

SKILL NET, Karnataka

An initiative to organise the skilled workers

1. Context

FVTRS has been engaged in skill training of the school dropout youth for the last 21 years. Over the years FVTRS has scaled up our intervention based on the experience and learning. Of late there has been a series of discussion/discourses involving partners during review meetings, PIPs, workshops and other occasions regarding innovations in skills development. Based on this a special meeting of the partners from Karnataka State was organised which critically looked at the progress made, areas for improvement and way forward. Deliberations and conclusions of this meeting are consolidated by a core team comprised of members from partners and FVTRS. The concept of Skills Net – Karnataka, is a result this meeting.

2. FVTRS Experience

Functional Vocational Training and Research Society (FVTRS) was started in 1993 with the main objective of promoting vocational training among school dropout and illiterate youth across the country. Projects and other activities are formalised and carried out through non-profit organisations in the voluntary sector, with funding support to organise vocational training. The following are key achievements made so far;

- a. FVTRS has so far supported around 850 projects all over India and trained more than one lakh youth in about 200 trades with a placement rate of 70 per cent as employees and as successful entrepreneurs. Among the above trainees 55 per cent are women.
- b. FVTRS also supported projects in the disaster affected areas – i.e. Tsunami affected areas in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and communal riot affected areas in Odisha, and also encouraged them to implement innovative skill training projects. Attempts are also made to mainstream Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) and life skills training along with the vocational training so that the trainees become more efficient entrepreneurs.
- c. With National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, FVTRS has entered into a MoU for facilitating accreditation of NGOs. So far 40 partners were accredited to facilitate academic vertical mobility to make the youth pass class 10 with PASS10N philosophy and also to avail assistance for vocational training with certification. 4,262 trainees were enrolled so far for both academic and vocational courses.
- d. Through National Skill Conferences conducted every year since 2007, FVTRS was able to reach out to many stakeholders and sensitise them about skilling the unskilled marginalised school dropout youth.
- e. In collaboration with ILO, FVTRS has trained 40 master trainers for EDP. FVTRS also translated ILO's EDP training materials into Hindi, revised the English version and also

printed the games-kits. It is an effort to incorporate entrepreneurial skill for the trainees along with the technical skill training.

3. Areas of concern

While the progress and achievement are celebrated, FVTRS is also aware about few concerns that have to be looked into. The following are a key area for improvement

- a. **Need for systematic follow up:** It is increasingly realized that FVTRS need to find ways and means to follow up on trainees who are distributed far and wide across the country. Sustainable use of the skills imparted to them should be ensured and facilitated for a decent living. Though follow up reports are received from partners, many of these reports reveal that the trainees have left the trades in which they are trained and gone for other casual work.
- b. **Better enhancement of skill, trades and income:** Most of the trained youth are not enhancing their skills or their enterprises thus there is no enhancement of their income. There accessibility to facilities to enhance their skill is also limited.
- c. **Limited linkages with the government schemes.** Though there are lot of schemes for the youth and their development, the reference group is not able to access these schemes effectively due to various reasons, some of which could be within their control and some beyond their control.
- d. **Poor bargaining power:** As the trained youth remain isolated they are not able to articulate their requirements and desires to the concerned persons and office. Due to this they are not able to get right wages and expand their scope of work. This makes them more vulnerable to the present existing exploitative mechanisms and practices.
- e. **They remain as unorganised labour:** In the present scenario the trained youth are not able to get a right job or to start a successful entrepreneurship due to individual efforts. Individual efforts limit opportunities and growth. Due to various reasons an individual finds it challenging to find a job, start an enterprise, mobilize bank loans and government schemes, upgrade skill, take up large projects, be socially secure, have good bargaining capacity and develop better business models.

4. Way forward

It is important to ensure that the trainees are constantly accompanied. If the skilled people get together and form an association, their collective effect will be able to enhance their skill, business and income constantly and they will be capable of addressing their issues together.

Goal: A community based network of skilled youth who are engaged in training, enhancing their skills and business for better economic independence and quality of life.

Methodology

- **State level orientation to the partners:** Initially FVTRS will organize a orientation programme for the FVTRS linked and other interested partners at the State level. The head of the organisation will be the participants for this programme. FVTRS will explain and clarify the envisaged programme to the participants.
- **Partner level orientation:** Among the interested organisation who wants to be part of the programme there will be a second round of orientation. FVTRS along with the head of the organisation who attended the state level meeting will conductan orientation about the programme at their geographical location. This orientation will be forthe board members and staff of the organisation
- **Organisation of the occupational groups:** The partner organisations will be facilitating formation of the occupational groups. These groups will be formed by organising the trained and skilled youths who are interested to be together. This can be done even when they are undergoing training. The ideal number of members shall be around 10 to 25. Both male and female can be members of the group. The group formation can be done according to the trade considering the geographical proximity. It is advisable that the members of groups are from the same Gram Panchayat (GP). There will also be a panchayat level structure incorporating all groups formed in the panchayat irrespective of the trades.

These groups shall have elected leaders. The group will ensure regular meetings at regular intervals as decided by the groups but not more than a month. Association will initiate building rules and regulations in the admission process and functioning of the groups as and when required. Some commonalities of these rules of functioning can be developed. The rules and regulation shall be decided by the group's themselves in a democratic way. They will initiate thrift and credit programmes. Along with this they will also be engaged in their job/business/enterprises.They can take up group activities which are either income generation or otherwise. Though they are formed as group of a locality their scope of work can be anywhere they like.

The partners will be identifying the existing groups initially. If such groups are there they will start working with them after assessing them. They will motivate the FVTRS trainees and other trained youth to join the group. Partners will also facilitate rules development within the groups. The partner staff willalso participate in the group meetings initially and ensure that the groups become independent in organising such meetings. They will help them to identify the initial leaders for the group. They will try to develop the leadership qualities within them as“on the job facilitation”in addition to the structured training. In the process they will also be monitoring the group dynamics and guiding the process so the conflicts are handled well. They will ensure inclusion of all and avoid hijacking of the groups by other forces and groups.

- **Formation of panchayat level clusters:** The groups from different village level clusters are envisaged at the Gram Panchayat level. The occupational groups are federated to form the clusters. Each group will be represented in the cluster through their leaders. Theseclusters

will not be trade wise. This has to function as a service provider to enhance the skills, business and linkages of the primary groups. These Panchayat level clusters can be further networked at higher level as it grows.

The partner organisations will access information that is relevant, disseminate them among the groups and facilitate the use of information. Partners will also help in mainstreaming and institutionalising this knowledge along with facilitating internal learning mechanisms inside the clusters and network. Partners will also help the cluster level association for organisational management (leadership, team management, system building and management and finance management)

- **Leadership training:** The elected leaders of the clusters and the groups will be trained on a periodic basis so that they are capable of managing their groups.
- **Curricula development and standardization:** FVTRS will designate one partner as the lead NGO for the development of curricula for one trade. FVTRS will collect existing curricula from different agencies and disseminate them to the designated partner. FVTRS will also connect expert organisations and individual to such partners for further improvement of the curricula.

The designated partner will be finalising the curricula after validating it with reputed organisations and agencies. The partners will validate the content of the curricula, about its use and relevance. After calibrating the curricula they will start making use of it for further trainings. Finalised curricula shall be published and circulated by FVTRS.

- **Forming technical resource teams:** The consortium partners will be identifying potential master trainers. They will also identify skill up-grading requirements of the trained youth, based on which FVTRS will organize training of master trainers in the identified areas.
- **Facilitating Vocational Training Providers (VTP) registration:** FVTRS will also facilitate VTP registration among partners. Thus, partners will be able to facilitate the certification through Directorate General Employment Training (DGET) for National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) certification.
- **Facilitating vertical educational enhancement:** The partners will constantly identify and motivate the trained youth to get enrolled with NIOS for PASS10N so that they can directly write and pass 10th standard. For this purpose, FVTRS in association with the partners will organize an enrolment campaign in the target areas so that it will give visibility for the programme and motivation for more people to get enrolled. They will also be supported with supplementary classes so that they get qualified to write the exams as early as possible.

Expected results

The following results are expected from the above concept and interventions;

- The organisation of the skilled persons will be engaged in accessing rights of the workers through dialogue, linkages, lobbying etc.
- They shall also have access to services like social security measures, Government schemes, services by others, banks, Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR), NGOs, religious institutions as well as getting better certifications for the trainees.
- They shall be engaged in organizing awareness programme in other relevant subjects like legal matters, health issues etc.
- They will be motivated to aspire for further education and up-grading the skills which will help them to climb the ladder of career growth/success. This mechanism will also function as a constant follow up and accompaniment mechanisms for the skilled youth with their own leaders.
- As the network grows in size and strength they can engage in their own business starting from production, processing, promotion, marketing, standardization of the products and further scaling up.
- The network is with different capacities and it will help each member federation and individuals to prepare proper business plans and access to better employment, services, rights etc.
- This will bring long lasting sustainability to the process that is initiated.
- The whole process will lead to systematic progress of the skilled persons and their groups in terms of sustainability, strength, economic progress etc.
- They will also feel and gain better bargaining capacity for accessing their rights and services and influencing for better policies and programmes for their development and welfare.
- The entire unorganised skilled labour in the target area will get into an organized form

5. Conclusion

This programme is envisaged to be a trainee-centric, trainee-owned and trainee-driven process for their own progress, attaining better identity and image. The overall process is expected to mould individual as a responsible citizen and agents of change for sustainable society. This programme, if implemented arduously, has the potential to bring dignity to the trade as well as skilled people in the trades.

SKILL NET INDIA

