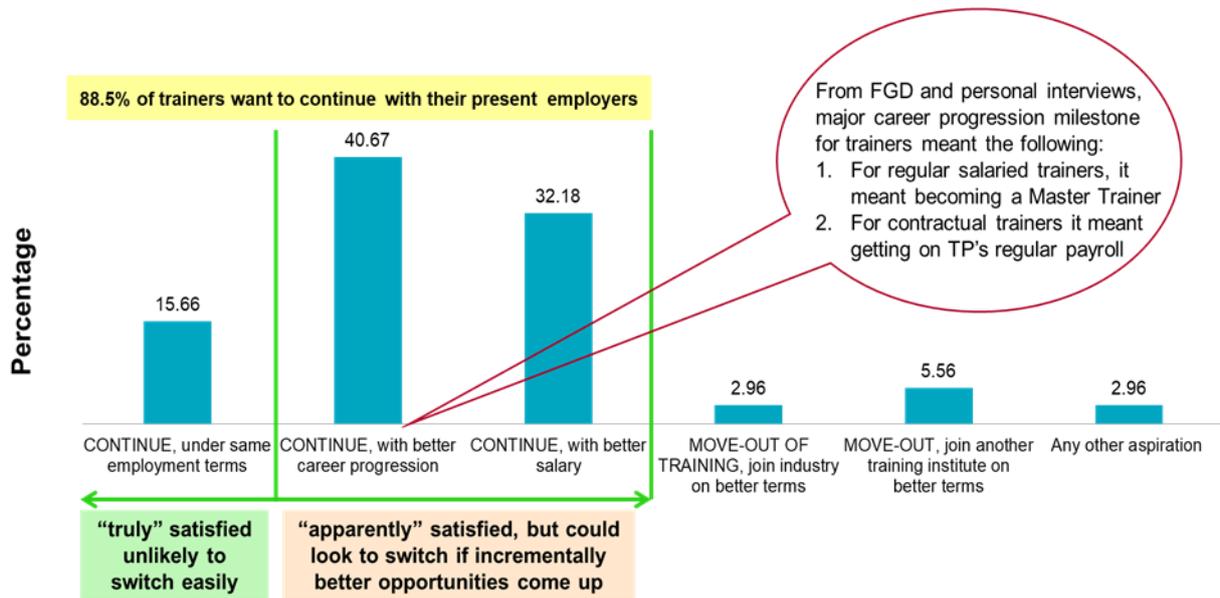
Figure 4: Intent to continue with present employers

However, closer look at Figure 4 shows only 15.66 per cent are "truly" satisfied with their present employment terms and about 73 per cent (sum of 40.67 and 32.18) were "apparently" satisfied but could look to switch if incrementally better opportunities came their way. Within this group, 40.67 per cent sought better career opportunities which, on-the-ground, meant either (i) becoming a Master Trainers for trainers employed with large TPs, or (ii) getting on TPs regular payroll for contractual trainers.

D.1.3: Professional development of trainers

The web-survey captured trainers' views on the importance of skills to succeed in skill training. Respondents were requested to rank the four skills in a scale of 1-4; rank 1 being most important. Only rank importance 1 and 2 responses have been consolidated and depicted Figure 5. Overall, the trainers felt a balance of hands-on technical skills, class management and pedagogy, and communication skills were needed to succeed as a skill trainer. The trainers' views, when analysed by sectors, reflected this balance across most sectors; except for two sectors (Logistics, Beauty and Wellness) where trainers ranked class management and pedagogy incrementally more than hands-on technical skills.
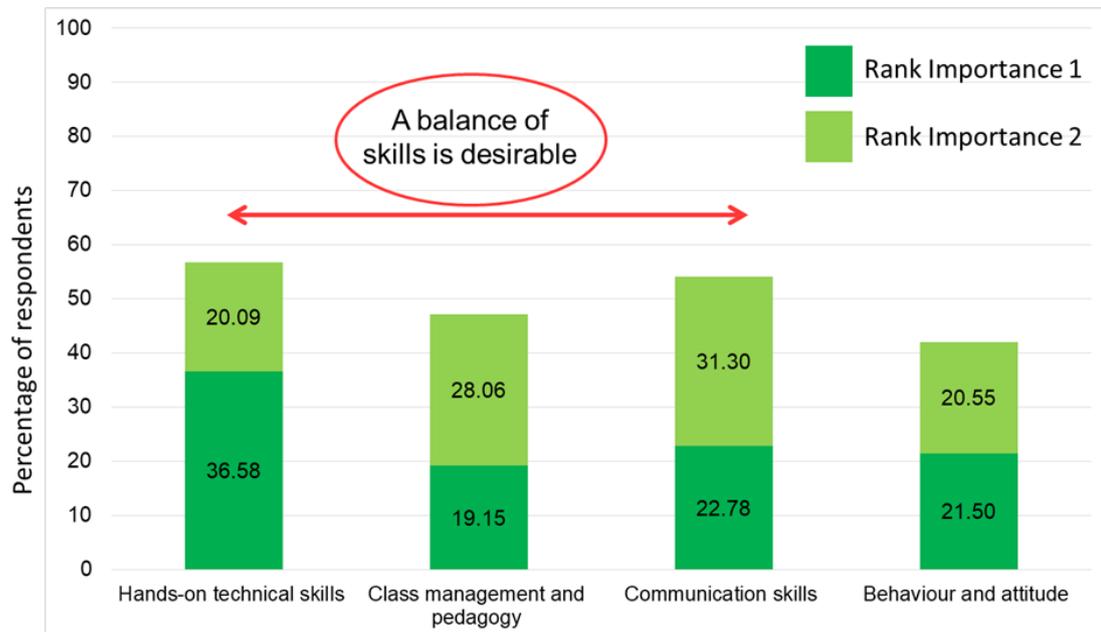
Figure 5: Trainers' views on the importance of skills to succeed in skill training

Respondents were requested to rank their need for further training in five areas in a scale of 1-5; rank 1 being most important. The trainers gave precedence to their need for further training to acquire advanced technical skills and domain knowledge (Figure 6). Analysis at the sector-level showed all sectors (without exception) reflecting this need. A plausible explanation of such need could be the young profile of trainers who could be low on domain knowledge / industrial experience. In the FGD discussions, all trainers welcomed the idea of undergoing periodic industry attachments and felt it could increase their training effectiveness.
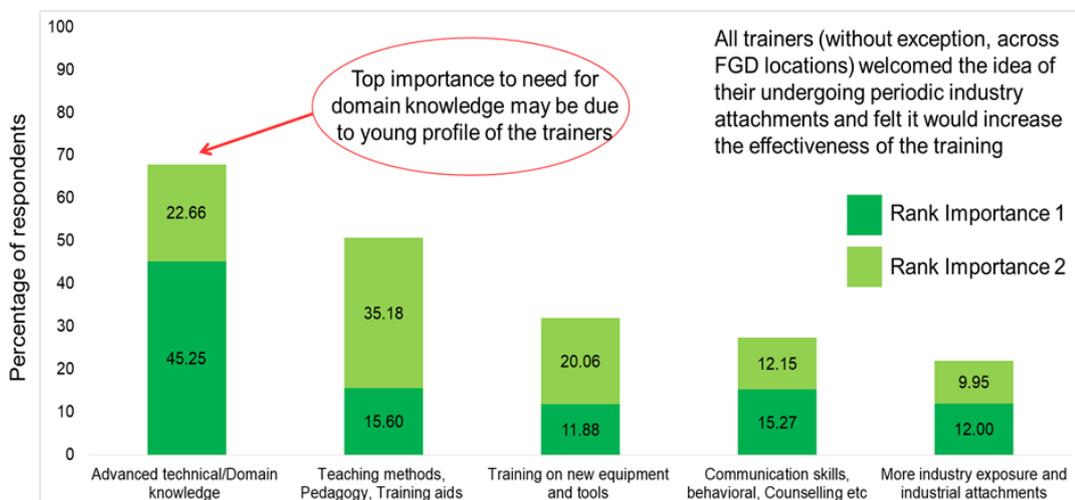
Figure 6: Trainers' views on the need for further training

D.2: Focus group discussions with trainers

As a part of the primary data collection methodology, FGDs (each session spanning about three hours) and some personal interviews with trainers were held in 15 cities. Research questions in all the four study areas: trainer's motivation; pedagogy; evaluation; continuous professional development was covered extensively in these FGDs and interviews.

Overall, the trainers acknowledged establishment of a working system (which, of course, could be improved as detailed below) as an outcome of the PMKVY 2.0 scheme. The work environment, discipline and infrastructure norms were rated highly satisfactory by the trainers. Key findings, for selected research questions, are summarised below.

D.2.1: Trainers' motivation: drivers and barriers

Drivers of motivation: Trainers across FGD locations uniformly felt training students and helping them get placed created livelihood opportunities. Achievement of this objective fulfilled the main purpose of their association with a skill development programme and was the most important motivator. Many trainers added: training young female students and helping them get placed ensured beginning of their economic empowerment process which was a further motivator for them.

Students from marginalised sections of society, and some of the rural areas, had limited exposure. They need additional coaching to give them a better understanding of skill and entrepreneurship. Effective skill training liberates feeling of "inferiority" (if they have any) and "shyness" and made them confident and aspirational. The positive feedback received from such alumni students, after they start their career, were strong motivators for trainers.

Barriers to motivation: Trainers work often involves mobilizing students to join the class, training them, managing to keep high attendance in class, and ensuring placements. All such tasks put together are beyond what would normally be expected of a teacher in a general education school, if they are considered peers. Salary is significantly lower in training (sometime lower than minimum wages) when compared to any comparable role in the same industry. Social protection, such as workplace injury insurance, medical insurance and other benefits are not available to all trainers.

Uncertainty of scheme target allocations to TCs is linked to engagement continuity of trainers and job-security and has an adverse impact on trainers' motivation. In Small and Medium (SME) training provider segment, due to uncertainty in batch allocations to TCs, trainers could be idle for 4-6 months (many of them are not paid during this time). Good trainers "jump ship" either to a larger provider where there is more business certainty or from the sector altogether as soon as they get an opportunity. Most trainers (be in Large or SME TPs) do not look beyond next 1-2 years in planning their careers; some even look at the current year only. This short-term focus of trainers on their own career planning becomes a challenge for longer-term policy planning to train trainers and improve pedagogy.

Some of the trainers also mentioned that a higher recognition of PMKVY certification by the industry (which of course is a wider issue) can also be a driver of trainers' aspiration.

D.2.2: Aspects of Pedagogy / Andragogy

Importance of skills needed to succeed in training: While an almost unanimous view from trainers were to be an effective trainer, one needs to have domain skills and pedagogical competency, most trainers (with some exceptions) prioritized the need for domain skills over other competencies. One of the reasons could be young profile of skill trainers with limited workplace experience themselves but needed such experience to prepare students within the available hours of short-term training courses. The other reason could be that trainers were themselves not updated on industry-wide technology trends and upgrades that were currently happening in workplaces. Hence, the trainers could not adequately provide such knowledge to their students, leading to difficulties in placement interviews.

Handling the differential pace of learning among students is a major challenge for trainers, especially within the short course duration and stipulated hours. Another related challenge was varying interest levels of students to learn; a "free" course with trainers having the responsibility of placement triggered no urgency in the students to learn, except those who were either needy or self-motivated. The common estimate provided by trainers was 25-30 per cent of students in a class could have a different pace (or interest level) of learning. However, they felt that ToT curriculum did not delve deeper into adult learning principles, active learning, objection handling and other "remedial" aspects. Consequently, the ToT did not adequately equip them to handle such heterogeneity in their classes, leaving the trainers to adopt training methods, which they, at an individual level, thought could work in these situations.

Inclusion of On-Job-Training (OJT) component: The concept of OJT is not available for all the courses. Trainers felt OJT should be included in all course work, customized to the sector and job-role. This inclusion will help in active learning, increase the quality of the skill training, and in turn enhance the effectiveness of trainers during the course. Trainers cited instances that they had recently arranged 1-2 weeks of workplace-based training (or once a week exposure to the actual work site during the last month of training) through individual initiatives. The results showed marked improvement in quality of their student pass-outs vis-à-vis the earlier batches that did not go through such OJT.

D.2.3: Training of trainers

Views on ToT programme: Trainers reported the three days duration of ToT domain component was not being useful. Though this ToT component may have been designed as an orientation session to be given to experienced trainers on NSDC Qualification Packs on job-roles, the attendees expected more in-depth domain training would be provided in these sessions, thereby supplementing knowledge on current trends in the industry.

While the above could be further deliberated, one of the inferences that could be drawn was the TP's assessment (and verifying if needed) of the quality industrial experience and domain knowledge of trainers during recruitment needs to be improved. This aspect was also covered in the trainers' FGD sessions, wherein many trainers voluntarily admitted they were deficient in knowledge on contemporary industrial technologies.

This inference was corroborated during discussions with the SSCs who expressed concerns about the quality of domain experience of many trainers in their respective sectors and the need for TPs to adopt more stringent recruitment standards.

The seven days duration of ToT platform component was found more useful, but by the less-experienced trainers. The more-experienced trainers suggested improvements in the ToT platform training component as well, such as including of "teach-back" sessions which could extend the duration of the ToT but would be beneficial for trainers.

Scheduling of ToT sessions: While ToT batches are periodically published by SSC on the Skill India portal along with training calendar, in the FGDs the trainers asserted that the ToT sessions were arranged at a short notice. Though this was not independently verified by the research team, there may be cases where TP informed their trainers at short notice or incidences of ToT scheduling by SSCs at a short notice.

Overall, the demand for ToT sessions far exceeded the number of ToT sessions being organised by the SSCs, leading to a long waiting time for trainers to join the courses. The SSCs separately reported their constraints to aggregate ToT demand and periodically conduct ToT at locations. At times the inter-state location of the courses was quite distant from the TCs; traveling long-distances, at a short notice, was cited as a challenge by some women trainers in the FGDs. Linguistic incompatibilities with the master trainer during the ToT sessions were also cited, with a request that state-wise ToT programmes be conducted to overcome both logistics as well as linguistic difficulties.

ToT assessment outcomes by third party agencies were not view favourably by even certified trainers; the assessments seemed to have fallen short of standards anticipated by the trainers. The assessment outcomes were questioned in almost all FGD locations, giving experiential examples. One of the oft quoted examples were the third-party agencies administering questions to trainers for ToT assessments leveraging question banks earmarked students' assessments, thus compromising on the degree of difficulty that needs to be there for a ToT assessment. Another example repeatedly cited by many trainers was assessors doing a hurried job and barely giving few minutes to each trainer during the ToT assessment process.

Cost of ToT expenses: Though NSDC's common norms stipulated provisioning of the ToT expenses as the TP's responsibility towards their trainers; the TP's looked to optimise on this. One of the expectations was ToT sessions being conducted closer to the TCs to minimize the expenses of trainers' travels.

Some of the TP senior officials interviewed suggested there should be a provision of a one year lock-in period for the trainer availing of the ToT expense funding by their employers to reduce "poaching" possibilities by competing TPs who were looking to hire certified trainers to jump start their allotted batches. In their proposal, where the trainer decides to dishonour the lock-in period and join another TP, there should be a hold put on registering any new batch by the TP in the name of the "poached" certified trainer till the expiry of the lock-in period. To protect the trainers' interest, in case of any unfair treatment by the TP, the trainer can approach the SSC for a waiver of the lock-in period.

Validity of ToT certification: All trainers either sought lifetime validity or at least a five-year validity of the ToT certification. The ToT renewal process was also critiqued for improvement. Instances were also cited of clubbing trainer candidates appearing for the first time ToT certification in the same batch with those seeking bi-annual renewal of their certificates, thereby leading to repeated learning of the same curricula by the more experienced trainers leading to potential conflict and disagreement between them.

D.2.4: Evaluation of trainers' performance

At present, the focus of trainers' performance evaluation remains on commercially linked aspects such as trainers' responsibility to ensure biometric attendance of students, achieve success rates in assessments for certification and placements. Intra-company trainer evaluation system exists within some large TPs who also consider students' feedback on the effectiveness of the trainers (taken by the Centre Managers). However, such intra-company trainer evaluation systems are not operational in the SME TP segment. Moreover, the intra-company evaluation system of trainers (wherever it is operational), may not be well structured and objectively administered.[14] Trainers expressed the need for more objective evaluations.

D.2.5: Continuous professional development of trainers

At present, the TPs expect their trainers to keep pace with modern advancements and appraised of current technology trends through self-learning. Some large TPs do have sector level social media groups of trainers that are led and moderated by Master Trainers based in their corporate offices. The Master Trainers respond to queries posted by trainers and provide the group with self-study material. However, there are almost no measures (either at the programme-level or at the firm-level) to ensure trainers undergo periodic domain refresh and follow continuous professional development pathways linked to their career progression. The printed material (books) provided by NSDC need updates and be made available to the trainers and students on time.

Domain knowledge refresh: Updating the trainers' domain knowledge is an important aspect to help improve trainer's effectiveness and ensure quality in training outcomes. Implementing a domain knowledge refresh process becomes even more important in an environment where weaknesses exist in the TP's assessment of trainers' domain knowledge during the recruitment process. All trainers (without exception, across locations) welcomed the idea of their undergoing periodic industry attachments and felt they could benefit from exposure to current practices and technologies being currently used in the workplaces. Such industrial attachments could be jointly certified by the industry partner and their employer TP, subjected to a quality audit by the SSC (may be on a sample basis), and would go a long way to enhance trainers' effectiveness.

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[14] *This was reported by trainers and the study team did not carry out any independent verification*

D.3: Web survey of alumni students

A short web-survey was launched with an objective to obtain alumni students' views on the key factors to which students assigned importance, and obtain their opinion if trainers' effectiveness could be improved. Valid responses from 498 alumni students (56.2 per cent respondents were male and 43.8 per cent were female) of 2019 batches were obtained with most responses coming from age groups 18-25 years (83.1 per cent) and 25-30 years (13.7 per cent). Of the respondents 71 per cent were in regular salaried jobs, 11 per cent in contractual jobs, 8.8 per cent were self-employed and 9.2 per cent neither in wage nor self-employment. About 76.5 per cent of respondents engaged in Apparels, Electronics and Hardware, Healthcare, Retail, Telecom, Tourism and Hospitality sectors.

A short web-survey was launched to obtain alumni students' ranked importance of trainers' qualities (Figure 7) and if the trainers' effectiveness could be improved. The students' ranked the importance of trainers' possession of theoretical knowledge and practical skills higher than other skills. However, a sizeable number of students (about 27 per cent) also ranked the trainers' skills to gauge the students' speed of learning as important or most important. This corroborated with the trainers' views voiced in the FGDs that 25-30 per cent students in their classes had a differentiated pace of learning.
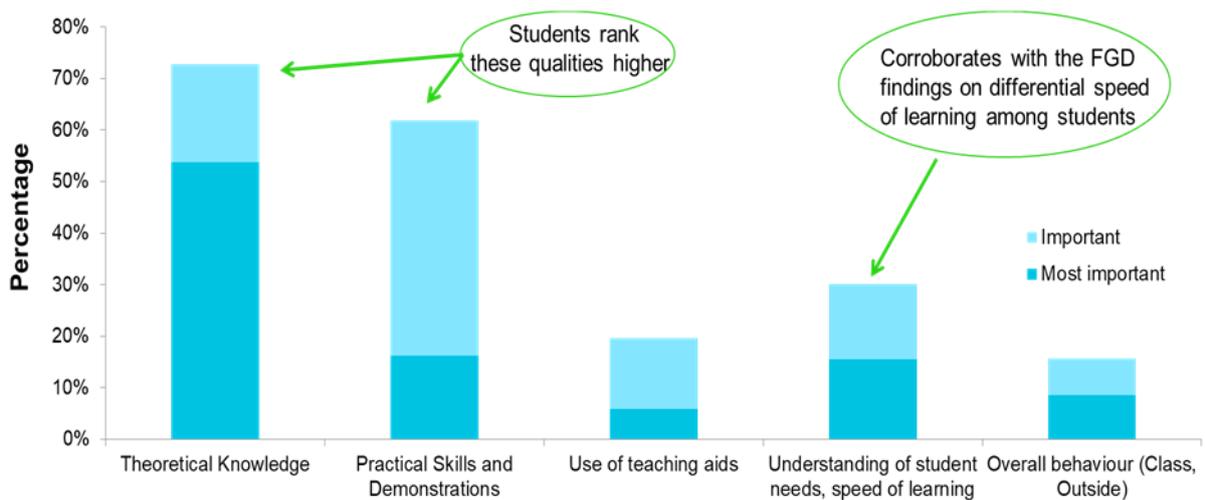

Figure 7: Ranked importance of trainer's qualities (students' views)

D.4: Sector skill council interviews

In all 26 Sector Skill Councils were interviewed as a part of this study; six SSCs were met in person and twenty others were interviewed telephonically. The key findings from these interviews are summarized below:

- While most SSCs said trainers should have strong domain knowledge and that pedagogical skills could be imbibed, few sectors such as apparel, telecom and healthcare felt pedagogical and intrinsic communication skills of trainers were more important to achieve success in training.

- A majority of the SSCs stated that the quality of trainers at entry should be improved. One of common reasons put forward for poor quality of trainer at entry could be low remuneration levels for trainers which was insufficient to attract talent. The SSCs suggested such recruitment norms be affected that assures quality at entry and TPs be requested to comply to these norms which could then be subject to post-recruitment audits by the SSC.

- Most SSCs opined that the present ten-day ToT format, i.e. seven days platform training and three days domain training, would be useful if the nominations sent for the ToT course are pre-screened. Most of the SSCs also suggested providing flexibility in guidelines for the SSCs to make ToT's more sector-specific; some SSCs have initiated steps to flexibly deliver ToT courses according to their sector needs.

- At present ToT assessments are being conducted by third-party assessment agencies. Almost all the SSCs suggested that ToT assessments be made an in-house responsibility of the SSCs to be done in collaboration with the industry. This would improve assessment quality. The study found examples of SSCs who have started the practice of conducting ToT assessments by their own staff. They also preferred online monitoring of the ToT assessments from their Head Office or videography of the assessment sessions of the trainers, which could be subsequently scrutinised.

SECTION E: INSIGHTS FROM SYNTHESISED FINDINGS

Our findings are consistent with those previously identified in the Guidelines for Short-Term Skill Development Programmes (September 2019), and so these remain issues to overcome. However it is important to present an overview of the total picture in line with the terms of reference with the study that the research has found and to ensure that that any improvements going forward take into account the feedback of trainer perceptions, interventions already in place from the Guidelines and good international practice that exists. Findings have been grouped into the following areas:

- strengthening the trainers' recruitment process;
- enhancing quality of TVET delivery through pedagogical improvements;
- enhancing the professionalism of a trainer role;
- providing continuous and better professional development opportunities to trainers;
- ushering in a more comprehensive evaluation system of trainers' performances leading to certification and its renewal.

Ensuring trainers' quality at entry is of paramount importance

Even though qualification requirements exist for assuring trainers' quality at entry, concerns about the quality of trainers (both domain knowledge and pedagogical skills) in the system has been voiced by almost all SSCs and senior management of TPs (as employers of the trainers) who were interviewed. Basic pedagogy and training skills requirement needs to be consistently enforced during trainers' recruitment.

Training of trainers; improving Pedagogy

An effective trainer needs to have both domain knowledge and pedagogical skills. The design of the existing ToT programme takes cognizance of this need. However, the ToT domain component of three days duration was reported as not being useful. Though this ToT component may have been designed as an orientation session to be given to experienced trainers on NSDC Qualification Packs on job-roles, the attendees expected more in-depth domain training would be provided in these sessions, thereby supplementing knowledge on current trends in the industry. One of the inferences that could be drawn was the TP's assessment (and verifying if needed) of the quality industrial experience and domain knowledge of trainers during recruitment needs to be improved. In comparison, the ToT platform component (7 days) was found more useful, but by less-experienced trainers. The more-experienced trainers suggested improvements in the ToT platform training component as well, such as including of "teach-back" sessions.

The ToT assessments by third party agencies were not viewed favourably; the quality of assessments seem to have fallen short of the trainers' expectations and the assessment outcomes were questioned by trainers participating in almost all FGDs. At the same time, almost all the SSCs suggested that ToT assessments be made an in-house responsibility of the SSCs to be done in collaboration with the industry. This would improve assessment quality. The study found examples of SSCs who have started the practice of conducting ToT assessments by their own staff.

As reported by the trainers, they were given an opportunity in their ToT course to take a short duration mock presentation class (for about 5 – 10 minutes) and the Master Trainer provided feedback. In practice, most trainers were required to take hour-long classes and found this short duration mock presentation session inadequate. Also, as these mock presentation sessions were not video-graphed and played back while the Master Trainers gave their feedback to the trainers, resulting in the latter not fully visualising their areas of improvement.

Trainers during FGDs expressed the challenges of handling differential learning ability of trainees. A sizeable number of mobilised students are either academically or linguistically challenged (but most had innate capabilities) and were mobilised without following a proper screening process. The most common estimate of such students in a typical class put forward by the trainers was 25-30 per cent. Handling the differential pace of learning of this group of students within the short duration of the course becomes a major challenge for trainers.

A related challenge to trainers emanating within this group of students was their varying levels of interest to learn. Some of these students felt "entitled" or tended to become freeloaders both of which did not generate the required motivation to learn. Though these were mobilisation and counselling issues, the onus lay on the trainers to develop them adequately to ensure their qualification as well as placements. The trainers felt that ToT sessions (the way they are being delivered) did not adequately cover training them to handle such issues. If these issues were to be covered in the ToT sessions and they received hands-on guidance on how to deal with such situations, it would help them improve their training effectiveness.

The use of digital resources to facilitate active learning (which is different from using audio-visual content to support didactic learning) is limited in the skills eco-system in India. The use of appropriate Instructional Aid to train students who demonstrate differentiated learning ability[15] needs to be ushered in a much bigger way.

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[15] *The term "Remedial Instructional Aid" has been used in the draft National Education Policy. However, in the context of skill development, remedial instruction may not always bring up to speed students who tend to lag behind their peers.*

Professionalism of trainers

From the FGDs, there are issues emerging that are seen to denigrate the professionalism of a trainer. Trainers work often involves mobilising students to join the class, training them, managing to keep high attendance in class, and also ensuring placements. A large number of students joining short-term skilling programmes are academically challenged and drop-outs from mainstream schools; trainers need to make significant efforts to retain and get them to complete their courses. According to the trainers, such tasks put together make their workload beyond what would normally be expected of a teacher in secondary or higher secondary schools for general education who were considered as peers by the skill trainers[16].

Trainers' salaries are usually lower in training institutes when compared to teachers in general education or comparable trainer job-roles in the industry. Sometimes their salary levels are lower than minimum wages of the State.[17] Trainers working with most TPs have faced issues around regularity of salary payments at some point of time or the other; they felt that trainers' salaries would be one of the first items that would get deferred when their employers faced any cash-crunch. The severity of this issue is even more with trainers engaged with sub-contracted TPs who work under the aegis of the larger ones. Other benefits, workplace injury insurance, and social protection cover are also not available to all trainers. These collectively are de-motivators for trainers and do not make a trainer's career aspirational.

Trainers felt uncertainty of scheme target allocations to the TCs affects the continuity of engagement in their job-roles, job-security and career progression possibilities. Many trainers who attended the FGDs stated they do not look beyond next 1-2 years; some even look at the current year only. These prevailing uncertainties adversely impacted the trainers' motivation levels and were barriers to their aspiration. In the SME training provider segment, trainers said they seek opportunities to move to larger TPs where they perceived more business certainty.

Another issue that trainers brought forward in few of the FGDs[18] were trainees of short-term skill training courses being sought to be placed in the same operational area within industries and business establishments where trainees completing their longer-term skill training courses are also seeking opportunities. In this overlapping competitive scenario the longer-term skilled candidates tend to be more successful and thus leading to the short-term skill trainers being de-motivated.

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[16] This peer-comparison was stated by skill trainers in most of the FGDs and local comparisons were shared by the trainers as anecdotal evidence

[17] Our study did not include any survey or benchmarking exercise of trainers' salaries or wages. This issue was brought forward by the trainers in the meetings and Focus Group Discussion held across cities.

[18] It was discussed in three of the 15 sessions

Continuous professional development

Most trainers reported their need for advanced technical training and periodic refresh of domain knowledge. Presently, they sought to keep their domain knowledge updated through self-study, keep themselves updated with current development and advancements in their field of work, and avail online freeware to prepare their lesson plans. Most TPs, especially the SMEs, have no in-house systems to support their trainers CPD needs.

However, some of the large TPs have social media groups of trainers and these are moderated by their in-house Master Trainers. Queries posted by trainers in this group are responded to by the Master Trainers along with self-study material (if required). These are useful practices, however trainers may still need to go through a period of industrial attachments (elaborated in the Recommendations section) to refresh their domain knowledge and get them updated on current technology applications at the workplace.

Evaluation of trainer performance

Currently there is no system for comprehensive evaluation of trainers' performance during the period of their initial certification and when it becomes due for renewal (fixed period of two years). At present trainers' performances in private training institutes are evaluated on the basis of the biometric attendance of the batch of students and placement success rates both of which are linked to training batch commercials. Some large TPs, through their Centre Managers, take informal feedback from students on the effectiveness of the training, and even fewer other TPs send their academic team representatives to meet trainers at the centres and sit through some training sessions should there be concerns about the quality of training. None of these evaluation measures address the need to systematically evaluate the pedagogy which is core to the Teaching and Learning (T-L) process.

At present ToT courses (both first time and renewals) are scheduled by the SSCs periodically based on aggregated demand at locations across the country and published in the Skill India portal. This poses some logistical problems for the TPs and their trainers in many States, mainly because of (a) waiting times to attend the next available course, (b) releasing the trainers for about two weeks (including travel) to attend this course when enrolled training batches are in progress, (c) expenditures incurred for large distance inter-State travel involved and the supposed question "who bears expenses?", and (d) women candidates who find long-distance travel at a short notice additionally challenging. Instances of trainers seeking to renew their certificates being grouped with ToT sessions for first time candidates have also been critiqued in the FGDs.

On the other hand, the SSCs also voiced their constraints to mobilise high quality Master Trainers and regularly schedule ToT courses. This results in the number of trainers getting certified being less than what is needed for the training eco-system to function in a streamlined fashion. The limited delivery of ToT courses vis-à-vis demand may have created a "bottleneck" and avoidable arbitrage for ToT certified trainers in the labour market. The "poaching" of ToT certified trainers by employers who are looking to enroll their batches under the ToT trainers and get started could have been a result of such ToT certification arbitrage that may have come to exist in the trainers' labour market.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS

The study identified measures that could be recommended for further development of trainers engaged in the Indian skilling ecosystem. These recommendations are in line with the synthesised findings delineated in the five priority areas stated in Section E. Many of these recommendations are applicable to the practices of TPs and quality assurance of their training delivery. It may be noted that SSCs can be involved to ensure minimum benchmarks for quality of training delivery through their certification process.

Figure 8 below has been developed from international practice to show the skills, attributes and characteristics that a trainer needs to be effective when delivering training to students. In seeking to help and improve trainer effectiveness it will be important to use an overall structure such as shown in the diagram from which to highlight gaps in i) areas where trainers feel the current system is letting them down and ii) on-going CPD provision for making trainers more effective and iii) building the role of a trainer as a professional career. These gaps will become apparent when taking elements from the NSDC Skill India Training of Trainer and Assessor Guidelines for Short-Term Skill Development Programmes (September 2019). Others will come from outcomes of the research study and also gaps that have emerged from research of international good practice.
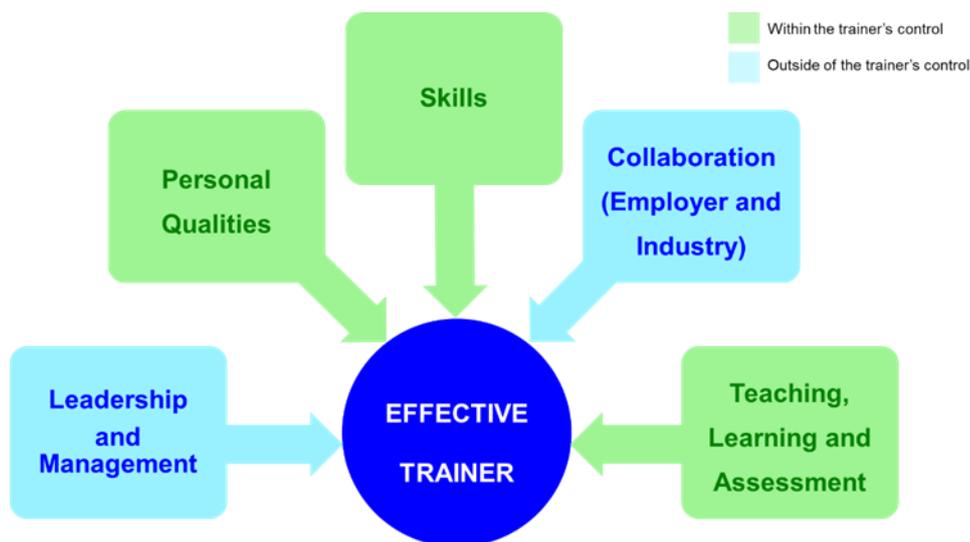

Figure 8: Key attributes of an effective trainer (source: compilation from multiple international good practice examples, contributed by international consultant)

The headings used in Figure 8 can be tabulated into more useable points for assessing gaps and highlighting topics to consider for making a trainer more effective:

Outside of the trainer's control	Within the trainer's control
Leadership and management • Organisation policy for CPD • Funding • Support to actively take up CPD opportunities • Information Technology • Quality assurance processes • Inclusivity • Dissemination opportunities • Industry standard resources • Evaluation of programmes	**Personal Qualities** • Industry professional • Motivated to improve • Passion for learners to achieve • Enthusiastic and knowledgeable • Emotional intelligence (self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship management) • Self development activity for lifelong learning • Career aspirations and goals
Collaboration • Formal employer partnership working • Networks • Mentoring	**Skills** • Occupational competence • Up to date industry knowledge • Digital competency in classroom • Good communication skills • Working in a team • Training design • Classroom management
	Teaching, Learning and Assessment • Relevant industry curriculum • Planning • Pedagogy and Andragogy • Variety of delivery methods • Differentiated learning • Formative and summative assessment • Reflective practice

The NSDC Guidelines specifies the procedures to be followed to implement and adhere to the processes, frameworks and systems for establishing a quality assured process for bringing all elements of trainer/assessor recruitment and domain development together. In the Qualification Pack for trainers and assessors both domain and pedagogical training is covered thoroughly and addresses many elements of Figure 8 above. There is however a lack of training to develop the personal qualities a trainer needs to be effective, and ultimately be able to successfully train young people and adults to enter the Indian job market. For example, developing their own self-awareness or managing relationships with stakeholders and these will be covered within the recommendations.

Looking at these guidelines, some of the skills and attributes as well as digital and pedagogical skills required, there remains a need to establish a formally developed on-going skills development process for all qualified trainers (i.e. a structure for **lifelong learning for trainers**). Findings from the research study show that many trainers do the job because of social recognition, love of teaching and their need to continue learning and therefore adopting a structured approach to the system will deliver on these. This should then demonstrate that becoming an effective trainer is a professional and valued career option and that there are real opportunities for career development and progression (viz. newly qualified trainer moving to become an experienced trainer, then becoming a master trainer). It is also important that trainers appreciate the value of ToT certifications and that these are held in high regard by training institutions, students and employers in general and not just the SSCs and training institutions that deliver the trainer courses.

To fully develop a career path for a professional, effective trainer it is suggested that routes through a trainer's career development be plotted. One example could be to use an overall headline structure as released by NSDC in their framework developed in collaboration with Singapore Polytechnic[19]: three-level vocational pedagogy framework entitled TPCK (Technological, Pedagogical, Content, and working Knowledge) and, the capability to systematically and progressively develop TVET teachers towards teaching excellence via professional pedagogic development and communities of practice.

From the overall picture of the Singapore Polytechnic framework presented in Figure 9 a new framework incorporating a range of relevant international practices, together with a set of detailed criteria, can be developed for assessing the quality of outcomes required at each stage. This could be titled the '**Professional Trainer Development Framework'**. Initially starting at recruitment/induction training, it would continue through to Master Trainer/Assessor, and recommendations made will address various points of the career path that are found lacking in trainer effectiveness from the research study.
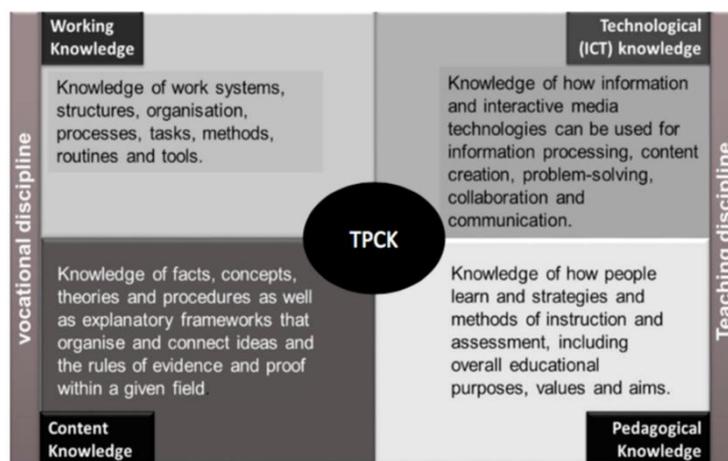

Figure 9: Vocational Pedagogy in Institute of Technical Education ITE Singapore

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[19] *Training of Trainers and Assessors, Guidelines for Short-Term Skills Development Programmes v2 August 2019*

In addition to the recommendations above to develop a formal structure for trainer effectiveness and development, there are specific recommendations to be made in response to outcomes from the research study. These are made below under the five prioritised areas of the synthesised findings presented in Section E of this report:

- Ensuring trainers' quality at entry
- Management of the pedagogical learning process
- Professionalism of trainers
- Continuous Professional Development
- Evaluation of Trainer Performance

F.1: Ensuring trainers' quality at entry

As a part of the recruitment and initial training process (Stage 1 in a trainer development), training institutes should use a detailed **set of performance criteria** for trainers to achieve in order to become certified as a trainer. These criteria[20] will then support the training provider to assess trainer performance to ensure consistency across TPs, and to assist SSCs in their sampling exercise.

There are examples of what to look for when reviewing trainer performance in the classroom that can be used in order to develop an appropriate model for India. These include: i) Ceputec Trainer Competency Checklist (Australia) that looks at for example, how a trainer prepares the session, delivery, visual aids used, body language, student participation and technical competency; ii) Quality Assurance Framework Scotland that lists quality indicators and what an observer would expect to see; iii) in the UK there is a thorough observation of teaching and learning process with documentation that can be adapted to meet the needs of the initial training process. Most TPs in England have clear documentation for this process. One example could be from University of Leicester, although there are others in existence and available for adaptation.

It is recommended that every applicant-trainer during their recruitment process takes a 30-minute video-graphed training class of an ongoing batch at the TP's centre. The training quality (domain knowledge and pedagogy) demonstrated by the applicant-trainer in this training session should be certified for adequacy by the Academic Head (or equivalent) of the TP, which along with the video recording of the session may become made a part of a recruitment record. These records may subsequently be audited by the SSC as a pre-screening measure when the trainers get nominated for their ToT courses.

Based on their performances in the recruitment process, newly recruited trainers will be required to have their CPD plans formalised. This formalised CPD plan would then become a part of the trainer's service record and serve as a reference document (with periodic updates) to guide the trainers' future professional development process.

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[20] *Our study has not recommended this set of criteria, as it needs to be consultatively evolved between NSDC, SSCs and TPs. However we have made suggestions of international practice that could guide this.*

Thereafter, as a part of the post-recruitment trainers' induction process, the first domain certification (essentially two-day orientation of the Qualification Packs (QP), model curriculum and related lesson plan) could be delivered digitally as a curated online material. The trainers achieving certification on this course would be allowed to register batches and commencing training classes. This would ensure minimum consistent understanding of the QP by the trainers at the point of entry across the country. The longer duration (ten days or more, if revised) on-premise ToT courses could be scheduled subsequently. Thereafter of domain knowledge refresh could happen through the periodic industrial attachments and/or supplemented by curated on-line learning and its certification.

F.2: Management of the pedagogical learning process

Enabling trainers to focus on the difference they want to make for their students is highly motivating and effective professional development. This requires trainers to challenge their existing practice and make connections between how they teach and how pupils learn. Great professional development requires trainers to examine their own practice and pre-conceptions about what they think students understand and what they actually do understand. Using the British Council's CPD Framework (Figure 10) for teacher educators, adaptations could be made for relevance to trainers. For example, managing and moderating teacher learning, demonstrating effective teaching behaviour or supporting and mentoring teachers.
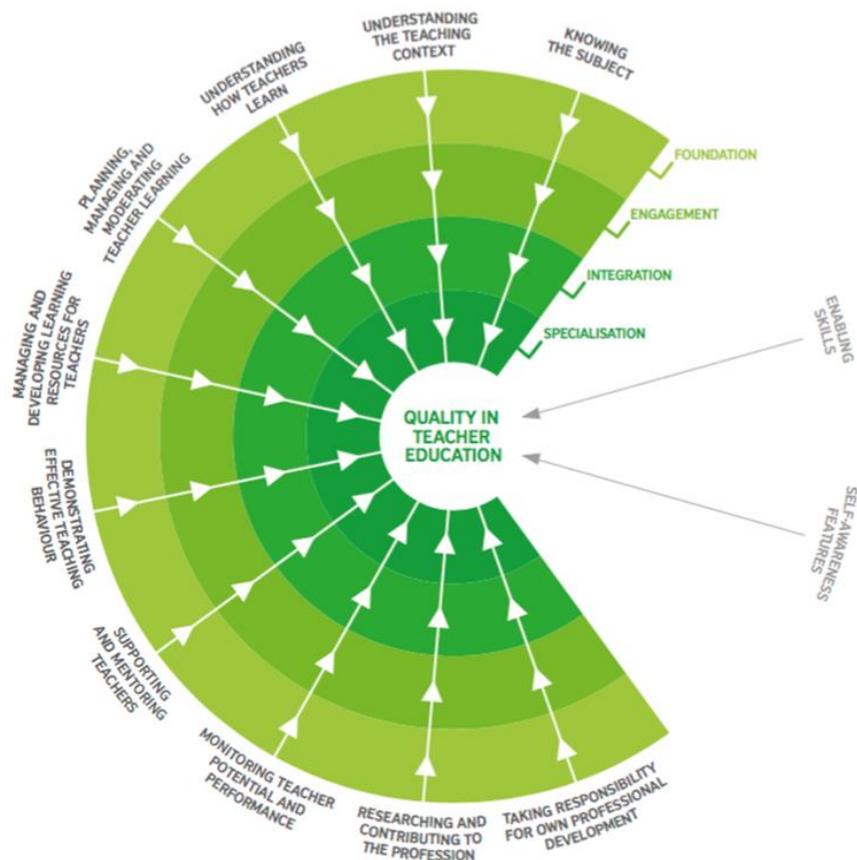

Figure 10: British Council's Continuing Professional Development Framework

It will be important to create a culture where trainers feel valued, where they can share their learning, learn from each other and build a collaborative and self-sustaining system. The nature of teaching means that there is a wealth of talent that essentially remains in the classroom. In England, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) conducted research into TPs as to how they use 'Advanced Practitioner' type roles[21] to improve teaching, learning and assessment. From this research a support package for TPs was developed that included: a set of cards to support quality improvements in teaching, learning and assessment that could be adapted for master trainers (shown below in Figure 11) ii) four guides to use to support master trainers in developing skills in mentoring, coaching, and facilitating professional development; and these were all updated in 2020.

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

BLUE CARDS
PRIMARY FOCUS: DEVELOPING SELF

GREEN CARDS
PRIMARY FOCUS: DEVELOPING OTHERS

MAGENTA CARDS
PRIMARY FOCUS: DEVELOPING ORGANISATIONS

Figure 11: Education and training foundation's advanced practitioner toolkit cards

A selection of training modules may be developed to address pedagogical needs that trainers can use as part of their development activities. These could include:

- Pedagogical approaches adaptable to different student needs (research study outcome)
- Pedagogies to address readiness for learning
- Learning strategies for student-centred learning
- Classroom management
- Develop learner independence
- Develop resources for e-learning
- Coaching and mentoring in action
- Facilitation skills

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[21] *Advanced practitioners support peers on developing teaching, learning and assessment and are often referred to as Teaching and Learning coaches*

For handling students dissatisfied with short courses a number of teaching strategies can be developed. CPD training could be beneficial to handle these aspects in future ToT courses by demonstrating practical techniques, giving instructional aids and making trainers actively participate in practice presentations to the trainers. Going forward, there could be about 40 hours "teach-back" sessions in the future ToT courses to create scenarios and make trainers actively practice everyday situations, such as those emanating from differential pace of learning among students. The ToT courses could include demonstrating practical techniques, giving instructional aids of how to apply adult learning principles (andragogy), active learning[22] and objection handling. Keeping in view such augmentation, the ToT course duration should also be increased, as deemed necessary.

Although curriculum review was outside of the scope of this project, it may be worth looking at how the course is developed and delivered and how outcomes i.e. employment at the end of the course, are related to course content? Also how well is this promoted to the students where their motivation could also be an issue? Finding answers to these questions through further research may address student motivation problems.

It may also be beneficial to introduce a short duration On-Job-Training (OJT) for students, say one to two weeks, within the three-month course period to familiarise the students with the workplace and work environment. The trainers felt such a measure could supplement their classroom and laboratory efforts and improve the overall quality of training imparted. However, any student work experience needs to be carefully planned, delivered and outcomes monitored and linked to student success. Many students then gain employment directly as a result of a successful placement.

It should be noted however that there can be problems in recruiting sufficient numbers of employers to offer this activity, especially SMEs, as offering this takes up so much of their time to make it a worthwhile intervention for a student. Additionally, employers will need guidance for this to be effective. In many vocational courses in the UK students undertaking work experience is now mandatory, and the Adult Learning and Improvement Network with funding from ETF developed a student work experience guide for practitioners and employers from which TPs in India can learn lessons before adopting this approach.

It is suggested that a proportion of lessons be identified[23] and video recording of the class or laboratory demonstration being taken by trainer for these lessons be made a part of the trainer's service record. The SSC would evaluate these sessions on a sample basis, as a part of the certificate renewal processes or while handling any grievance. In UK there is standardised 'observation of teaching and learning' as part of the Quality Assurance (QA) process that each training provider must follow, and this was detailed in sub-section F.1. Master trainers are trained to conduct these observations and findings are fed back to managers on individual performance, and on-going trainer CPD is planned.

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[22] *Felder and Brent (2009). Anything course-related that all students in a class session are called upon to do other than simply watching, listening, and taking notes is called active learning.*

[23] *The selection of lessons can be those which if not taught appropriately and learnt well, will render further learning difficult.*

The training provider is then assessed on overall performance of all their trainers. It will be important that the onus for ensuring quality of training be placed on the training institutions themselves with SSCs regulating them and continuing approval for delivery of courses.

In terms of digital teaching, the Government of India's NPTEL programme in higher technical education has been a pioneering initiative in this direction and lessons learned from this could be considered.[24] In the UK, Jisc (formerly, Joint Information Systems Committee) has produced a 'Digital Teaching Professional Framework', funded by ETF (Figure 12).
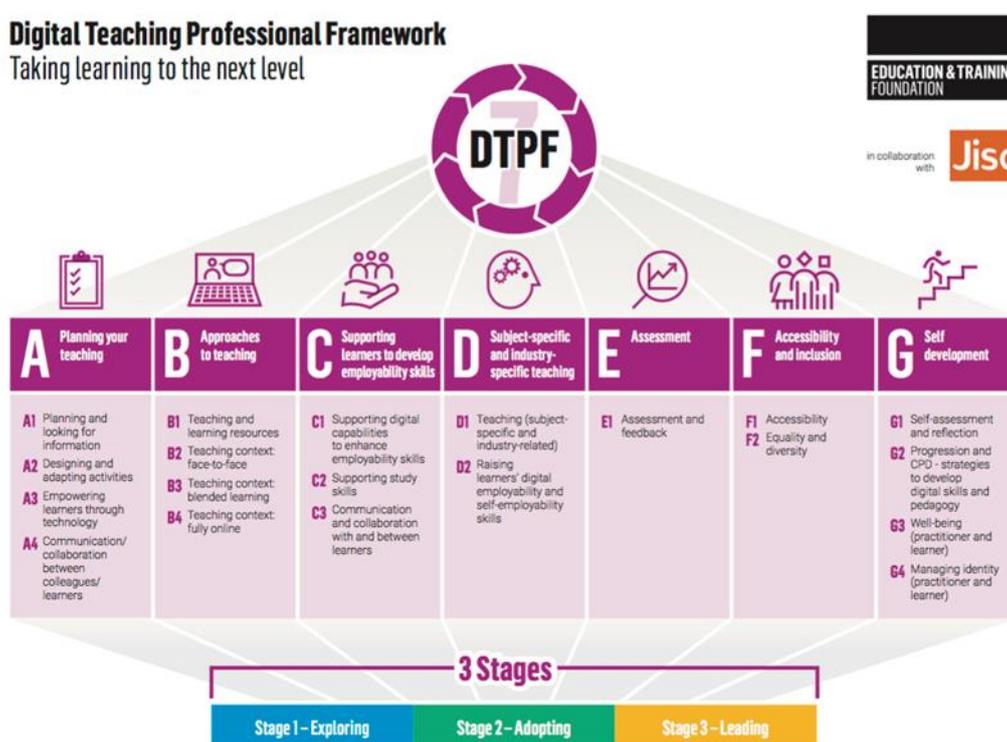

Figure 12: Digital Teaching Professional Framework

This Digital Framework sets out different teaching contexts and activities, and the main components that comprise each of these. Each component is mapped to: relevant parts of the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators; the ETF's Professional Standards; and JISC's six Digital Capabilities. There are statements that describe what competency looks like for each of the teaching and training activities that form the core elements of the framework. The competency statements describe three stages of competence – Exploring, Adopting, and Leading – to show how practitioners can develop their skills. Using this framework, individual trainers can have their needs assessed against criteria for assessing competence and then the subsequent development of activity for CPD modules in:

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[24] *The Govt. of India NPTEL is a project initiated by seven IITs and IISc Bangalore to provide quality technical education.*

- Planning teaching; using digital technology to help plan better teaching and learning

- Approaches to teaching; using resources to engage students in face to face, blended and online learning

- Supporting students to develop employability skills; using digital technologies to improve employment prospects for students

- Subject and industry specific teaching: organizing CPD to develop subject knowledge and business and industry awareness

- Assessment: using digital technologies to improve assessment and give better feedback to students

- Accessibility and Inclusion: ensuring that all students make full use of digital technology

- Self-development: reflecting on professional practice, developing CPD strategies and promoting safe digital identity.

F.3: Professionalism of trainers

It would be highly beneficial to outline the role of an effective trainer and in so doing promote the role as a professional career choice. ETF has developed standards for Teachers and Trainers in Training (TVET sector) to facilitate a common language of longer-term professional development. The purpose of these standards is to support trainers to maintain and improve standards of teaching and learning, and outcomes for students. They were developed in consultation with practitioners and TPs from across the training sector, and define common expectations and provide an interpretation of what a professional might be doing at differing stages of their career or training. Below are extracted criteria that trainers can be assessed against when preparing their annual CPD plan. These can also form titles of some training modules for CPD activity.

Professional values and attributes

- Inspire, motivate and raise aspirations of learners through enthusiasm and knowledge;

- Be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help all students learn;

- Build positive and collaborative relationships with colleagues and students.

Professional skills

- Motivate and inspire students to promote achievement; develop their skills to enable progression;

- Plan and deliver effective learning programmes for diverse groups or individuals in a safe and inclusive learning environment;

- Promote the benefits of technology and support students in its use;
- Enable students to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment, setting goals that stretch and challenge.

In Thailand there is a standard for TVET competencies that can also be considered when developing a set of standards within the overall trainer development framework for India.

- *Core competencies* mean the ones everybody must be fluent, that is communication, figure analysis, information technology and communications, systematic problem solution, reactions among people and responsibilities, and continual self-development.
- *Professional competencies* refer to the ones all teachers must possess. In other words, they have the ability of curriculum design and development, of learning management, of measurement and evaluation, of psychology for vocational teachers, and of learning measurement and evaluation, of environmental management and administration for learning, of educational research, of development of educational innovation and information technology, of guidance and learning activity management, and of building cooperation between academic institutes and communities for educational management.
- *Functional competencies* mean the ones for the vocational teachers of every study field, which is about course development and design. These competencies are concerned with the teaching aid development for vocational students, working in specific study areas, teaching and learning management in technical and skilled levels, working and/or teaching specific areas such as classroom, workshops and laboratory management, equipment usage and maintenance, innovation and invention building, supervision, evaluation, knowledge application to specific study areas for development, together with learning management and self-development.
- These competencies can be achieved through online training programmes in facilitating training, supervising work-based training or facilitating a learning session.

To address the issue of uncertainty in jobs from year to year the scheme could provide a better target allocation pipeline visibility for the entire scheme period that is linked to the training centre performance. This would, to an extent, assure business continuity for TPs and in turn address trainers' engagement continuity issues which they grapple with round the year.

Trainers' emoluments are usually lower in training institutes when compared to teachers in general education or comparable trainer job-roles in the industry. At times their salaries may be lower than minimum wages of the concerned State. Trainers working with most TPs have faced issues on regularity of salary payments. Other benefits, workplace injury insurance, and social protection cover are also not available to many trainers. While working on the enabling factors, the emolument factors thus needs to be professionalised to make a trainer's career aspirational and attract talent into the skilling ecosystem.

F.4: Continuous professional development

In the Training of Trainers and Assessors Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Short-term Skills Development Programmes, Quality Standard (QS) 12 suggests four hours self-study, and at the end of this module the trainee will be able to:

- Explain the importance of continuous professional development for trainers;
- Develop year-on-year personal and professional goals and objectives;
- Evaluate one's own capacity to meet these goals and objectives;
- Identify techniques for continuous professional development;
- Develop a professional development plan to enhance professional capabilities.

The essence of this research study is to inform a range of CPD opportunities that allow trainers to be more effective in their roles and to support students achieve successfully, thus getting relevant jobs and supporting the skills system. It will therefore be essential that training modules be developed that trainers can self-select as part of the SOP QS 12. Trainers therefore will require their own individual performance targets, set by their employer, which they are reviewed against annually and a CPD plan developed accordingly (example: in the UK's this is known as the staff appraisal system).

For trainer CPD to be valued and used as a tool to develop improvement in teaching and learning, individual trainer CPD plans will need to be linked to institutional staff CPD plans with a budget and outcomes that meet the needs of individual students and local employers. A quality standard exists for supporting companies to ensure their staffs are developed, called Investors in People. This is relative to all companies both in the UK and some international organisations have adopted this approach to developing their people, but the significance behind this successful process can be developed and rolled out to training TPs to ensure consistency that all trainers are continuously being developed professionally. Figure 13 shows the structure of the Investors in People framework.

Figure 13: Investors in People framework

Part of the development process of an effective trainer is self-review and reflection. Again, the British Council's excellent resources under the Teaching for Success framework can be used to develop trainers e.g. enabling skills, self-awareness and resilience features: communicating effectively; team working skills; thinking critically; building relationships; effective organisational skills; increasing motivation; leadership / supervisory skills. The

'Reflective practice leading to improvement and enhancement of services' from the Quality Assurance (QA) framework, Scotland can also be used to develop CPD activities here.

All trainers interviewed in this study (without exception, across locations) have welcomed the idea of undergoing industrial attachments at a fixed periodicity. Trainers' industrial attachment could be made mandatory and some norms may be developed such as: one week attachment annually for "fast" moving job-roles while one / two weeks attachment bi-annually for other job-roles (or as may be decided by NSDC / SSC for such job-roles). These attachments could be undertaken at companies who are member of SSCs, employers where trainees get placed, other registered enterprises and advanced technical training institutes approved by the SSCs. The timing of the attachments could be flexibly decided between the Training Provider and the companies (anytime within the stipulated period of one or two years) keeping in view trainer's workload. On completion of the attachment, a joint certification would be done by the industry and TP which would form a part of the trainer's service record and be audited by SSC during ToT certificate renewal. In the Philippines industry work experience is mandatory and, on its completion, a certificate is signed by employers as trainers' CPD record.

Thereafter this knowledge could be kept updated through curated on-line courses and achieving completion certification within these online courses. Continuous domain refresh through such online certification courses would also "de-bottleneck" the existing method of ToT course delivery by conducting on-premise classes.

Another recommendation for professional development of trainers, through their industrial attachments, concerns trainers and employers working more closely together in partnership. The *Teach Too* programme in UK shows how working in partnership with employers and employer networks using a shared approach to delivering quality technical and vocational education can be developed. Teach Too approaches implement the key characteristics on which excellent TVET and learning programmes depend on, such as 'dual professional' trainers who combine occupational and pedagogical expertise. They are trusted, given the time to develop partnerships and curricula with employers, and access to industry-standard facilities and resources reflecting ways in which technology is transferring work. This offers clear escalators to higher-level vocational learning, developing and combining deep knowledge and skills.

The Teach Too framework (Figure 14) is centred on the interlinked themes of Collaboration, Curriculum, Professionalism and Leadership to ensure sustainability in reforms. It aims to support TPs as they work to embed Teach Too principles and practice throughout their own training organisations, showing how more detailed trainer CPD can be developed that not only enhances partnership working, but also feeds into other recommendations such as industrial placements, as this will support relationship building.
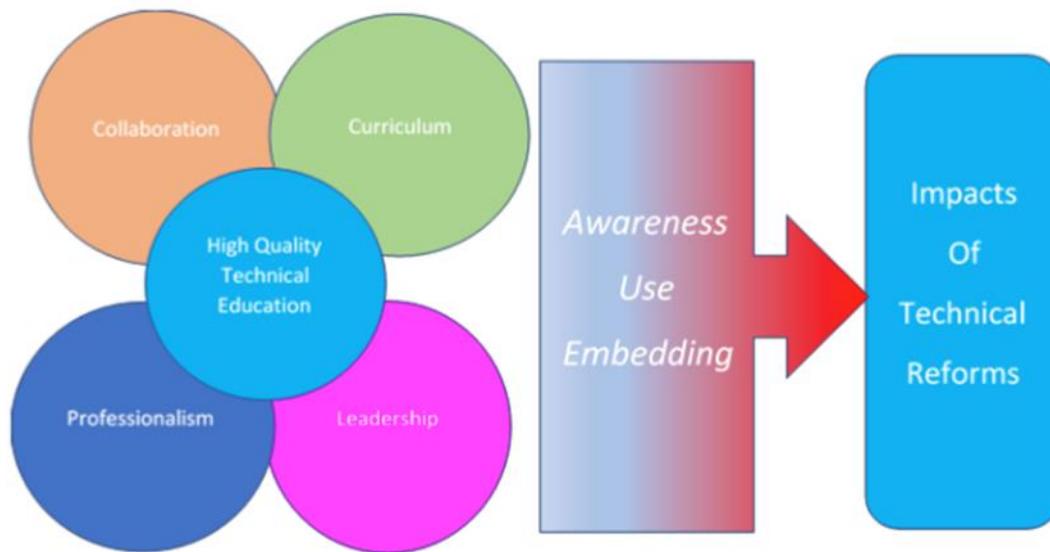
Figure 14: Teach Too framework for collaborative working

The resources available to adapt are: i) Teach too framework; ii) a collaboration readiness check to help partnerships to develop mutual goals and areas for development; iii) a planning toolkit for business planning, risk identification, market analysis and implementation plans; iv) a curriculum design and delivery toolkit exploring the many ways that curriculum can be designed and delivered in collaboration and providing activities that move towards embedding collaboration between education and training providers and employers, creating a sense of shared responsibility for technical and vocational programmes; v) dual professionalism toolkit providing guidance on how to enhance teaching and learning by combining specialisms and aligning the classroom to the workplace; vi) a mapping tool to improve the quality of provision.

For the skills system in India to become more effective it will not just be about supporting institutions that offer ToT courses, but more about ensuring that all TPs are quality assured and developed i.e. ensuring sure that senior leaders provide necessary conditions for effective professional development to take place. It is also essential each training institution that delivers publicly funded courses has guidance and support for leadership and management and effective governance if applicable. This will ensure consistency across the training sector and that TPs are taking responsibility for managing the training process that is staff CPD and student outcomes.

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) have produced a 'Good to Great' programme for private TPs delivering public funded courses, using a mixed model of workshops, webinars and support activities with a strong emphasis on peer support. The headings for this programme identified in Figure 15 can be used to develop a management training programme for TPs to become great across five core areas of their operation'.

Figure 15: 'Good to Great' programme association of employment and learning providers

F.5: Evaluation of trainer performance

In order to be effective and improve the effectiveness of trainers and the training industry as a whole it will be essential to implement a formal evaluation and review process as part of the quality assurance cycle, and feedback from employers and students should also be part of this.

In the UK in-house master trainers regulate quality and feedback to their own management team through monitoring against a regulatory framework, and a national central organisation (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, a non-ministerial department of the UK government, reporting to Parliament. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting a range of educational institutions. The regulatory framework considers every TP and includes:

- Quality of Education
- Behaviours and attitudes of students
- Personal development of students

- Leadership and management of the provider focusing on improving staff's subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment.

If a framework similar to the 2019 Ofsted regulatory framework used in UK with specific criteria was set for recruiting and developing trainers through to becoming a master trainer, it would support TPs and SSCs to get higher quality, lower costs and time off work, and also professionalise the training sector. It would also ensure that each TP was working to a set of common standards, thus ensuring consistency in quality. An example of measuring specifics of a trainer was outlined in Recommendation 1 of this report.

Comprehensive evaluation of trainers' performance: It is recommended that a composite set of metrics be evolved for a comprehensive evaluation of trainers' performance during the intervening period of their first ToT certification and renewal. These metrics, inter alia, could include biometric students' attendance and feedback, students' performance in their assessments, placement success rates, completion of industrial attachments, evaluation of pedagogy, and completion of curated on-line refresher courses.

National System to Recognise Trainers' Excellence: The role of a professional trainer could be made more aspirational. One of the ways this could be done is by instituting a National System to Recognise Trainers' Excellence. Annual awards recognizing training excellence, one for each of the sectors, could be given away at the national level. Trainer nominations for the award can be filed in by the TPs and the winners could be selected by a jury. The process could be managed by the respective SSCs. Once this National System to Recognise Trainers' Excellence becomes operational, it could be extended to interested states for instituting their State-Level recognition systems and awards.

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