

## CONCEPT NOTE ON NATIONAL SKILL CONFERENCE 2015

Theme: “Towards Community owned and managed skill development”

### Introduction

Demographically, India is a young country with majority of her population below the age of 35 years. This is an onset for India to experience a dynamic transformation as the population burden of the past is turning into a demographic dividend. Unleashing this power builds the necessary condition for the success history of a nation like India. This urges the need for high rate of school retention and more educational participation.

With the implementation of RTE there is a gradual decline in the annual average school dropout rate from 9.1% in 2009-2010 to 6.9% in 2010-11. But there have been more school dropouts in 2010-11 as compared to 2009-2010. As per the recent socio-economic and caste census (SECC) 24% of the families in India do not have a literate person above the age of 25. As per the different surveys of development sector including UNICEF, about 80 per cent students get dropped out before they reach class X in India.

However India has only 5 per cent formally trained workers. The occupational profile of India’s workforce shows that 90 per cent of the workforce is employed in skill-based jobs, but more than 90 per cent of these workers have no formal vocational training.

It is during the 11th five year plan the country started discussing about this skill gap. 12th five year plan took a more affirmative stand. National Policy on Skill Development 2009 aims to train 500 million people by 2022. It also aims to increase the workforce in the organised and un-organised sectors especially among youth, women, disabled and disadvantaged sections. Thus today skill development has become the buzz word across the country.

In an effort to make the school dropout and illiterate youth employable, Functional Vocational Training and Research Society (FVTRS) has been facilitating skill development in India since 1993. So far 941 projects were supported all over India through which 118,873 youth acquired skills in more than 200 trades. This has impacted their livelihood with a placement rate of 70 per cent.

Along with this FVTRS is constantly communicating the relevance of skill training to a large number of potential players. As part of this process, FVTRS has also been organising National skill conferences annually, as an opportunity to sensitise more stake holders on skill development. The conference is expected to bring all stake holders together and build solidarity to work for skilling India, with one particular theme taken-up for deeper reflections and discussions. This year the theme selected for NSC is “Community owned and managed skill development”.

### Community owned and managed skill development

With two decades work in the field of skills promotion with various stakeholders FVTRS is convinced that vocational training at present is focusing more on skilling people to suit the workforce requirements of the secondary and tertiary sector. While this is important to a large extent, the primary sector (which provides raw material to the other two sectors) has not been adequately attended. The share of primary sector has decreased from the past four

decades – from 50% in 1970 to 29% in 1995. Currently it is further reduced to 25%. Major businesses in this sector include agriculture, agribusiness, fishing, forestry, all mining and quarrying industries. This sector also engages mostly the rural poor like dalits, tribals, marginal farmers and fish workers, thus serving the livelihood of a large majority of people in the country. The food security of the country is very much dependent on the prosperity of the primary sector.

The Indian economy is characterized by the existence of a vast majority of informal or unorganised labour. As per a survey carried out by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 2009–10, the total employment in the country was of 46.5 crore comprising around 2.8 crore in the organised and the remaining 43.7 crore workers in the un-organised sector. Out of the workers in the un-organised sector, there are 24.6 crore workers employed in agricultural sector alone. Another one crore is engaged in fishing. According to SECC 51% of the un-organised labour live with manual and casual work without any skill. According to the other available studies, reports and data 93 per cent of the working population in India is in the unorganized sector. Hence large number of the poor who are engaged in the primary sector are remaining as part of the unorganized sector always.

Usually the secondary and tertiary sector engages people with a minimum qualification of 10<sup>th</sup> standard or above. This limits the opportunities for the school dropouts to look for livelihood in the secondary and tertiary sector and thus they solely depend on the primary sector. Most of these dropouts are concentrated in the rural areas where there is insufficient opportunity to pursue higher education except the open schooling about which the rural masses are largely unaware. The limited communication, transport facilities and accommodation facilities etc also limit their scope of advancement in the formal education.

There is also a stigma existing to say that skill education is low to other professions. In India everybody looks for white collar jobs. Because of this the traditional occupations which are very much needed for the human existence is being vanished. Along with this the traditional wisdom of the original communities are also getting lost.

Skills which were learned through informal/non-formal were not certified. As a result, these trained youth and their capacities were not recognized. Hence most of them earn less income than they deserve or corresponding to the earnings of their counterparts in the organized sector and continue to lead an undignified life or move away from the profession and migrate.

The rapid economic growth that is being experienced in India is becoming cause for migration of the rural population, making the issue of urban poverty more complex. According to the census data, the level of urbanization has increased from 27.81 % in 2001 to 31.16% in 2011. The Planning Commission also estimated that 535 million people or 40% of India's population will live in towns and cities mainly because of migration by 2026.

Poverty alleviation efforts by both government and the civil society are dwarfed by the huge number of poor concentrated in urban areas and peripheries. These efforts have largely been insufficient to meet the real need as compared to the sheer magnitude. Unless and until we foresee this and plan ahead, we will end up in irreversible situations.

Therefore protecting and promoting the primary sector by updating and diversifying the skills of people engaged in primary sector is of utmost importance in terms of food security of the country and the livelihood security of the large majority of the rural poor. If this is done, the

poor, marginalized and unorganized sector will get a default focus. Therefore there is a need to look for skills which are compatible for the local rural situations which will give them self-employment and retain them in their own villages. This will support the primary sector and the growth of the communities in the villages. This in turn will also support the secondary and tertiary sector.

There is already a mismatch between the educational requirements among the rural population who are mostly un-organised and the available education and skill training facilities. These unattended rural school dropout youth have to be equipped with required facilities to access open schooling.

It is also equally important to organise the un-organised labour thus empowering them to attain due recognition. This will facilitate a collective growth in the community, along with growth of the individuals. This will also help them to retain in the much needed primary sector and enhance the potentials of primary sector. Thus the growth of the rural economy can be accelerated. In terms of addressing urban poverty, it cannot be done merely by interventions in urban areas. Specific interventions in the rural areas (the source) is very crucial to reduce migration and related rural poverty issues.

It is also a well-known fact that there is no dearth of schemes for skilling of the rural youth from the government and CSR initiatives. However they are also not accessed well by the reference community. Facilitating access to these facilities also is crucial for rural development

Therefore the need for a community based approach is increasingly important by which the skill training services reach the unreached, mainly in the rural areas where majority are engaged in primary sector, thus facilitating a collective and integrated growth of the rural communities.

FVTRS thus looks forward to have in-depth discourses during the forthcoming NSCon skilling people engaged in primary sector who are largely un-organised and represented by the excluded communities.