

54th Engineers' Day:
Engineers for Skill Development & Employment in combating COVID

The heralding of a new decade in 2020 was marred with plummeting of the global economy pushing millions into penury as the COVID 19 pandemic took centre stage. Reeling under an economic downturn, many industries have adopted conservative approaches like hiring freezes, pay-cuts and layoffs to remain afloat while others were forced to shut down. The shutting of commercial establishments due to the second wave of Covid-19 has rendered several people jobless leaving them financially vulnerable.

As we move along, the biggest challenge at hand will be getting back on track and accept the new normal. Under the new normal, the jobs, which are heavily dependent on migratory workforce and involve work spaces with higher levels of physical proximity, are likely to see greater transformation and would require skilling and re-employing our workforce.

We, as professional engineers, need to think of technical interventions to design and implement sound labour market information systems, including accurate market assessment and need anticipation, and putting in place processes for skills recognition to prevent attrition, poor labour market integration and deterioration of working conditions for all workers.

There is a dire need to scale up Skill Development Ecosystem while strengthening our cloud based infrastructure. Access to skills recognition processes, especially for low- and medium-skilled migrant workers, will be crucial and would assist us in formulating policy recommendations for improvement of the relevant legislative and operational mechanisms.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to come up with a well-crafted strategy to deal with this crisis. As uncertainty persists, it is imperative that our workforce is empowered with the right skills through timely and relevant skilling, upskilling and reskilling efforts. This will make our people more agile and resilient, and able to cope with the challenges posed by the current pandemic and what lies beyond.