BRIDGING THE GAP: ANALYZING SKILL DEFICIENCIES AMONG YOUTH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COCHIN CORPORATION

Project Report

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Under the guidance of

Ms. NAMITHA NA

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE

ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), ERNAKULAM

COLLEGE WITH POTENTIAL FOR EXCELLENCE

Nationally Re-Accredited with A++ Grade

Affiliated to

Mahatma Gandhi University

Kottayam-686560

March-2025

ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE, ERNAKULAM (AUTONOMOUS)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project titled **"BRIDGING THE GAP:ANALYZING SKILL DEFICIENCIES AMONG YOUTH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COCHIN CORPORATION"** submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Bachelor in Commerce is a record of the original work done by **Ms. Jane Jaison, Ms. Irien Thresy Philip, Ms. Rida Fathima, Ms. Hephzibah Susan Binu,** under my supervision and guidance during the academic year 2024-25.

Project Guide

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We, Ms. Jane Jaison, Ms. Irien Thresy Philip, Ms. Rida Fathima, Ms. Hephzibah Susan Binu, final year B.Com students(Capital Market), Department of Commerce (SF), St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) do hereby declare that the project report entitled "BRIDGING THE GAP:ANALYZING SKILL DEFICIENCIES AMONG YOUTH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COCHIN CORPORATION" submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University is a bonafide record of the work done under the supervision and guidance of Ms. NAMITHA NA, Assistant Professor of Department of Commerce (SF), St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) and this work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any academic qualification, fellowship, or other similar title of any other university or board.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, we are grateful to God Almighty for his blessings showered upon us for the successful completion of our project.

It is our privilege to place a word of gratitude to all persons who have helped us in the successful completion of the project.

We are grateful to our guide **Ms. Namitha N.A**, Department of Commerce (SF) of St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam for her valuable guidance and encouragement for completing this work.

We would like to acknowledge **Dr. Alphonsa Vijaya Joseph**, Principal of St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam for providing necessary encouragement and infrastructure facilities needed for us.

We would like to thank **Smt. Lekshmi C**, Head of the Department, for her assistance and support throughout the course of this study for the completion of the project.

We will remain always indebted to our family and friends who helped us in the completion of this project.

Last but not the least; we would like to thank the respondents of our questionnaire who gave their precious time from work to answer our questions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

According to a TeamLease report, though there are over 500 million Indians in the working age , one out of two are not employable . This demographic dividend shows the fatality of the prevailing issue of skill gap/talent gap in the country. India, a nation poised for global economic dominance, faces a significant challenge that could hinder its aspirations: a widening skill gap.

Skill gap refers to the disparity between the skills required by industries and the skills possessed by the new generation which poses a serious threat to the country's economic growth and competitiveness. In order to better understand the complexities of the talent gap and its effects on regional economic growth, this study focuses on the particular setting of Cochin Corporation, a significant metropolitan center in Kerala. We endeavor to determine the underlying reasons of the skill gap and offer customized solutions to close this gap by analyzing the several factors that may be responsible such as education, brain drain and the effectiveness of government policies. A trained and skilled generation of students is essential to the growth of every country's economy. It is composed of people who possess the specific training, education, and work history needed to do demanding tasks in a variety of industries.

The skill gap, a significant disparity between the skills required by industries and the skills possessed by the workforce, has far-reaching implications for individuals, businesses, and the overall economy. Individuals who lack the requisite abilities may find their work options limited, which might result in underemployment or unemployment. Lack of skills can impede professional advancement, preventing people from moving up to higher-paying positions, and it may drive them to take lower-paying professions, lowering their earning potential.

This research aims to investigate the root causes of the skill gap in Cochin Corporation and propose strategies to develop a skilled rising generation that can drive economic growth and innovation in the region.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Kochi, a growing city in India, is grappling with a significant shortage of skilled workers, which poses a major challenge to its development. Despite its advantageous location, rich cultural heritage, and increasing investments in various sectors, the city is unable to fill critical positions in key industries like technology, tourism, and manufacturing. C. Jayakumar , CHRO of Larsen and Toubro (L&T) says “Talent is the biggest challenge for growth”. Widening skill gap negatively impacts productivity, which not only slows economic growth but also limits innovation and competitiveness in the region. The gap in skills is further exacerbated by a mismatch between educational offerings and industry needs. Additionally, the struggle to attract and retain talent is causing businesses to reconsider their investments, which could impede Kochi’s potential for future development. As a result, addressing the skills gap has become essential for unlocking the city’s full economic potential and ensuring sustainable growth.

1.3 Scope of the study

The study is confined to the Cochin Corporation. This study aims to evaluate the current skill levels and challenges within India’s education and training system. It will assess the effectiveness of existing government policies and programs, such as the Skill India Mission, in promoting skill development. Additionally, the research will investigate the reason skilled individuals pursue opportunities abroad, considering economic, social, educational factors. Finally, the study will analyze the alignment of the current education curriculum with workforce requirements and its impact on skill development.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To assess the current skill levels and pinpoint the main challenges within the education and training system.
- To assess the effectiveness of existing government policies and programs aimed at skill development, such as Skill India Mission.
- To investigate the key reasons driving skilled individuals to seek opportunities abroad, including economic, social and educational factors.
- To analyze how the current education system in India prepares students for the workforce, focusing on our curriculum relevance and its skill development.

1.5 Research Methodology

1.5.1 Research design

The present study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. It is descriptive in the sense that it tries to identify the reasons for the research study to get an understanding of the current status of the issue. It is analytical in the sense that it analyses and interprets data to arrive at conclusions.

1.5.2 Sample design and size

The sample design used for the proposed research is snowball sampling method and the sample size is 210.

1.5.3 Collection of data

The data collection for the proposed research is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through mailed questionnaires and the respondents are selected through the snowball sampling method. The secondary data is collected from books, journals, census and statistics, surveys, organizational reports, websites, etc.

1.5.4 Research instruments for Data collection and Analysis

The collected data were examined and interpreted with the aid of statistical tools such as charts, ranks , percentages and graphs .

1.6 Limitations

The study on skill gap research faced several limitations that may have impacted its findings. First, the research was geographically confined to the Cochin Corporation. Additionally, time constraints limited the depth of data collection and analysis, which may have affected the study. Finally, the amount of available data created an information overload, which made it difficult to focus on the most relevant insights, that may have affected the clarity of the results.

1.7 Chapter Outline

This research study has been presented in five chapters.Each part of the study has a significant role in the completion of the study. Here are the chapter segregation followed for the study.

1.7.1 Introduction

1.7.2 Literature Review

1.7.3 Theoretical Framework

1.7.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

1.7.5 Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 International level

2.1.1 Seamus McGuinness (2015) This analysis confirms that skill gaps are a major determinant of training expenditures and tend to increase the average labor cost globally. The report also highlights the role of communication at the firm level in reducing the skill gaps reported by employees and employers. It is concluded that it is more common for employees to recognize skill gaps when firms do so than vice versa. The level of agreement was higher for skills or competencies related to IT, and management. HRM and collective bargaining stand out among the factors that facilitate the mutual recognition of skill gaps. From a theoretical perspective, the work demonstrates that organizational structures and characteristics play an important role in the identification of skill gaps.

2.1.2 The Global Skills Gap in the 21st Century (2018): This report examines the relationship between graduate skills and employer expectations in today's evolving labor market. It highlights divergences between geographical regions and provides insights for universities aiming to bridge employability skills deficiencies.

2.2 National level

2.2.1 Mullan, J., & Rolleston, C. (2020). Over half of India's GDP comes from the informal sector, which is characterized by low skill levels and significant obstacles to workers' ability to advance their talents. The Indian government has put in place bold upskilling policy measures aimed at boosting productivity and accelerating the "formalization" of the sector. Evidence about skill development is still lacking, though. This article examines and synthesizes the research on the real-world obstacles to upskilling, drawing on systematic review approaches. It concludes that abilities are frequently underutilized in the absence of a supportive labor market and broader business environment circumstances, and that access to and the quality of training—particularly for women—are significant barriers.

The training system's capacity is constrained, and training is frequently not well connected to learner requirements and the labor market.

2.2.2 Bibek Debroy, (2000). This article specifies causes of the Skill Gap –

Several factors contribute to the skill gap in India. One primary cause is the mismatch between the skills imparted by the education system and the demands of the industry. Traditional education often focuses on theoretical knowledge, neglecting practical skills and industry-relevant competencies. This disconnect hinders the employability of graduates. The absence of suitable programs and institutions for vocational training is another important problem. Even while India has made progress in increasing the availability of vocational training, these programs' quality and applicability are frequently lacking.

Furthermore, the problem is made worse by the social stigma attached to vocational training and a preference for academic degrees. Impact of the Skill Gap - The effects of the talent gap on India's economy are extensive. It results in more unemployment, lower earnings, and decreased productivity. Finding qualified people is a problem for many industries, especially manufacturing and services, which limits their ability to develop and compete. Additionally, innovation and technological growth may be impeded by a shortage of trained personnel.

2.2.3 Amit Basole (1998). Policy Interventions - Numerous policy initiatives have been put forth and put into effect in an effort to close the skill gap. The goal of government programs like the Skill India Mission is to improve skill development and vocational training. However, obstacles including insufficient money, subpar infrastructure, and a lack of coordination amongst many stakeholders frequently make these initiatives less successful.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as a promising approach to bridge the skill gap. By collaborating with industry, educational institutions can tailor their programs to meet specific industry needs. Moreover, PPPs can facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and industry placements, providing practical experience to students.

2.2.4 Ajita Shashidhar and Nevin John(2023): The article highlights how semiconductor,5g equipment manufacturing, climate technology and carbon capture, EV batteries, medical equipment manufacturing, defense manufacturing, and other such new technologies have all laid bare the talent gap and posed an enormous challenge before the largest business houses such as Tata group, reliance industries, Adani group in India.

The lack of sufficient skilled workforce to make use of the latest technology is a prominent issue in the new age. With diverse sectors wanting similar skill sets, the talent requirements have gotten blurred. There are jobs available but the challenge is the availability of skilled talent. One of the major reasons that the article specifies for wide skill gap is the archaic curriculum of schools and colleges which focuses on theoretical knowledge. It concludes that solving the talent crisis is investing in skilling and adopting skill-based training.

2.2.5 Rajshekhar Basavapattan(2021) The paper discusses the significant skill gap in India amid its rapid economic development. It highlights the necessity for enhancing skill sets among the youth to leverage emerging opportunities. The author analyzes various government initiatives aimed at skill development using a demand-supply framework, emphasizing the need for more effective educational and training programs. The research underscores the importance of aligning skill development with the evolving economic landscape in India.

2.2.6 Ishfaq Hussain Bhat and Shilpi Gupta(2024) examines the skills gap in critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration (the 4Cs) within the Indian private sector. Highlighting the growing concern over the shortage of these essential soft skills, the research involved interviews with 56 respondents from 15 organizations across five industries. Key findings reveal themes such as the need for explicit feedback, interpersonal skills, and team culture, indicating areas for organizational improvement. The authors emphasize the importance of educational reforms and investments in soft skills development to maintain competitiveness in the global market, making a Compelling case for addressing this critical skills gap.

2.2.7 Geetika Malik and A. Venkatraman(2017) The article examines the significan' skill gap in India's labor market, despite its large youth population. Through a literature review, the authors identify the underlying reasons for this gap and highlight the lack of human intellectual capital.

They emphasize the need for collaboration among stakeholders—industry, academia, and government—to address this issue. The paper provides original recommendations, advocating for companies to invest in workforce training and for educational institutions to align curricula with market demands. By linking the skill gap to employability and economic growth, the authors underscore the urgency of bridging this divide to realize India's demographic potential. This study serves as a strategic roadmap for enhancing skills and improving employability in India.

2.2.8 Manju Dahiya, Ritu Singh, and Mallik Arjun Ahluwalia(2024) examines the significant skill gaps among Indian college students in relation to industry demands. Utilizing both primary surveys and international case studies, the authors highlight a critical disconnect between educational institutions and the rapidly evolving job market, particularly in emerging technologies.

The findings emphasize the need for curriculum reforms to address these gaps, ultimately aiming to reduce unemployment and enhance national income. This study offers valuable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to improve employability and align educational outcomes with industry needs.

2.2.9 Krishnamoorthy A. and Srimathi H. (2019) conducted a study called "Skill Development - The Future of India." They looked at skill-based vocational and higher education practices and found that it's important to understand global workforce needs and take steps to teach the skills that industries require. This will help Indians compete better in the global job market and support the country's growth. To improve skill development, a combination of effective strategies based on real needs is necessary, and these should be reviewed regularly. Collaboration among all stakeholders will ensure that our vocational and higher education system provides the right skills to achieve our goals.

2.2.10 Vidhyadhar T. Banajawad and Dr. Mukta S. Adi (2020) conducted a study called "A Study on Skill Development Programmes for Rural Youth in India." The study aimed to look at the current situation, challenges, and government efforts related to skill development in India. They found that skill development is becoming more important and that education and skills are key to improving job opportunities, reducing poverty, increasing productivity, and supporting sustainable development in rural areas.There's an urgent need to bring together skills, policies, and strategies focused on rural development. It's essential to include skill training and job placement in education. Skill development is crucial for helping rural youth meet today's needs and make real improvements in their communities. So, improving education and skills is a top priority for developing countries like India, which have large youth populations

2.2.11 Anita Swain and Sunita Swain (2020) conducted a study titled "Skill Development in India: Challenges & Opportunities." They analyzed data from the National Skill Development Corporation and concluded that India, being the second most populous country with about 60% of its population being young people, has a "demographic dividend." This means India can benefit economically by developing its young workforce and supporting initiatives like the "Make in India" campaign.
The "Skill India" mission emphasizes the need to focus on entrepreneurship skills to create more jobs. The Indian government has launched various programs, such as PMKVY and DDU-GKY, to help young people gain skills and become employable. It's important for Indian youth to know about these programs, receive the necessary training, and prepare themselves for the job market.

2.3 State level

2.3.1 Amal Sivadasan, Ananthu, Anoop Jayan, Namitha Rani Behera, V. Ramalakshmi (2024). Kerala's development has been significantly influenced by migration, particularly to the Gulf countries. Remittances have reduced poverty and unemployment, empowered women, and funded infrastructure. However, Kerala faces challenges in maintaining its competitive edge in the global labor market.

To sustain this flow, the state needs to invest in education, skill development, and training programs to equip its workforce with the necessary skills to compete with workers from other countries. This includes improving language skills, technical expertise, and cultural adaptability. By addressing these issues, Kerala can ensure the long-term sustainability of its migration-driven development model.

2.3.2 National Skill Development Corporation (2012): In this study, the researchers have mandated Deloitte to undertake a district-level skill gap study for the state of Kerala with the broad objective of creating an information source. Concerning Ernakulam district, Ernakulam has a higher literacy rate of 95.9% in comparison to the state average of 93.9% and the estimated district employment in 2011-12 is highest in the secondary sector (47.2%), and followed by the tertiary sector (37.7%) and the primary sector (15.1%).

The report believes that primary sector and secondary sector contribution will continue to decline whereas tertiary sector contribution will increase. The report also highlights qualitative skill gaps in Ernakulam such as lack of communication and English skills among tour guides and restaurants, lack of knowledge of green building design among engineers, and absence of Technical knowledge in trades such as fashion design; fine arts, and Soft Skills and Inter-Personal Skills among faculty and trainers.

2.3.3 Akil M Nair, Sidharth S Prasad, Sreelatha KS (2019): The study focuses mainly on finding the gap between education and employability with a special emphasis on engineering students in Kerala.

Kerala being a state with a high literacy rate and high IQ and EQ in students, they can be brought to self-sufficiency in terms of skilled employment by increasing the synergy between academics and Industries. The study revealed that most of the students have a strong opinion about rejuvenating the curriculum. The industry needs trained talent and not academics alone. In order to balance the gap, an industry preparedness programme needs to be incorporated in the curriculum which helps students to do internships in Industry and Industries can collaborate with colleges to upgrade the curriculum as per their requirements.

2.3.4 D'silva and Balasubramanian (2024) studied digital information literacy in rural Ernakulam, focusing on available resources for acquiring digital knowledge and necessary skills. They found a significant gap in digital knowledge among residents, highlighting the need for targeted education and training programs. The study emphasized specific skills like internet use, online communication, and basic software applications.

2.4 Summing up

The skill gap is a pressing challenge affecting workforce development and economic growth in Cochin. It arises from a mismatch between the skills possessed by job seekers and those required by industries, leading to unemployment, lower productivity, and barriers to innovation. Studies identify key causes such as an education system that prioritizes theory over practical application, limited access to vocational training, and rapid technological advancements that outpace workforce skills. Migration further worsens the issue, as skilled professionals leave for better opportunities, creating local talent shortages. While government initiatives like the Skill India Mission aim to bridge the gap, challenges such as inadequate funding, outdated curricula, and weak industry-academia collaboration persist. Research highlights the need for targeted policy interventions, including curriculum reforms, industry-driven training programs, and improved accessibility to skill development opportunities. Addressing these challenges is crucial for equipping the workforce with relevant skills, boosting employment, and ensuring Cochin’s long-term economic growth.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Cochin, officially known as Kochi, is a bustling city in the Indian state of Kerala, recognized for its historical significance, strategic location along the Arabian Sea, and as a center for trade, commerce, and tourism. While Cochin has experienced significant economic growth, particularly in sectors such as information technology, logistics, and tourism, it faces critical challenges regarding workforce development, particularly the existence of a skill gap. This gap—the difference between the skills required by employers and those possessed by job seekers—hinders economic progress and innovation. Compounding this issue is the phenomenon of brain drain, wherein skilled professionals migrate to other regions or countries in search of better opportunities, further depleting the local talent pool. This theoretical framework aims to explore the intricate factors contributing to the skill gap in Cochin, analyze the implications of brain drain, and evaluate the government initiatives aimed at addressing these intertwined challenges.

3.1. Understanding Skill Gap

3.1.1 Definition of Skill Gap

The skill gap refers to the discrepancy between the skills that employers need to compete effectively and the skills that the workforce currently possesses. This issue is prevalent in various industries in Cochin, where employers report difficulty in finding candidates with the necessary qualifications. Key sectors experiencing skill shortages include information technology, healthcare, hospitality, and manufacturing.

3.1.2 Importance of Addressing the Skill Gap

The significance of addressing the skill gap cannot be overstated, as it has far-reaching implications for economic growth, social stability, and community well being:

• Economic Development: A skilled workforce enhances productivity and drives innovation, which are critical for economic advancement. Bridging the skill gap can lead to increased efficiency in production processes and higher quality of goods and services, ultimately boosting the region's GDP.

• Youth Empowerment: Cochin has a relatively young population. Providing youth with the skills needed to secure stable employment not only empowers individuals but also fosters a sense of purpose and community involvement. A skilled youth demographic can drive entrepreneurship and local economic initiatives.

• Social Cohesion: Employment opportunities that align with individuals' skills contribute to social stability. When people are engaged in meaningful work, it reduces unemployment rates and associated social issues, such as crime and unrest.

• Attracting Investment: Regions with a well trained and readily available workforce are more appealing to businesses and investors. Addressing the skill gap positions Cochin as a competitive player in attracting both domestic and international investment, essential for sustainable economic growth.

3.2 Economic Landscape of Cochin

Cochin, or Kochi, is a city situated on the southwestern coast of India in the state of Kerala. Known for its rich history, cultural diversity, and economic significance, Cochin has evolved into a major commercial hub in the region. The city's strategic location as a port city has facilitated trade for centuries, and today it hosts a mix of traditional and modern industries.

Key Industries:

- Tourism: Cochin is renowned for its stunning landscapes, historical sites, and vibrant culture, attracting millions of domestic and international tourists annually. The tourism sector has led to the growth of various ancillary services, including hospitality, transportation, and handicrafts.

- Information Technology (IT): The IT sector in Cochin has been burgeoning, with numerous IT parks and start-ups establishing operations in the region. The Kerala Government's proactive initiatives, such as the "Kerala IT Mission," have aimed to create a conducive environment for tech companies, thereby increasing the demand for skilled IT professionals.

- Shipping and Logistics: Cochin's port facilities are among the busiest in India, handling a significant volume of cargo. The shipping industry creates a demand for specialized skills in logistics, supply chain management, and maritime operations.

- Manufacturing and Handicrafts: The city also boasts a rich tradition of manufacturing, particularly in sectors like coir products, spices, and handicrafts. These industries require a workforce skilled in artisanal production techniques as well as modern manufacturing processes.

Employment Statistics: Despite the potential for job creation in these sectors, employment statistics reveal a concerning trend. The unemployment rate in Cochin, especially among youth, has remained higher than the national average. A significant proportion of graduates from local educational institutions find themselves ill-equipped to meet the demands of employers, leading to a persistent.

3.3. Theoretical Perspectives

3.3.1 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, proposed by economists such as Gary Becker, posits that investments in education and training enhance individual productivity and earning potential. In the context of Cochin:

- Educational Investments: The quality and relevance of education directly influence the skills of the workforce. Investments in vocational training, higher education, and continuing education are vital for developing human capital. Unfortunately, many educational institutions in Cochin focus heavily on theoretical knowledge, neglecting practical skills needed in the job market.

- Skill Development Programs: Initiatives aimed at reskilling and upskilling the workforce are crucial. Programs that provide on-the-job training or internships can help bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that graduates possess the practical skills that employers demand.

- Return on Investment: Studies indicate that investments in education yield high returns, not just for individuals but also for the economy as a whole. A skilled workforce can significantly enhance productivity levels, contributing to higher economic output.

3.3.2 Labour Market Theory

Labour Market Theory examines the dynamics of supply and demand in the workforce. In Cochin, rapid economic growth in sectors like IT and tourism has increased demand for specialized skills:

• Labour Market Mismatches: Employers in Cochin report challenges in filling positions due to a lack of qualified candidates. This mismatch indicates a need for educational institutions to align their training programs with current labour market demands.

• Job Creation vs. Skill Development: While new job opportunities are emerging, there is often a lag in the supply of skilled labour. Employers may offer competitive salaries, but if candidates lack the required skills, positions remain unfilled, impacting productivity and economic growth.

• Regional Disparities: Variability in the availability of skilled labour across different sectors can create economic disparities. Some industries may thrive due to a surplus of skilled workers, while others suffer from a shortage, leading to uneven economic development.

3.3.3 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, posits that people learn from observing others within a social context. This theory has practical implications for skill development in Cochin:

- Mentorship and Collaboration: Establishing mentorship programs that connect experienced professionals with students or young workers can facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills. Collaborative learning environments can enhance the learning experience, making it more relevant and applicable to real-world scenarios.

- Community Learning Initiatives: Encouraging community workshops and training sessions can create informal learning networks. These initiatives can help individuals acquire practical skills through peer learning and shared experiences.

- Role of Technology: With the rise of digital platforms, opportunities for remote learning and collaboration have expanded. Utilizing technology for online courses, webinars, and virtual mentorship can enhance access to skill development resources.

3.3.4 Dual Labour Market Theory

Dual Labour Market Theory suggests that the labour market can be divided into primary and secondary sectors, with the primary sector offering higher wages and more stable employment. In Cochin, this theory highlights:

- Job Segmentation: Many skilled individuals find themselves in secondary jobs that do not utilize their skills effectively, leading to underemployment. This segmentation can create frustration and disillusionment among workers, further contributing to brain drain.
- Barriers to Advancement: Structural barriers may prevent workers from moving into primary sector jobs, even if they possess the necessary skills. Addressing these barriers through policy reforms can facilitate upward mobility and skill enhancement.
- Skill Development in Primary Sector: Programs that enhance skills specifically for primary sector jobs can improve job satisfaction and retention rates. By focusing on the needs of high-wage industries, Cochin can better retain its skilled workforce.

3.4. Factors Contributing to the Skill Gap in Cochin

3.4.1 Educational System

The educational landscape in Cochin plays a pivotal role in shaping the skill set of its workforce, yet it faces numerous challenges:

- Curriculum Misalignment: Many educational institutions in Cochin still prioritize theoretical knowledge over practical application. For instance, engineering graduates may not receive adequate hands-on experience with modern tools and technologies, leaving them ill-prepared for the workforce.
- Quality Disparities: The quality of education varies significantly across institutions, leading to unequal skill development among graduates.

Well funded schools may offer advanced resources and experienced faculty, while underfunded institutions may struggle to provide quality training.

- Teacher Preparedness: The effectiveness of educational programs often depends on the preparedness of teachers. Ongoing professional development for educators is crucial to ensure they can deliver relevant and high-quality instruction that meets industry needs.

- Accessibility Issues: Students from marginalized backgrounds may face barriers to accessing quality education, exacerbating the skill gap. Scholarships, financial aid, and community outreach programs can help mitigate these challenges

3.4.2 Economic Structure

Cochin's economic structure is undergoing significant transformation, with a shift from traditional sectors to modern industries that require specialized skills:

• Emerging Industries: The rise of new industries, particularly in technology and logistics, necessitates a workforce with specific skills that may not be adequately taught in local educational institutions. As industries evolve, educational programs must adapt to prepare students for emerging job opportunities.

• Sectoral Dynamics: Different industries may experience varying levels of skill shortages. For instance, while the IT sector may require advanced technical skills, the hospitality sector may prioritize soft skills such as communication and customer service.

• Investment in Innovation: Encouraging investment in research and development can create new opportunities for skilled professionals. Establishing innovation hubs or technology parks can attract talent and foster collaboration between academia and industry.

3.4.3 Demographic Factors

Cochin's demographic characteristics significantly influence its labour market and contribute to the skill gap:

• Youth Migration: A significant number of skilled youth migrate to other regions or countries in search of better employment opportunities. This brain drain not only depletes the local talent pool but also discourages younger individuals from pursuing careers locally, fearing limited opportunities.

• Aging Workforce: The loss of young talent leaves an aging workforce that may lack the dynamism and innovation needed for economic growth. As older workers retire, the skills gap may widen if younger workers do not possess the necessary qualifications.

• Changing Family Structures: Modern family structures may lead to different career aspirations among young people. The desire for stability, job security, and quality of life can influence their decisions regarding education and employment, impacting the skill dynamics in Cochin.

3.4.4 Technological Advancements

Rapid technological advancements are reshaping industries and necessitating ongoing skill development:

• Skill Obsolescence: The fast pace of technological change can render certain skills obsolete. Workers may not have access to ongoing training and development, leaving them unprepared for the evolving demands of the job market.

• Digital Divide: Disparities in access to technology, particularly in rural areas surrounding Cochin, can impede skill development. Limited access to the internet and digital tools can hinder individuals from acquiring necessary skills for modern jobs.

- Automation and AI: The rise of automation and artificial intelligence in various sectors may displace certain jobs while creating a demand for new skill sets. Preparing the workforce for this transition is critical to ensuring job security and economic stability.

3.5. Impacts of Brain Drain

3.5.1 Economic Consequences

The brain drain phenomenon has profound economic implications for Cochin:

- Loss of Talent: The emigration of skilled professionals leads to significant talent shortages in critical sectors, limiting innovation and productivity. Local businesses may struggle to find qualified employees, impacting their ability to grow and compete in the global market.

- Decreased Investment: A lack of skilled workers can deter potential investors. Businesses are less likely to invest in regions where they cannot find the talent necessary to support their operations. This can create a vicious cycle of stagnation and further migration.

- Impact on Local Economy: The outflow of skilled individuals can reduce consumer spending in the local economy, impacting businesses and leading to a decrease in overall economic activity. Local communities may also experience diminished tax revenues, affecting public services and infrastructure.

3.5.2 Social Implications

The social consequences of brain drain are multifaceted and can lead to greater inequality:

- Increased Inequality: The departure of skilled individuals may exacerbate economic disparities within the community. Those left behind may face limited job opportunities and lower wages, perpetuating cycles of poverty and reducing overall social mobility.

- Cultural Impact: The loss of young, dynamic professionals can diminish the cultural vibrancy of communities. Talented individuals often contribute to local arts, entrepreneurship, and community initiatives, enriching the social fabric.

- Brain Gain Opportunities: Conversely, while brain drain poses challenges, it can also lead to brain gain through remittances and knowledge transfer. Migrants can return with new skills and experiences, potentially contributing to local development if appropriate frameworks are in place.

3.6. Government Initiatives to Address the Skill Gap

3.6.1 Enhancing Educational Quality

Government action is essential for improving the quality of education and aligning it with industry needs:

- Curriculum Development: Collaborating with industry stakeholders to develop and update curricula can ensure that educational programs remain relevant and effective. This collaboration can take the form of advisory boards composed of industry leaders who provide insights into the skills required in the workforce.

- Quality Assurance Programs: Establishing rigorous quality assurance measures for educational institutions can help maintain and improve standards. Regular assessments and accreditations can ensure that schools meet educational benchmarks and continuously evolve to meet market demands.

- Investment in Teacher Training: Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for educators is crucial. Training programs that focus on modern teaching methodologies, industry practices, and emerging technologies can enhance the quality of instruction and better prepare students for the workforce.

3.6.2 Expanding Vocational Training Programs Vocational training initiatives are critical for addressing the skill gap:

- Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborating with businesses to develop vocational training programs can create clear pathways for students to gain relevant skills. These partnerships can facilitate internships and apprenticeships, providing students with hands-on experience in real-world settings.

- Awareness Campaigns: Promoting vocational training as a viable career path is essential to attract students. Many young people may overlook these opportunities in favour of traditional academic routes, despite the strong demand for skilled trades. Campaigns highlighting success stories of vocational graduates can help change perceptions.

- Access to Resources: Increasing funding for vocational training programs, particularly in underserved areas, can ensure that all individuals have access to skill development opportunities. Government grants and subsidies can help expand training facilities and resources.

3.6.3 Promoting Research and Development Encouraging research and development can help retain talent in Cochin:

- Funding Opportunities: Providing grants and subsidies for research initiatives can stimulate innovation and support the development of new technologies and services. Research centres that focus on local challenges can attract skilled professionals and contribute to community development.

- Collaboration with Universities: Partnering with academic institutions to promote research can leverage the expertise of faculty and students. Collaborative research projects can create opportunities for internships and employment while fostering innovation in local industries.

• Innovation Hubs: Establishing innovation hubs or technology parks can create environments conducive to collaboration between startups, established businesses, and educational institutions. These hubs can attract skilled talent and facilitate knowledge transfer, contributing to regional development.

3.6.4 Lifelong Learning Initiatives Fostering a culture of lifelong learning is vital for continuous skill enhancement:

• Access to Training Resources: Offering affordable and accessible training programs can help workers update their skills. Online courses, community workshops, and evening classes can provide flexible learning opportunities for individuals who may be working or have other commitments.

• Incentives for Continuous Education: Providing incentives for employers who support their employees' continued education can promote a culture of skill development. This could include tax benefits or grants for companies that invest in employee training and development.

• Public Awareness Campaigns: Raising awareness about the importance of lifelong learning can encourage individuals to pursue additional training and education throughout their careers. Highlighting success stories of individuals who have benefited from continuous education can inspire others to engage in skill development.

3.6.5 Retention Incentives Implementing strategies to retain skilled professionals is crucial for addressing brain drain:

• Career Development Programs: Establishing programs that provide clear career advancement opportunities can help keep talent engaged in the local workforce. Employers should be encouraged to develop internal training programs that support employee growth and promote from within.

- Quality of Life Initiatives: Improving living conditions, infrastructure, and community amenities can make Cochin a more attractive place for skilled individuals. Investments in public services, transportation, and recreational facilities can enhance the overall quality of life and draw talent back to the region.

- Networking Opportunities: Creating platforms for professionals to connect and network can foster a sense of community and belonging. Professional associations, industry conferences, and local meetups can help individuals build relationships and feel more invested in their local economy.

3.7 Case studies

To gain a deeper understanding of the skill gap issue in Cochin, this section presents several case studies that highlight successful skill development programs and initiatives. These examples illustrate various approaches taken by educational institutions, private sector companies, and government agencies to address the skills mismatch and enhance employability in the region.

3.7.1 Case Study 1: Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence (KASE)

Overview: The Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence (KASE) was established by the Government of Kerala to enhance the employability of the state's youth through skill development programs. KASE aims to provide quality training that meets industry standards and aligns with the evolving demands of the job market.

Program Implementation: KASE collaborates with various industries to design and deliver training programs tailored to specific skill requirements. The academy focuses on sectors such as information technology, healthcare, tourism, and construction. It offers a mix of short-term courses, certifications, and skill enhancement programs that cater to both fresh graduates and working professionals seeking to upskill.

Outcomes: KASE has successfully trained thousands of individuals, with many graduates securing employment in reputable companies. The collaboration between KASE and industry stakeholders has facilitated internships and job placements, bridging the gap between education and employment.

3.7.2 Case Study 2: Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT)

Overview: Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) is a premier institution that offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in science, engineering, and management. However, like many educational institutions, it faced challenges in ensuring that its graduates were adequately prepared for the job market.

Innovative Initiatives: In response to the skill gap, CUSAT has implemented several innovative initiatives:

- **Industry-Academia Collaboration:** CUSAT established partnerships with local industries to integrate real-world projects into the curriculum. This collaboration allows students to work on industry-relevant problems, gaining practical experience and insights into workplace dynamics.
- **Skill Development Programs:** The university introduced additional workshops and training sessions focused on emerging technologies, soft skills, and entrepreneurial skills. These programs are designed to complement academic learning and better prepare students for employment.

Impact: CUSAT's efforts have resulted in improved employability rates among its graduates. Feedback from employers indicates that CUSAT graduates are better equipped with the skills and knowledge required for various roles in the workforce, reflecting the positive impact of these initiatives on reducing the skill gap.

3.7.3 Case Study 3: IT Parks and Incubation Centers

Overview: Cochin has seen the establishment of several IT parks and incubation centers, such as the Infopark and SmartCity Kochi, aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the technology sector. These hubs serve as platforms for tech start-ups and established companies, creating a vibrant ecosystem for skill development.

Skill Development Initiatives:

- **Training Programs:** Many IT parks organize regular training programs, workshops, and hackathons in collaboration with educational institutions. These events focus on upskilling participants in areas such as software development, data analytics, and digital marketing.

- **Internships and Job Placements:** Companies within these parks often offer internships and job placements to students from local colleges and universities, providing them with practical experience and facilitating smoother transitions into the workforce.

Outcomes: The IT parks have contributed significantly to reducing the skill gap in Cochin by aligning training with industry needs. Many graduates from local educational institutions have secured jobs within these parks, thanks to the targeted skill development initiatives that address the specific requirements of the technology sector.

3.7.4 Case Study 4: Local NGOs and Community Programs

Overview: Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Cochin focus on empowering marginalized communities through skill development programs. These initiatives target youth and women, providing them with opportunities to gain employable skills.

Program Features:

- **Vocational Training:** NGOs offer vocational training in areas such as tailoring, handicrafts, computer literacy, and hospitality. These programs are designed to meet the local job market's demands while also considering the participants' socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Entrepreneurship Support:** Some programs also focus on entrepreneurship, equipping participants with the skills and resources needed to start their own businesses. This support includes training in business management, financial literacy, and marketing.

Impact: These community-based programs have proven effective in enhancing the employability of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many participants have successfully secured jobs or started their own businesses, demonstrating the potential of targeted skill development initiatives to bridge the skill gap.

Conclusion of Case Studies

The case studies presented highlight the diverse approaches taken by various stakeholders in Cochin to address the skill gap. From government-led initiatives to collaborations between educational institutions and industry, these examples showcase the importance of multi-faceted strategies in skill development. The positive outcomes observed in these case studies underscore the potential for scalable solutions that can significantly reduce the skill gap in Cochin and contribute to the overall economic development of the region.

3.8 Summing up

The skill gap in Cochin, intertwined with the challenges of brain drain, poses significant obstacles to the city's economic and social development. Through a thorough examination of theoretical perspectives and the identification of contributing factors, we gain insights into effective strategies for addressing these issues. Government initiatives aimed at enhancing educational quality, expanding vocational training, promoting research and development, fostering lifelong learning, and providing retention incentives are essential for cultivating a skilled workforce. To achieve sustainable economic growth and social equity, Cochin must embark on a holistic approach that involves collaboration among government, educational institutions, and the private sector. By investing in human capital and creating a supportive environment for talent retention, Cochin can transform its workforce into a dynamic, innovative, and competitive entity capable of meeting the challenges of a rapidly evolving economy. The journey toward bridging the skill gap is not merely an economic imperative; it is a critical step toward creating an inclusive, thriving community where talent can flourish, ensuring a prosperous future for all residents.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

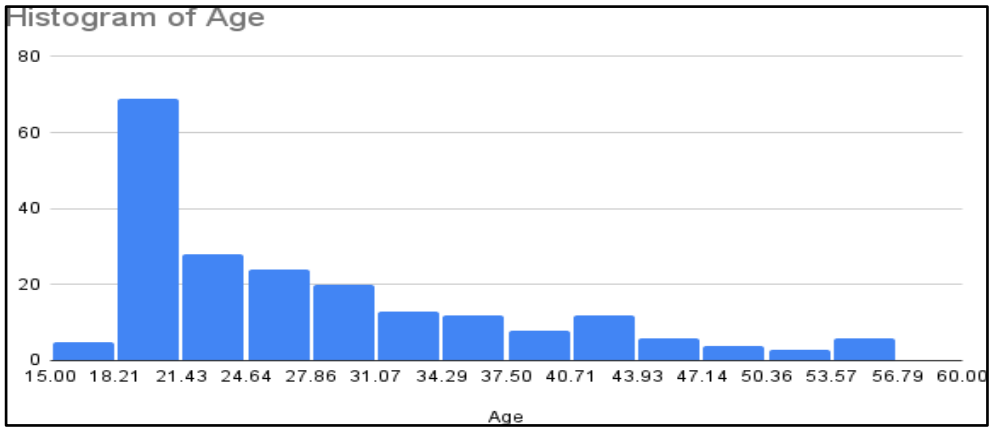
4.1 AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 4.1: AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
UNDER 18	1	0.48
18-25	112	53.33
26-40	66	31.43
41-60	31	14.76

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.1: AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS



(SOURCE: Primary Data)

Interpretation: The above graph indicates that out of 210 responses , the largest group of respondents comprising of 112 individuals (53.33%) are under the age category 18-25 . 31.43% of the respondents are of the age 26-40 and 14.76% are of the age 41-60.The under 18 age group has the fewest respondents with just 1 individual (0.48%).This highlights that majority of participants are in the 18-25 age category.

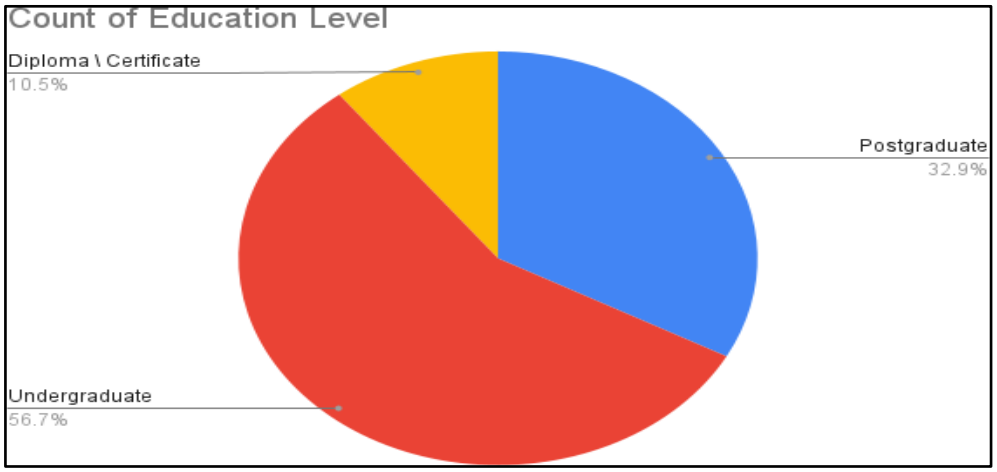
4.2 **EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS**

TABLE 4.2: EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS

EDUCATION LEVEL	**FREQUENCY**	**PERCENTAGE(%)**
UNDERGRADUATE	119	56.7
POSTGRADUATE	69	32.9
DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE	22	10.5

(SOURCE-Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.2: EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: Most of the respondents are undergraduates and they amount to 56.7%. Post graduates amount to 32.9%.

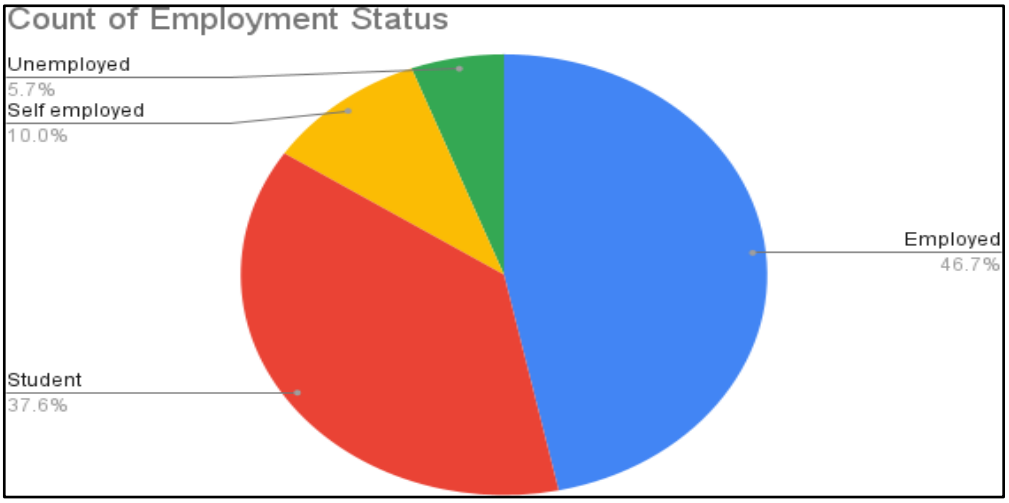
4.3 EMPLOYMENT STATUS

TABLE 4.3: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
EMPLOYED	98	46.7
STUDENT	79	37.6
SELF EMPLOYED	21	10
UNEMPLOYED	12	5.7

(SOURCE:Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.3: EMPLOYMENT STATUS



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: Majority of the respondents are employed and they amount to 46.7% of the data. Student respondents are 37.6%. Unemployed amounted to 5.7% and self employed amounts to 10%.

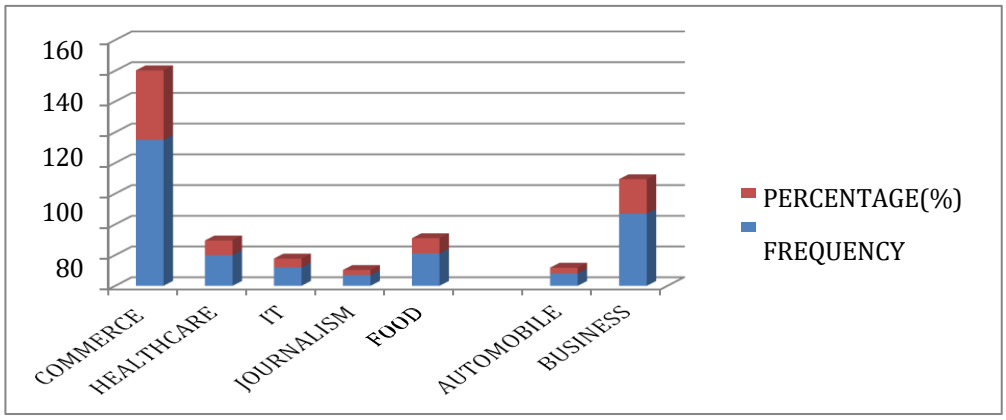
4.4 FIELD OF STUDY/WORK

TABLE 4.4: CLASSIFICATION ON THE BASIS OF FIELD OF WORK

FIELD	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
COMMERCE	95	45.24
HEALTHCARE	20	9.52
IT	12	5.71
JOURNALISM	7	3.33
FOOD	21	10
AUTOMOBILE	8	3.8
BUSINESS	47	22.4

(SOURCE:Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.4: CLASSIFICATION ON THE BASIS OF FIELD OF WORK



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: This chart indicates that Commerce leads with 45.24%,followed by Business at 22.4%, while other fields show lower representation.

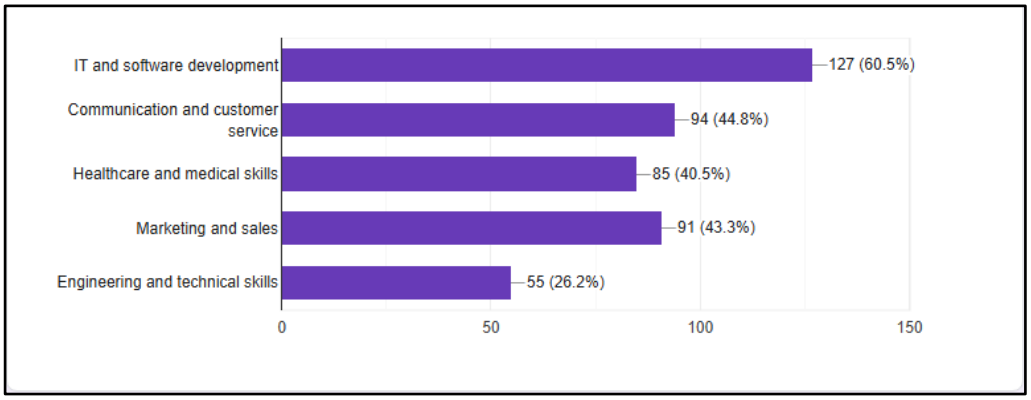
4.5 KEY SKILLS IN HIGH DEMAND IN CURRENT JOB MARKET

TABLE 4.5:MOST IN DEMAND SKILLS IN CURRENT JOB MARKET

IN DEMAND SKILLS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
IT AND SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT	127	60.5
COMMUNICATION & CUSTOMER SERVICE	94	44.8
HEALTHCARE & MEDICAL SKILLS	85	40.5
MARKETING& SALES	91	43.3
ENGINEERING & TECHNICAL SKILLS	55	26.2

(SOURCE-Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.5: MOST IN DEMAND SKILLS IN CURRENT JOB MARKET



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: Majority of the respondents has chosen IT and software development as the most in demand skills in the current job market. Communication and customer service is a close second.

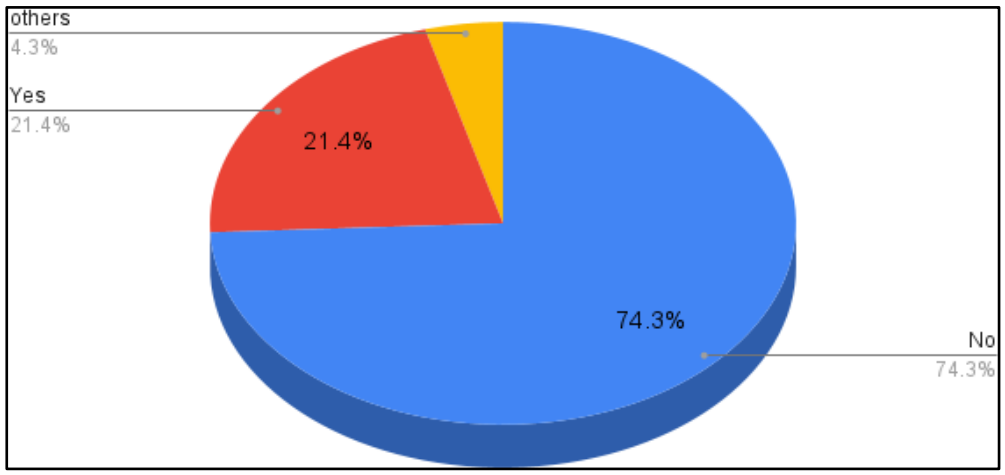
4.6 RESPONDENTS FACING REJECTION DUE TO SKILL GAP

TABLE 4.6: RESPONDENTS BEING REJECTED DUE TO SKILL GAPS

PURPOSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
YES	45	21.4
NO	156	74.3
OTHERS	9	4.3

(SOURCE:Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.6: RESPONDENTS BEING REJECTED DUE TO SKILL GAPS



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: Almost all of the respondents have not faced rejection due to skill gaps. 45 respondents have faced the challenge of being rejected due to lack of skill gaps.

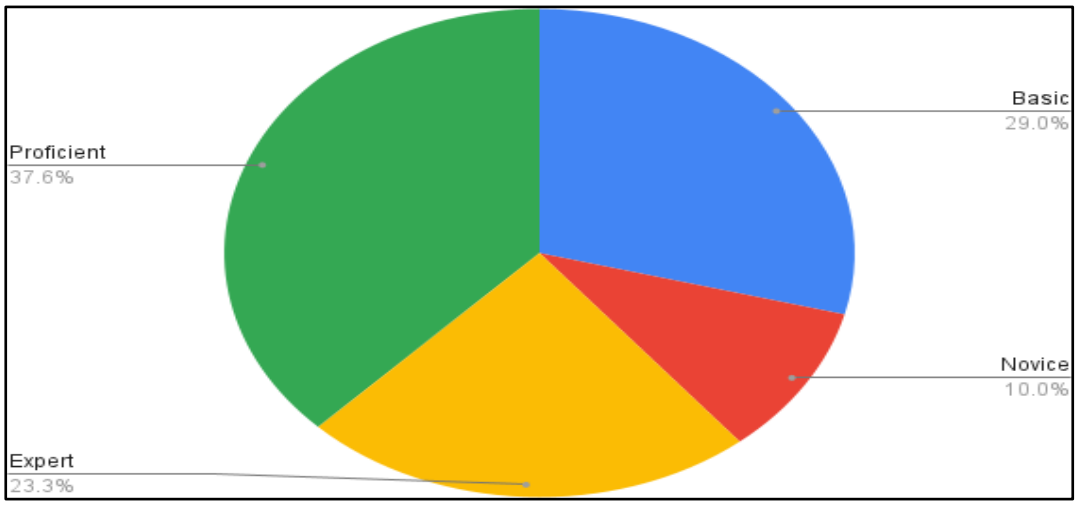
4.7 CURRENT COMPETENCE IN KEY ROLE-SPECIFIC SKILLS

TABLE 4.7:CLASSIFICATION ON THE CURRENT COMPETENCE IN RELEVANT SKILLS REQUIRED

COMPETENCY LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
EXPERT	49	23.3
PROFICIENT	79	37.6
BASIC	61	29
NOVICE	21	10

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.7: CLASSIFICATION ON THE CURRENT COMPETENCE IN RELEVANT SKILLS



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: 37.6% of the respondents is said to be proficient in the specific skills required for their role.10% of the respondents find their skills to be lacking.

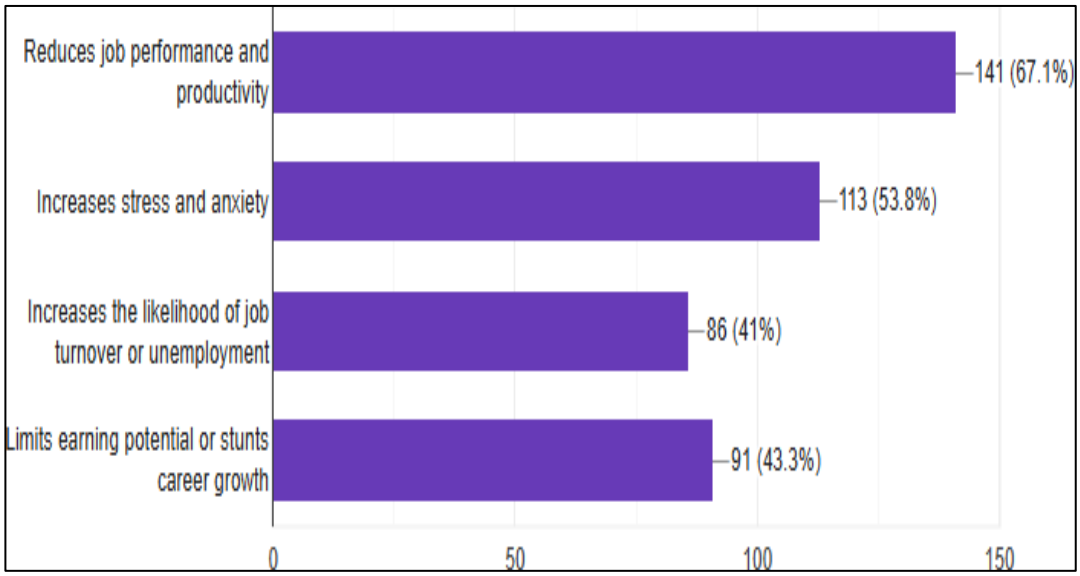
4.8 IMPACT OF SKILL GAPS ON EMPLOYEES AND JOB SEEKING STUDENTS

TABLE 4.8: CLASSIFICATION ON THE EFFECTS

EFFECTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
REDUCES JOB PERFORMANCE & PRODUCTIVITY	141	67.1
INCREASES STRESS & ANXIETY	113	53.8
INCREASES CHANCES OF JOB TURNOVER OR UNEMPLOYMENT	86	41
LIMITS EARNING POTENTIAL	91	43.3

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.8: CLASSIFICATION ON THE EFFECTS



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: The chart indicates that skill gaps mainly reduce job performance and productivity (67.1%), increase stress and anxiety (53.8%), hinder earning potential and career growth (43.3%), and raise the likelihood of job turnover or unemployment (41%).

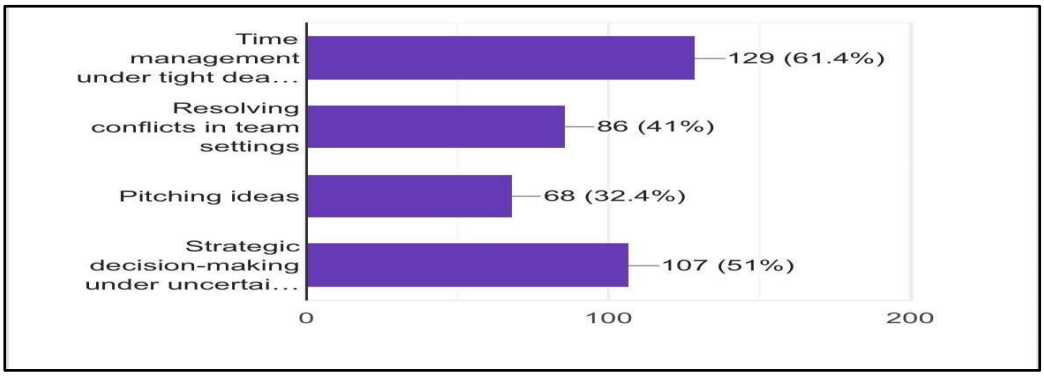
4.9 IDENTIFYING SKILL DEFICIENCIES IN RECENT ACADEMIC, PROFESSIONAL, OR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

TABLE 4.9: CLASSIFICATION ON THE MOST RELEVANT SKILL DEFICIENCIES

VIEW	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
TIME MANAGEMENT UNDER TIGHT DEADLINES	129	61.4
RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN TEAM SETTINGS	86	41
PITCHING IDEAS	68	32.4
STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING UNDER UNCERTAINTY	107	51

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.9 CLASSIFICATION ON THE MOST RELEVANT SKILL DEFICIENCIES



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: The data suggests 61.4% believe time management under pressure to be an area of skill deficiency, 41% in resolving conflicts, 32.4% in pitching ideas, and 51% in strategic decision-making under uncertainty.

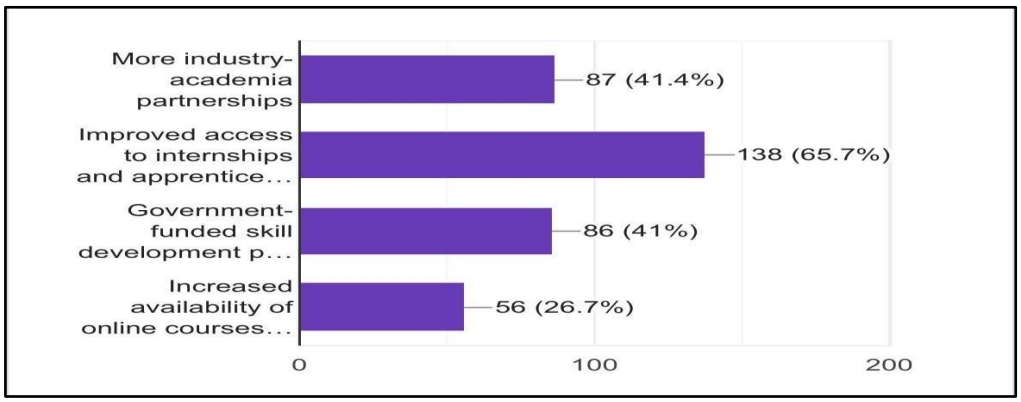
4.10 TOP STRATEGIES FOR CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

TABLE 4.10: CLASSIFICATION ON STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

TRANSPARENCY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
MORE INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA PARTNERSHIPS	87	41.4
IMPROVED ACCESS TO INTERNSHIPS & APPRENTICESHIPS	138	65.7
GOVERNMENT FUNDED SKILL DEVEOPMENT PROGRAMS	86	41
INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF ONLINE COURSES TAILORED TO LOCAL NEEDS	56	26.7

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.10: CLASSIFICATION ON STRATEGIES EMPLOYED



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: The data shows a strong need for government-funded skill development (65.7%) and better access to internships (41.4%), with less focus on online courses (26.7%) and industry-academia partnerships (41%).

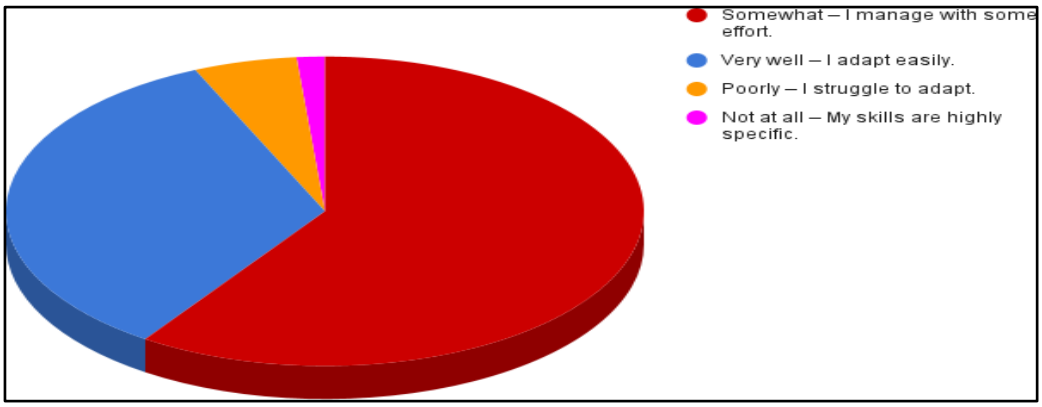
4.11 EVALUATING THE TRANSFERABILITY OF YOUR SKILLS TO NEW OR UNEXPECTED TASKS

TABLE 4.11: CLASSIFICATION OF TRANSFERABILITY OF SKILLS

PERCEPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
SOMEWHAT	125	59.5
VERY WELL	71	33.8
POORLY	11	5.2
NOT AT ALL	3	1.4

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.11: CLASSIFICATION OF TRANSFERABILITY OF SKILLS



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: The data shows that 33.8% adapt easily to new tasks, 59.5% manage with effort, and a smaller portion struggle or find their skills highly specific.

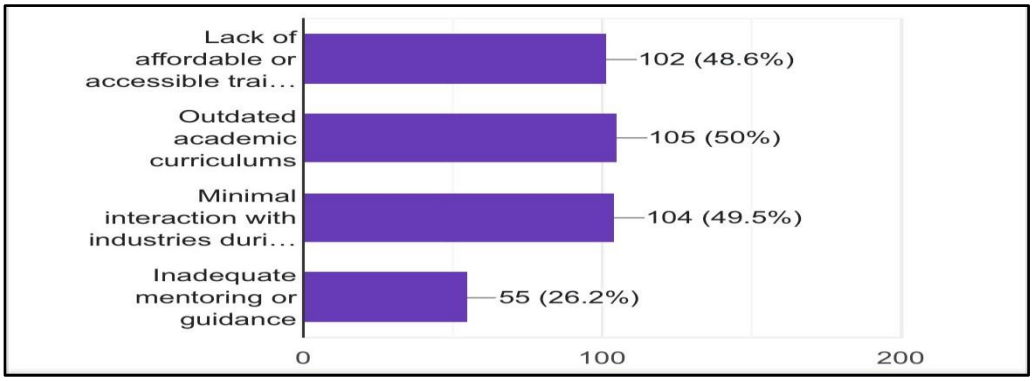
4.12 SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES CONTRIBUTING TO SKILL GAPS AMONG YOUTH IN THE REGION

TABLE 4.12: CLASSIFICATION OF CHALLENGES

CHALLENGES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
LACK OF AFFORDABLE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES	102	48.6
OUTDATED ACADEMIC CURRICULUMS	105	50
MINIMAL INTERACTION WITH INDUSTRIES DURING EDUCATION	104	49.5
INADEQUATE MENTORING	55	26.2

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.12: CLASSIFICATION OF CHALLENGES



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: The data highlights major challenges, with 50% citing outdated curriculums, 48.6% noting a lack of affordable training, and 49.5% mentioning minimal industry interaction, while 26.2% point to inadequate mentoring or guidance.

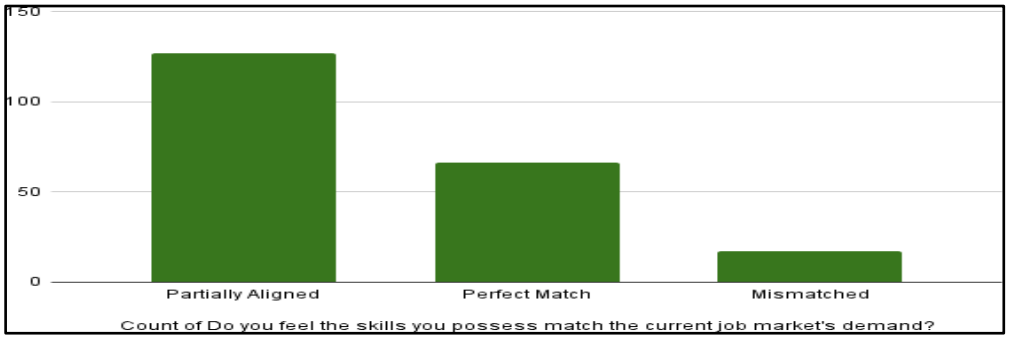
4.13 ALIGNMENT OF RESPONDENTS SKILLS TO CURRENT JOB MARKET

TABLE 4.13: CLASSIFICATION ON THE BASIS OF ALIGNMENT OF SKILLS

ALIGNMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
PERFECT MATCH	66	31.4
PARTIALLY MATCH	127	60.5
MISMATCHED	17	8.1

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.13: CLASSIFICATION ON THE BASIS OF ALIGNMENT OF SKILLS



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: The chart reveals that 60.5% find their skills mismatched with the job market's demands, 31.4% believe their skills perfectly match, and 8.1% see their skills as partially aligned.

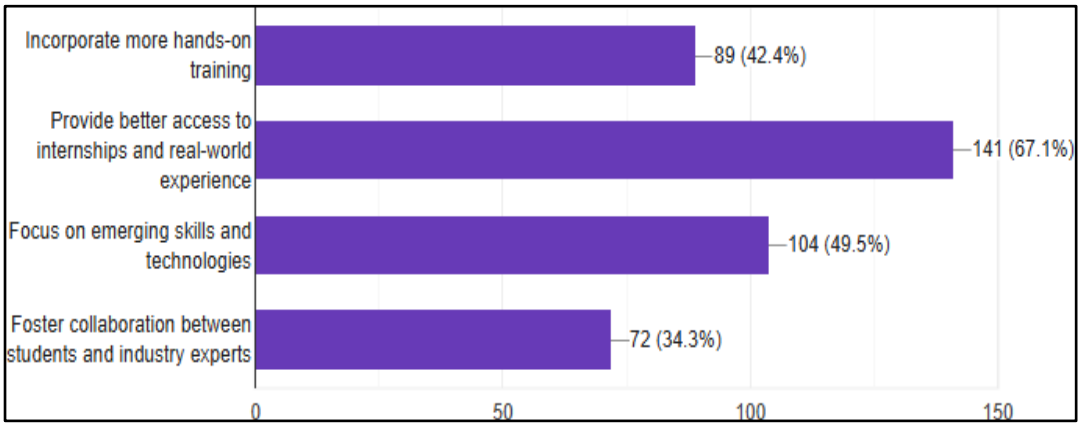
4.14 BRIDGING SKILL GAPS: ROLES OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYERS

TABLE 4.14: CLASSIFICATION ON THE MEASURES TAKEN BY EMPLOYERS AND EDUCATORS

MEASURES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
INCORPORATE MORE HANDS ON TRAINING	89	42.4
PROVIDE BETTER ACCESS TO INTERNSHIPS & REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE	141	67.1
FOCUS ON EMERGING SKILLS & TECHNOLOGIES	104	49.5
FOSTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN STUDENTS & INDUSTRY EXPERTS	72	34.3

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.14: CLASSIFICATION ON THE MEASURES TAKEN BY EMPLOYERS AND EDUCATION



(SOURCE: Primary Data)

Interpretation: The chart highlights that 67.1% prioritize better access to internships and practical experiences, 49.5% emphasize the need to focus on emerging skills and technologies, 42.4% call for more hands-on training, and 34.3% suggest fostering collaboration between students and professionals.

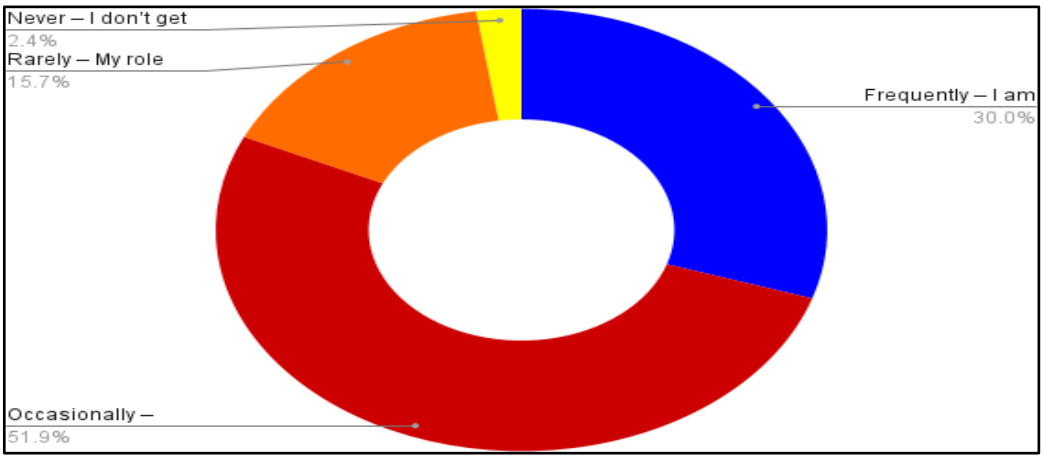
4.15 FREQUENCY OF REAL-WORLD OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE AND DEVELOP NEW SKILLS

TABLE 4.15: CLASSIFICATION ON THE BASIS OF FREQUENCY

VIEW	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
FREQUENTLY	63	30
OCCASIONALLY	109	51.9
RARELY	33	15.7
NEVER	5	2.4

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.15 CLASSIFICATION ON THE BASIS OF FREQUENCY



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: This chart indicates that a majority (51.9%) of respondents occasionally get real-world opportunities to practice new skills, suggesting limited availability of such opportunities. About 30% frequently apply new skills, showing consistent encouragement, while 15.7% rarely practice due to role constraints, and a small percentage (under 3%) report no opportunities at all.

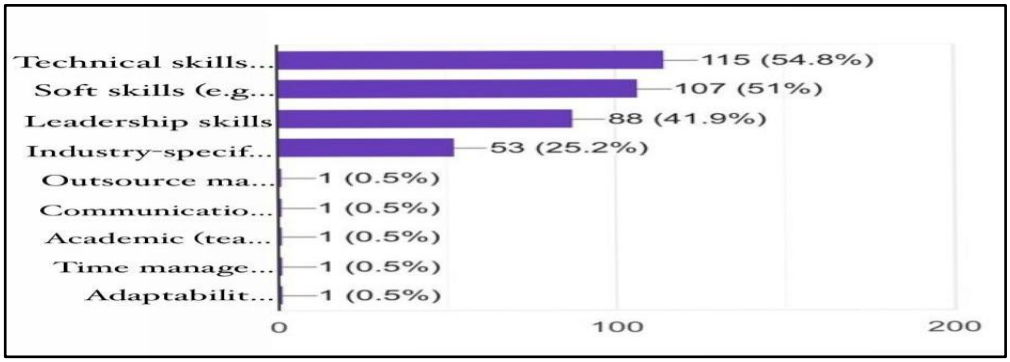
4.16 RESPONDENTS IDENTIFYING CRITICAL SKILLS FOR FUTURE ROLES

TABLE 4.16: CLASSIFICATION ON THE BASIS OF CRITICAL SKILLS

CRITICAL SKILLS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
TECHNICAL SKILLS	115	54.8
SOFT SKILLS	107	51
LEADERSHIP SKILLS	88	41.9
INDUSTRY SPECIFIC SKILL	53	25.2
OUTSOURCE MANAGEMENT	1	0.5
COMMUNICATION	1	0.5
ACADEMIC	1	0.5
TIME MANAGEMENT	1	0.5
ADAPTABIITY	1	0.5

(SOURCE:Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.16: CLASSIFICATION ON THE BASIS OF CRITICAL SKILLS



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: This chart indicates that technical skills (54.8%) and soft skills (51%) are the most critical for project success, followed by leadership skills (41.9%) and industry-specific expertise (25.2%). Other skills, such as adaptability, time management, and academic knowledge, were identified as less significant, each accounting for only 0.5%.

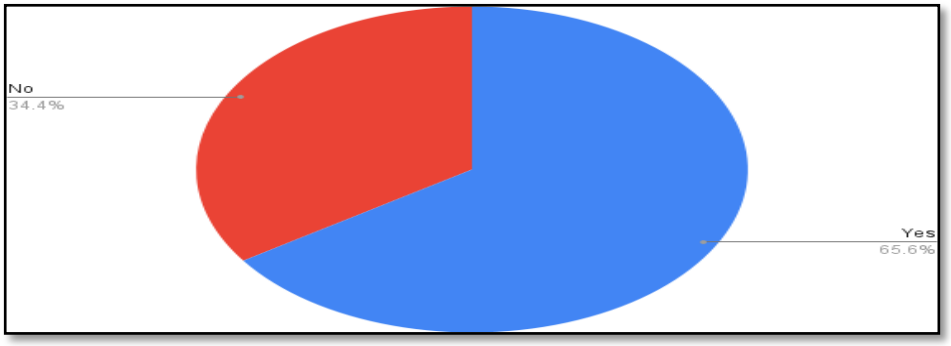
4.17 PARTICIPATION IN PAST TRAINING PROGRAMS

TABLE 4.17 CLASSIFICATION ON PARTICIPATION IN PAST TRAINING PROGRAMS

VIEW	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
YES	138	65.7
NO	72	34.3

(SOURCE:Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.17: CLASSIFICATION ON PARTICIPATION IN PAST TRAINING PROGRAMS



(SOURCE: Primary Data)

Interpretation: The data shows that 65.6% of respondents have attended training programs, while 34.4% have not, indicating a majority have prior training experience.

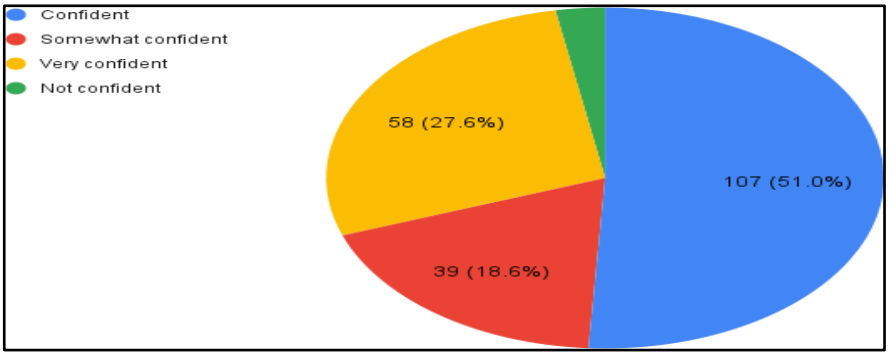
4.18 CONFIDENCE IN APPLYING ACQUIRED SKILLS

TABLE 4.18 CLASSIFICATION BASED ON CONFIDENCE IN APPLYING SKILLS

PERCEPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
VERY CONFIDENT	58	27.6
CONFIDENT	107	51
SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	39	18.6
NOT CONFIDENT	6	2.9

(SOURCE: Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.18: CLASSIFICATION BASED ON CONFIDENCE IN APPLYING SKILLS



(SOURCE: Primary Data)

Interpretation: The data shows that 27.6% of respondents feel very confident and 51% of respondents feel confident in applying the skills learned, while the rest are somewhat or not confident, highlighting a generally positive outcome.

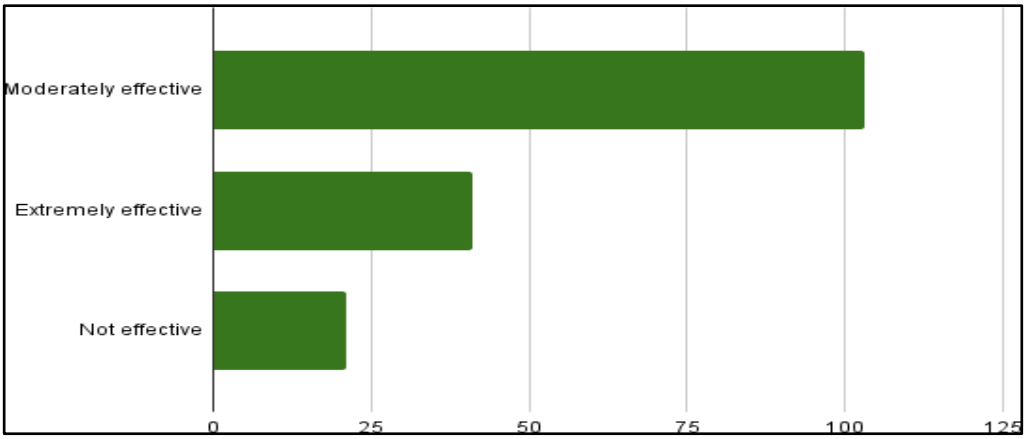
4.19 EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

TABLE 4.19 CLASSIFICATION OF TRAINING EFFECTIVENES IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

EFFECTIVENESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
NOT EFFECTIVE	21	12.7
MODERATELY EFFECTIVE	103	62.4
EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE	41	24.8

(SOURCE:Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.19: CLASSIFICATION OF TRAINING EFFECTIVENES IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: The chart shows that among 165 responses, 62.4% found the programs moderately effective, 24.8% found them extremely effective, and 12.7% found them not effective in improving their skills.

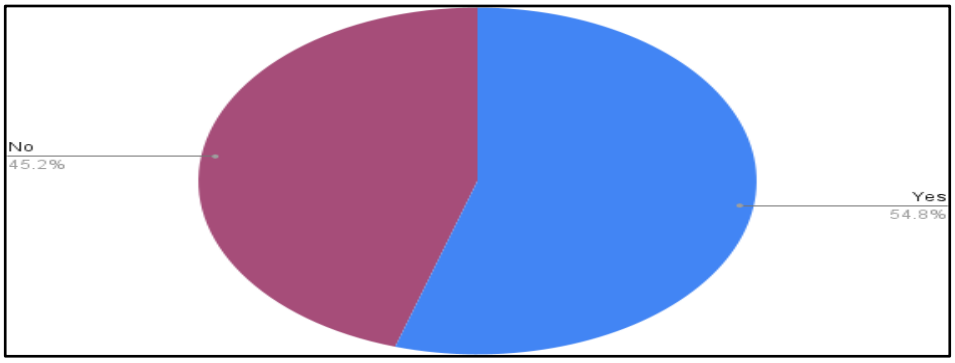
4.20 ASSESSING WHETHER TRAINING PROGRAMS FULLY ADDRESS IDENTIFIED SKILL GAPS

TABLE 4.20: CLASSIFICATION OF SKILL GAPS ON THE BASIS OF TRAINING

VIEW	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
YES	115	54.8
NO	95	45.2

(SOURCE:Primary Data)

FIGURE 4.20 : CLASSIFICATION OF SKILL GAPS ON THE BASIS OF TRAINING



(SOURCE:Primary Data)

Interpretation: The chart shows that 54.8% found the training effective, while 45.2% felt it did not address all skill gaps, indicating room for improvement.

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCLUSION

Findings

1. The majority of respondents are young undergraduates and are aged between 18 and 25.
2. Nearly half the respondents are employed, mainly in the commerce sector while a substantial number are students.
3. Many participants identify IT and software development as the most sought-after skills in the current job market, closely followed by communication and customer service skills.
4. While the majority have not faced job rejections due to skill gaps, a notable minority have encountered such challenges.
5. A significant portion of respondents feel proficient in their required skills, while a smaller group acknowledges skill gaps.
6. Negatively affecting job performance and productivity is reportedly the major impact of skill gap on employees and job seeking students.
7. The most common skill deficiency is time management under tight deadlines, followed by challenges in strategic decision-making and resolving conflicts in team settings.
8. Skill gaps among youngsters are primarily caused by outdated curriculums according to the respondents.
9. More than half of the respondents believe providing better access to internships and real experiences can bridge skill deficiencies while 51.9% of the respondents get the real world opportunities to practice such skills.
10. The most critical skills identified for future roles are technical skills and soft skills.
11. Majority of the respondents have participated in training programs and 62% believe these programs to be effective in addressing skill gap.
12. More than half the respondents agree that training programs can address skill gaps

Suggestions

i. Industry-Academia Collaboration: Strengthen partnerships between educational institutions and industries to design curriculum aligned with market needs. Establish internship programs, apprenticeships, and industry-led training sessions to equip students with relevant skills.

ii. Skill Development Programs: Launch government and private sector initiatives that focus on reskilling and upskilling workers in key industries like technology, tourism, and manufacturing. Specialized training centers can offer certifications tailored to industry demands.

iii. Attracting and Retaining Talent: Improve work conditions, offer competitive salaries, and enhance career growth opportunities to attract skilled professionals. Providing housing, quality healthcare, and social infrastructure can also help retain talent.

iv. Encouraging Entrepreneurship & Startups: Promote startup incubators, innovation hubs, and funding programs to encourage local talent to create new businesses, reducing dependence on external workers and boosting job creation.

v. Government Incentives & Policy Support: Introduce tax incentives, grants, and subsidies for companies investing in skill development programs. Policies that encourage businesses to invest in employee training and development can help bridge the skills gap effectively.

Conclusion

This study aimed at assessing the skill levels , education systems, and workforce challenges highlights a critical gap between industry demands and available talent. It has also helped identify the role of training programs in improving skill gaps. The findings of this study indicate that, contrary to common concerns, the skill gap may not be as pronounced in Kochi as previously assumed. The positive responses from the questionnaire suggest that the workforce is relatively well-equipped with the necessary skills to meet industry demands.

While the overall outlook is encouraging, continuous efforts are still required to maintain this balance and ensure that future workforce requirements align with evolving industry needs. Strengthening ongoing skill development programs, enhancing industry-academia partnerships, improving education systems to cater to boosting skills of the youth and staying ahead of emerging trends will be crucial in sustaining this positive trajectory. By building on existing strengths, Kochi can reinforce its position as a hub for skilled professionals and drive long-term economic growth.