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National Skill Conference

Hyderabad 27-29, November 2013

Vocational Training with Special Focus on Agriculture and Excluded Sections **Breaking the Myth 'One Size Does Fit All'**

Context: Functional Vocational Training and Research Society, in brief FVTRS, ever since its inception in 1993 has been spearheading a movement in India to make its underprivileged youth employable through skill training with special focus on the school dropout youth who have little or no opportunity for any formal training for a decent livelihood. The strategy to realise the objectives has been through funding and knowledge support to non-profits all over India who are interested to organise skill development based on location specific skills along with imparting training on enterprise development. FVTRS could so far support training to more than a lakh youth in various trades with 70 per cent placement effected as successful employees and as entrepreneurs by implementing more than 900 vocational training projects in different parts of the country.

National Skill Conference (NSC): FVTRS embarked on a national level conference annually, with appropriate theme on skill development since 2007. The conference involves a galaxy of stakeholders from government departments, autonomous institutions, banks, business, industry, media and civil society organisations of various shades and programme partners of FVTRS, to discuss and deliberate on what should be the right direction - a movement in mind - to make a difference in the lives of the hapless youth through focussed skill development. These conferences were useful to all the participants in many ways in exploring new avenues and possibilities related to skill training, to be better informed and equipped, to emulate on the emerging best practices, areas where more focus is required to improve the quality of training, and most of all on the quintessential aspect of capturing the untapped entrepreneurial energy lying dormant and unexplored among the youth who have been forgotten and written off as being redundant and useless or possibly the last priority of the planners.

Of India's 1.2 billion population, about 60% are of the working age. And of the 15 million youth who join the job seekers queue annually, only 3% undergo vocational training. Hereditary learning is more than formal training through 8800 IITs, 450 polytechnics indicating the inadequacy and inappropriateness of vocational training.

Therefore the challenge lies in imparting appropriate, useful skills not only to the educated, but the less educated or school dropout youth who form a large segment of job aspirants with adequate flexibility for vertical and lateral entries at relevant institutions.

NSC 2013: The theme selected for 2013 is pertaining to exclusion with special focus on agriculture and farming and excluded segments with the running message being 'a single size does not fit all' as is experienced from a multi-diverse country like India where formal efforts continue to hover around the privileged few and catering to the organised industrial needs. New sizes and experiments as practised in community colleges and vertical and lateral entries are essential in breaking the myth of lower value/status attributed to vocational training and establishing the fact that skill education is second to none. In addition to access to education, skill development of the marginalised and 'excluded' segment is the key to inclusive growth.

Take-Home Benefits: Best practices in newer areas in agriculture and farming where majority of the population depends for a livelihood, practices in community colleges and possible emulation, facilitation as activists to encourage vertical and lateral entry to educational institutions so that the early school leavers and school dropout youth do not remain ever as unproductive adding to the millions of already existing unemployed, are some among them.

Venue: Hotel Marigold (Hotel Green Park), Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh

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