

4 th National Skill Conference 2011

India International Centre, New Delhi

10-11 January 2011



'Get Linked and Improvise Skill Training Interventions'

In India demand for skills is hugely outstripping supply and is therefore witnessing a spate of skill related interventions from central and State governments, and various autonomous bodies like CII, FICCI and IAMR under planning commission. Missions and initiatives formed in the recent past galore to address the issue of skill-gap against a growing young population which is opportunity-starved.

A nation where 50 per cent of its population is living under 25 years of age and 2 per cent of the total workforce is skilled, and the school dropout rate is at 88 per cent, one doesn't need to over-emphasise the relevance of skill training to make the underprivileged youth employable. Out of 450 million working population in India, 430 million is engaged in the organised sector and only 2 per cent have marketable skills.

The challenge of skill training thus is of paramount importance where the unorganised sector constitutes 97 per cent of the population. There is a widely shared concern that low skills level of its workforce will be a major bottleneck in maintaining the growth process more inclusive. The availability of skilled workforce enhances the ability of enterprises, both medium to large and micro-enterprises - to introduce and make effective use of technology, diversify their products and services, as well as reduce defects and wastage in production and service processes. Skills enhancement in traditional clusters can also contribute to the preservation and/or upgrading of artisans skills as well as improving the competitiveness of the clusters.

The hard reality however, is that despite the presence of 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 majority of workers do work as they cannot afford not to work; however, their incomes 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. 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 as a result. Skills mismatch and limited training opportunities are common problems. The skilled artisans and craft persons are often not formally recognised/certified either. Those skilled crafts are reported to be in decline and calls for an intervention to retain such skilled crafts.

The Context

Players in skill scenario today are looking to the issue by and large as manpower to be supplied to the industries and machines. An agrarian economy where about 70 per cent of the population lives in the agriculture sector with its declining contribution to the GDP at 17 per cent is a cause for worry. In this context, India's problems are attributed partially also to the growth in the non-agriculture GDP to nation's economy. A time has come therefore for all us to think how to enhance the agro-related trades and areas to be developed and to make the growth process more inclusive.

FVTRS

Functional Vocational Training and Research Society is addressing the skill training needs in India especially among the school dropout and illiterate youth to make them employable while focusing also on development of entrepreneurial skills since 1993. The emphasis has been not on preparing youth as employees for wage employment but to make them as successful entrepreneurs to create ripple effect in the community to effect more employment. FVTRS has so far organised funding support to 700 vocational training projects that were executed by non-governmental organisations, training in about one lakh youth. Currently we are supporting more than 100 projects wherein 20000 youth are undergoing training in various trades from the underprivileged section of the society. These efforts are supported by European Union, and Misereor Germany for the last several years.

This is the fourth edition of the National Skill Conference that got off from 2007 by FVTRS. This conference is mainly conceived as the unorganised sector's response to the current skill debate happening in the country.

This Conference is being jointly organised with National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) New Delhi.

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Opportunities

- A vision to make India the Skills Capital of the World by Skilling 500 million by 2022.
- There is a large pool of labour however, majority of which is unemployable because of absence of relevant and adequate skills.
- Prime Minister's Skills Council and the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) are trying to bring the private sector to the forefront.
- Skill Development Initiative
- The Ministry of Employment and Labour in plans to establish 1500 ITI s
- 5000 Skill Development Centres with Public Private Partnership model
- National Skill Development Policy
- State Skill Development Missions and Corporations
- National Skill Development Corporation
- India has more than 6,900 ITIs/ITCs in the country with 9,54,000 seats out of which 4,909 ITCs are in the private sector with 5,45,000 seats. They need up-gradation very urgently.
- Demand for Skill outstrips Supply

Challenges

- Weak response from civil society and Non-Profits to vocational training
- Exclusion
- School drop-out rate at 88 per cent
- Of the current total workforce, 40 per cent is illiterate and an equal number constitutes school dropout persons
- Un-organised sector related skills are hardly found mention
- Agro-related skills/trades are not appearing in the common parlance
- Inaccessible geographic locations
- Institutional mechanism to develop Entrepreneurial Skill Development is conspicuously absent
- 70 per cent of employers look forward to employees strong on soft skills
- Absence of Instructors
- Trade diversification and the resultant trade stagnation
- Development of Curricula
- Certification
- Gender Mainstreaming
- Research and Development
- Contingency plans to move forward
- Recognition for Skilled Labour

Topics for Deliberations

- Hand-holding Mechanisms
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Trade Diversification
- 21st Century Skills
- Best Practices in VET
- Changing Mindsets
- Innovations and Promotion
- Green Trades
- Mainstreaming VET in Regular Academic Curricula
- Academic Vertical Mobility of school dropout youth
- Networking among VT players
- Research and Development

Objectives of the Conference

- Promotion of Inclusive Growth
- Scalable new models in VT
- Formation of an ardent array of doers in VET
- Best practices and emulation
- Bond and Link with peers doers
- Improvise skill training interventions
- Benchmark and standardise
- Diversified trade-sets
- Promotion of Sectoral Skill Councils to promote trade proliferation
- Respond to skill gap
- Promotion of Research and Development
- Facilitating Employment/Placement
- Make the voice of the unorganised sector heard



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