

Mammoth Task of Skilling 500 Million People by 2022

Govt. Initiates Action to Set Up 1500 ITIs & 500 SDCs in Unserviced, Backward Areas: Labour Minister Mallikarjun Kharge

NEW DELHI, August 19, 2010. Faced with the daunting challenge of skilling 500 million people by 2022, the Government has initiated action to establish 1500 new Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and 5000 Skill Development Centres (SDCs) in the PPP mode under the 'Kaushal Vikas Yojana' scheme, **Union Minister for Labour & Employment, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge**, announced here today.

Inaugurating the **3rd Global Skills Summit organised by FICCI and the Ministries of Labour & Employment, Human Resource Development and Rural Development**, Mr. Kharge said that "The new ITIs and SDCs will be created in the unserviced and disadvantaged blocks, including hilly, difficult and backward areas so that large unskilled workforce of these areas could acquire the skills and are able to mainstream with the workforce in the developed regions of the country."

The Minister urged Indian industry and trade to come forward and join hands with the Government to open new ITIs/SDCs based on the regional requirements.

Mr. Kharge said that as Indian industry grows and competes internationally, it was faced with the realization that the availability of requisite skills in terms of quality was emerging as a major constraint.

He said that the National Policy for Skill Development dealt with the issue of skill mismatch and skill mapping and suggested establishment of a Labour Market Information System and Human Resource Planning for a realistic assessment of economic trends and labour market needs.

The Minister declared that a nationally agreed framework that would guide and reflect the agreement of the stakeholders was under way. Such a framework would act as a bridge between different national systems and facilitate transparency, mobility and progression of different levels of skilled people working in and outside the country.

On the occasion, the Minister released the **FICCI-ICRA Management Consulting Services Ltd (IMaCS) Report on 'The Skill Development Landscape in India and Implementation of Quality Skills Training'**.

Mrs. Sudha Pillai, Member-Secretary, Planning Commission, called upon the stakeholders to look seriously at honing the skills of the huge number of school drop-outs as along with the right to education, skilling had to be regarded as an essential human right. She underlined the imperative of skilling 500 million persons by 2022, else the perceived demographic dividend could become a demographic nightmare.

Sir Richard Stagg, British High Commissioner in India, felt that India was uniquely well placed to fill the gap in the requirement for skilled workforce of the 21st century. He expressed confidence that the India-UK partnership would facilitate imparting of skills to the people to benefit the people of India and the UK.

Mr. Anurag Jain, Chairman, FICCI Skill Development Forum, spotlighted the challenges faced by India in skill development. These include the challenge of scaling up training infrastructure to expand vocational training from the present capacity of 3 million to 13 million new entrants to the labour force. He called for training of trainers for which the Advance Training Institutions need to be raised substantially. The labour Market Information System, he emphasized, needed to be geared to prepared relevant skills. An online connection with the industry would feed them with regulator information, he said.

The FICCI- IMAcS Report notes that considering the magnitude of the challenge in terms of skilling about 15 million persons every year and ensuring that the workforce of 500 million is adequately skilled by 2022, it is required that the way forward comprises of adequate initiatives to achieve these humungous targets in the right 'scale' and 'speed'.

Some of the possible solutions to address the issues outlined are as follows:

Targeting skill development at all levels of the 'skill pyramid': It is required to not only skill and educate the workforce at the higher skill levels (which is key to ensuring industry competitiveness through research and IP, etc.), but also to adequately skill the workforce at the lower levels (i.e., where much of the workforce is concentrated). Accordingly it is required that skill development initiatives be targeted at all levels of the 'skill pyramid'.

Implementing Vocational Education in schools: Vocational Education in schools should be enhanced. This will present a channel for students to acquire skills, both life skills and industry-specific skills during schooling. The vocational education system should be enhanced from the current 3.2 lakh available under the National Institute of Open Schooling.

Creating a large talent pool through Modular Employable Skills: The MES framework provides a means for multiple-entry and multiple-exit skill development. It brings with it a flexibility to offer short-term, demand-led courses with partnerships. Increased adoption and will help achieve the required scale in skill development.

Ensuring Quality in Delivery: Quality will have to be driven (as well as be determined) by the following dimensions at the level of each/individual institute/centre: Strong Governance and Administration; Adequate and appropriate faculty; Current curriculum; relevant infrastructure; a defined process for evaluation of student learning from in-gate to out-gate, employment, and employability and Rewarding partnerships.

Employing technology to achieve scale: Information and Communication Technology (ICT)- led interventions will help achieve scalability, standardisation, and maximisation of impact. ICT can have a role to play in the following areas: Need Assessment and Sourcing (through media, internet, community based mobilisation, employer views); Curriculum Design and Development (standardised curriculum which can be easily replicated and offered at multiple locations to aid scale up); Education and Training Delivery (through recorded/interactive teaching input); Assessment and Certification (through e-testing, computer based tests, supporting current theory and practical tests) and Placement linkages (employer and student views on demand, centralised placement systems).

Formulation of institutional mechanisms for content formation, delivery, and assessment: As the demand for training grows, there will also be a cascading impact on the demand for content, standardised processes for training delivery, uniform assessment practices. These will drive the demand for trainers and assessors which will be a critical bottleneck as other pieces of the ecosystem fall in place. Furthermore, there would be a need for standards and quality processes (quality systems formulation, quality assessment, quality certification/training process certification) as the demand for training grows rapidly. These would require institutional mechanisms, specifying of quality standards and practises.

Expediting the formulation of Sector Skill Councils: Given the need to ensure standards, industry involvement and industry led initiatives, it is required to expedite the formulation of Sector Skills Councils. The National Skill Development Policy has proposed the following roles for the Sector Skills Councils: Identification of skill development needs; Development of a sector skill development plan and maintain skill inventory; Determining skills/competency standards and qualifications; Participation in affiliation, accreditation, examination and certification; Plan and execute Training of Trainers; and Promotion of academies of excellence.

Setting up of a National Human Resource Market Information System (a National Skill Exchange): The requirement for an ICT-enabled market information system will help both employers and employees provide details on specific demand, as well as where the access to the skilled workforce exists. This should not only be limited to the vocationally skilled workforce but also be made available to the higher skill levels as well.

The two-day Global Skills Summit is deliberating on issues such as the emerging trends in skills development, nationally and globally; the quality paradigm in vocational training; PPP in running vocational training programmes & dual track system in India; structure, role & relevance of sector specific councils; and promoting rural employment through skill development.

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