Education Model and Employment

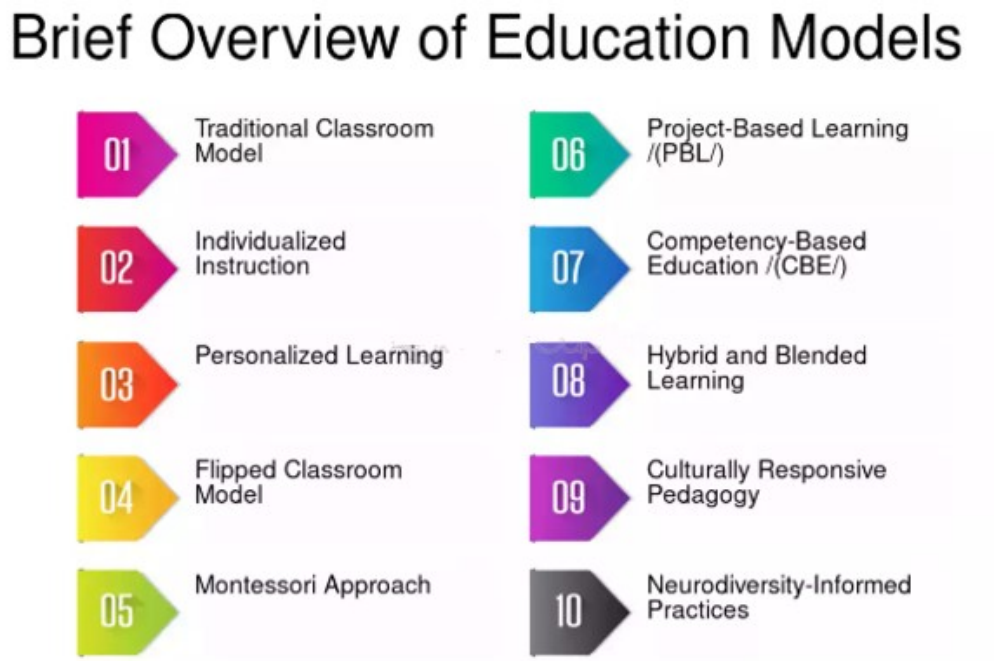
Mains: *GS2 – Social justice | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

Why in News?

In the Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23, Kerala reports a 42.3% graduate unemployment rate, which challenges the education-employment link, highlighting the need for vocational training and policy reforms.

How educational models and employability are related?

- **Educational model** – The educational model shapes employability by aligning teaching with industry needs.
- **Induces practical learning** – Practical learning approaches equip students with real-world skills valued by employers.
- **Inculcates industrial training** – Industrial training during education bridges the gap between academic knowledge and workplace demands.
- **Bridges demand-supply of labour** – Industry-focused education helps match workforce skills with market demand, reducing the employability gap
- **Improves readiness for employment** – Educational models shape the curriculum and skill development offered to students, impacting their readiness for the job market.
- **Boosts practical learning** – Curricula which get regularly updated to reflect the evolving needs of industries and incorporate practical experiences like internships and apprenticeships.
- **Enhance job security** – The effectiveness of an educational model significantly impacts graduates ability to secure and maintain employment.



What is the paradox in Kerala's educational model?

- **Kerala's education model** – It is often held as a model State in India's educational discourse with near-universal literacy,
  - Strong gender parity in education,
  - Robust public schooling systems,

> ***Literate –*** *A person aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language has been taken as literate. A person who can merely read but cannot write is not classified as literate. Any formal education or minimum educational standard is not necessary to be considered literate.*

- **Lack of diversification –** According to the Kerala Economic Review (2023), less than 10% of state-funded higher education institutions offer STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)-oriented vocational programs.
- **Misalignment to industry-specific courses –** As per Kerala State Planning Board's Economic Review 2023, *about 70% of the courses offered are in humanities and pure sciences* that do not match with modern job sectors.
  - **For instance**, Germany, through their dual vocational education system, integrate apprenticeships with formal education, ensuring smooth school-to-work transitions.
- **Failure in job creation –** Kerala has many educated young people moving away helping the economy with remittances, but it also shows that there aren't enough domestic job opportunities.
  - The Centre for Development Studies reports that over 2.1 million Keralites live and work abroad, primarily in the Gulf, many of whom are graduates unable to find appropriate jobs at home.

How other India States fare in education-employment scenario?

- **Tamil Nadu** – The state offers a revealing counter-example by boasting high literacy and educational attainment.
- It has built a relatively stronger network of polytechnic institutions and vocational training centers.
- As per National Skill Development Corporation's (NSDC) Tamil Nadu Skill Gap Report, the state's industrial linkages and sector-focused skilling have helped reduce the incidence of graduate unemployment to 23.4%.
- **Karnataka** – It has diversified its post-secondary offerings through public-private training collaborations that provide students with both soft and hard skills with its growing tech ecosystem.
- **Northern India** – ***Bihar*** *and* ***Uttar Pradesh*** continue to *struggle with low school completion rates* and poor employability indicators, even among graduates.
    - In Bihar, the graduate unemployment rate stands at 33.9% (Periodic Labour Force Survey 2022-23).
    - Only 25.7% of youth aged 18–23 are enrolled in any form of higher education (AISHE, 2021-22).
- Improving access to quality education while ensuring it meets market relevance posing as a dual challenge in this case.

What are the existing issues while linking education and employability?

- **Policy backdrop –** The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 rightly emphasizes flexibility, multidisciplinary, and skill integration but its rollout on the ground remains uneven.
    - In Kerala, the four-year undergraduate structure has not yet fully addressed the mismatch between degrees and employability.
- **Gaps in vocational training** – This gap reflects both cultural and institutional inertia against vocational pathways, often stigmatized as inferior to mainstream degrees.
    - The NSDC (2022) points out, only 17% of Indian youth receive formal vocational training, compared to 52% in the United States and 75% in Germany.
- **Quality education constraints** – The expanding private higher education sector, which has mushroomed without consistent quality benchmarks.
    - The University Grants Commission (UGC), nearly 60% of private colleges in India operate without NAAC accreditation, raising concerns about faculty quality, infrastructure, and academic outcomes.
- **Lack of guidance** – As per NCERT's National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021, only 13% of students receive formal career guidance, leaving most to pursue degrees without understanding their employment prospects.

What policy measures can be taken?

- **Integrating education** – Central institutions such as the NSDC and the Ministry of Education must work in tandem to ensure that the skilling ecosystem is not divorced from formal higher education.
- **Mainstreaming vocational education** – States can adopt the Berufsschule model

from Germany or the Institute of Technical Education from Singapore, that combine classroom education with practical apprenticeships.

- **Enhancing career guidance** – Secondary schools need to significantly improve their career counseling and academic advising.
- **Adopting placement-based ranking** – The states must establish employment-linked metrics in evaluating higher education institutions.
    - Tamil Nadu's recent move to integrate placement statistics into college rankings could be adapted across States.
- **Tracking outcomes** – National Skills Registry that tracks student outcomes across degree programs, job sectors, and geographies can aid both planning and accountability.

Reference

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