India reaping its demographic dividend will remain a myth if a large section of working-age population continues to be among dependent population and do not become part of the labour force. The working-age population becoming part of skilled workforce, therefore, is critical to the country leveraging the population growth to address its key issues of poverty, unemployment and sustainable growth. Skill India Mission (SIM) is a well articulated policy intervention aimed at skilling, re-skilling and upskilling to prepare the country's youth industry-ready. Wide gap between number of youth who have received skill training and placement of trained youth hold a mirror to the policy makers about the mismatch between the course content and industry and market demands. Economic Survey 2018-19 while highlighting the aspect of demographic dividend harped on the need for creation of additional jobs to keep pace with the increase in working age population. The Survey projected that India's working-age population will grow by roughly 9.7 million per year during 2021-31 and 4.2 million per year in 2031-41. Information furnished by the central government in the parliament shows that of total 68.94 lakh candidates trained till March 31 under the Short Term Training (STT) component of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikash Yojana (PMKVY), 54.43 lakh have been certified while 42.99% certified youth (24.37 lakh) have been placed. Thus, 65% of youth who have received STT under PMKVY are yet to find a placement which presents a bleak scenario about skilling the working-age population with market relevant skills to leverage the demographic change. Apart from PMKVY, Jan Sikhshan Sansthan (JSS), National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS) through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) are other skill training programmes under SIM. The JSS is aimed at imparting vocational skills to the non-literates, neo-literates and the persons having rudimentary level of education upto 8th standard and school dropouts upto 12th standard in the age group of 15-45 years. NAPS promotes apprenticeship training and increasing the engagement of apprentices by providing financial support to industrial establishments undertaking apprenticeship programme under the Apprentices Act, 1961. Under CTS long-term vocational/skill training is provided through ITIs to provide the industry skilled workforce

as well as for self-employment. About 29.82 crore out of the 40 crore workforce in India were estimated to be unskilled in 2014-15 while 1.5 crore unskilled people join the workforce every year. Over 5.5 crore have been trained under various skill development programmes so far since the inception of SIM. These figures speak volume about the skilling gap and rising unskilled working-age population. National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in an official release claims that even though India has seen tremendous effort and investment being channelled into improving employment opportunities from both the private and public sector, employment rates – particularly for women – remain low. “The country’s female labour force participation rate (FLPR) has been consistently low at around 30% and research has found that only 10 out of 100 women enrolled in skilling programmes continue to stay in jobs for three months,” it states which brings out the gender disparity in labour force participation that needs to be addressed on priority basis. The gap between trained, certified skilled professionals and their placement points towards training failing to meet the requirement of industry. This can only be addressed by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and industry through frequent interaction to evolve dynamic course content of skill training programmes to meet fast changing requirement of the industry which is linked to investments in existing industrial sectors as well as sunrise industries. A comprehensive review of the training programmes in the context of changing industry requirement will help design new and updated course curriculum to ensure that higher percentage of trained professionals are recruited. Easy access to credit is also a key to promoting entrepreneurship of trained professional so that they can dream to become employer and not limit their dreams to be an employee. For states in the northeast region, imparting training and nurturing entrepreneurial skills in agriculture and horticulture such as food processing, packaging, digital marketing, farm-based tourism and hospitality, start ups in farm mechanization, floriculture etc. will help generate employment opportunities to absorb the skilled youth, provided they receive training to meet the requirement of such entrepreneurial venture. Departments concerned identifying the skill requirement while

promoting such and other entrepreneurial ventures can develop pragmatic and tailor made skill training course so that every trained and certified professional are immediately absorbed. Current practice of imparting training for skill to large number of trainees needs to be replaced with multiple training programmes in accordance with the demand at the village, block, district, state level to meet local requirement. Identifying special skill training for youth migrating outside the state for greener pastures requires strong coordination among the states depending on skill demand in destination states