

NATIONAL SKILL CONFERENCE 2009: BANGALORE

'New Perspectives, Actions, and Challenges in the Unorganized Sector'



Skill Landscape: Skill training in India in the unorganized sector and school dropout and illiterate youth in particular attains very significant and crucial importance when the country is having school dropout rate ranging from 62 to 80 per cent. A young nation where 52 per cent of the population lives below 25 years age and coupled with the existing range of dropout rate, one can only imagine the number of youth who need skill training to make a living on their own. Further, only 5 per cent of the population is skilled and hence there is a huge skill deficit is experienced in all sectors. The demand for skilled labour outstrips the supply to respond to the newly emerging opportunities. Hence skill training is the only panacea for these unemployed youth to find a proper expression in their life. The country is yet to take advantage of the young demographic profile of its population to convert them as fine human capital.

Context: Despite the presence of the seemingly highly qualified people, majority of the workforce in India has very limited education and skills which severely limits their chances of obtaining gainful employment. The incomes of the majority of workers are low or the quality of work they engage in are such that it is not enough for them to move out of poverty. Access to formal training for those with limited education has been extremely minimal. Institutional support in India to provide vocational training is very weak for both, youth who have passed 10th class and who have dropped off before reaching 10th class.

Even when people can access education and training opportunities, the quality and relevance of the skills obtained are often questionable and many people struggle to find employment. Skills mismatch and limited training opportunities are common problems. The skilled artisans and craft persons are often not formally recognized / certified either. Those skilled crafts are reported to be in decline and calls for an intervention to retain such skilled crafts. A purely technical training with professional technical content will not be sufficient to ensure success. It is important to include aspects such as entrepreneurship skills, social behaviour, life skills, finance mobilization, market analysis along with generic skills. Workforce needs to have broader and transferable skills that allow employers and employees to continue to work effectively and efficiently in highly competitive and changing environments and markets. Employers are looking today to the VET sector to instill these skills into the workforce.

About FVTRS: Functional Vocational Training and Research Society (FVTRS), Bangalore is a skill promotion agency working for the unorganized sector. It focuses on school dropout and illiterate youth in the country to make them employable by building skills through vocational training. FVTRS empowers the school dropout and illiterate youth by building skills in various trades to help them build a livelihood on their own. FVTRS in this process is embarking on a sensitization mode on the relevance of skill training to a wide galaxy of stakeholders followed by funding support to NGOs across various States in India to organize skill training activities, simultaneously also focusing on building their entrepreneurial abilities to promote more of successful entrepreneurs rather than employees. FVTRS thus is trying to make a movement in the country through the associating/ implementing partners and other stakeholders to reach out to the un-reached and vulnerable sections to tap the hidden potential of youth who are branded as redundant, waste, useless, and how best they can be converted into productive human capital as opportunities galore in the globalized economy.

Goal: A good skill fraternity is a nation having a discussion with itself to make the underprivileged youth to make informed choices as in the process of introducing them to the world of work. This is yet to happen in this country in full swing though there are isolated efforts happening occasionally. It is in this context that FVTRS is organizing this National Skill Conference where a wide spectrum of stakeholders converge to discuss, deliberate and disseminate on best relevant options for the sector, new perspectives and actions with innovations, and challenges being faced by the service doers. The occasion will be also used to communicate on fine-tuning existing approaches where practitioners could scale-up to respond effectively by way of introducing new modules and modifications in approaches by incorporating all whatever are relevant in today's context and new strategies in the placement connect. Mandate and self-mandate through tangible relevant action plans in skill training scenario is the goal of this conference.