

Skill development can't be looked only from a job or economy point of view: Subroto Bagchi

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Participants at the Bengaluru Skill Summit 2025 . | Photo Credit: SUDHAKARA JAIN

Skill development should not be looked only from a job or economy point of view, but it has a lot to do with citizens' dignity, purpose of living, quality of living and eventually all these amounts to nation-building, said Subroto Bagchi, co-founder of Mindtree, former chairman of Odisha Skill Development Authority.

Mr. Bagchi, a technocrat-turned-philanthropist was speaking at the Bengaluru Skill Summit organised by the State government here on Thursday.

In his keynote address, he said, “India’s growth cannot be based on the number of graduates it churned out annually, but it is important to offer all these people skill development training and also offer respect to every skilled hand.... We must stop seeing skilling exercise as charity or compliance. For us, it should be a shared movement where government, industry, and society work together to uplift our youth.”

India has to make skill aspirational, not an alternative, and to create that environment, he stated, the country has to invest in people. “When we do that, we are investing in the soul of India.”

He suggested that alongside technical ability and exposure to technologies like AI-driven automation, the country should also equip its youth with empathy, adaptability, and lifelong learning to sustain success.

Ravi Venkatesan, chairman, Global Energy Alliance and former chairman, Microsoft India, said, “To prepare our youth for a huge shift, we must focus on three foundational skill sets — digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and human skills. This will also require continuous collaboration with the industry. Academic institutions should partner with enterprises like Google, Microsoft, and Infosys to ensure that no citizen of Karnataka is left behind in digital revolution.”

E. V. Ramana Reddy, Chairman, Karnataka Skill Development Authority (KSDA), said there was an urgent need to transform India’s skilling landscape, pointing out that while countries like South Korea and Japan have over 80% formally skilled workers, India had less than 5% skilled workers.

The maiden edition of State-sponsored Bengaluru Skill Summit, themed “Workforce 2030: Scale, Systems, Synergy” concluded on Thursday.