

National Skill Conference

**Theme: Inclusion, Employability Skills and Capturing Entrepreneurial Spirit
in the Unorganised Sector**
Kovalam, Kerala - 20-21 September 2012

A Brief Report



Day-01: 20 September, 2012

Govt. of Kerala to provide Skill Training for six lakh Youth

Inaugurating the National Skill Conference at Kovalam, Shri KM Mani, Hon. Finance Minister, Govt. of Kerala emphasised on skill development of young people and inclusive entrepreneurship leadership would be a main priority for the government of Kerala. The National Skill Conference organised by Functional Vocational Training and Research Society (FVTRS) with the support of The European Union, MISEREOR and NIOS.

Entrepreneurship development is the need of the hour which needed to transfer to the young generation encouraging them to invest on their ventures and to seek opportunities of self-employment. Talking about the initiatives of Kerala government for skill development, Shri KM Mani gave a brief on three schemes of skill acquisition programmes named-Additional Skill Acquisition, Skill enhancement and Entrepreneurship Establishment mission focusing to provide skill training to six lakh youth in the State. He also made a number of other important points, including:

- People want government jobs and they are willing to make huge investments for it. They are least willing to invest in entrepreneurial skills. This attitude must change.
- From a wage-earning mindset the youth should move to an entrepreneurial mindset.
- Scarcity of employment is not the real issue today; the challenge today is that of employability.

Skill Development leads to Economic Betterment

Mr John Samuel, Global Adviser, UNDP pointed out that there will have to be detailed planning for re-skilling the youth in relation to the present prevailing context and political economy in the society. Mr Samuel mentioned that Kerala's economic and social development is the outcome of the export of skilled workforce to other parts of the world and country.

Focus of Youth Development

Mr Saleem Ahmed, Director General, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), New Delhi focused on the need of the development of youth for the growth of the nation. Introduction of voting right at the age of eighteen by the former Prime Minister of India, Mr Rajiv Gandhi was the indication of his belief on the youth strength necessary for the growth of the country, cited Mr Ahmed. The focus of various programmes initiated by NYKS for the youth, women and rural people with the support of ministries, different institutions, organisations is based on the same belief.

Importance of Self-Employment

Mr PH Kurian IAS, IT Secretary, Govt. of Kerala emphasised on the need of skill development for poverty eradication and economic development. Linking of entrepreneurship development programmes with the skilled people is required to emphasis on self employment and job opportunities in organised sector, added Mr Kurian.

'Help Youth to Help Themselves'

Dr Antony Kariyil, President, FVTRS emphasised on the need to orient the efforts of skill development for the youth to equipped them to help themselves in his presidential address.

Vote of thanks was proposed by Ms Koely Roy, Vice-President, FVTRS.

'Skill Recognition and Certification comes prior to Skill Development'

Delivering the keynote address Dr Rajesh Tandon, UNESCO-Chair for Community Participation & President, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) said that there is a need to work with workers in the unorganised and informal sector to provide skill support.

It is also important to learn from the experience of farmers and to further support the skills to increase agricultural productivity. The need is to recognise the indigenous skills of our artisans and craftsmen and identify and certify to make them skilled in their professions, said, Dr Tandon.

Dr Tandon emphasised on the importance of lifelong learning module for our country.

- Millions of our people are skilled, but they are counted as unskilled.
- The greatest challenge is neither skill acquisition nor skill enhancement, but skill recognition and skill certification/accreditation.
- Existing skills should be recognised and certified.
- FVTRS should become an effective platform for policy analysis, lobbying and advocacy.
- Focus should be on livelihood and not on employability.

'Train Youth to exploit Perishable Natural Resources'

Dr S Vijayadharani, Hon. MLA from Vilavancode Constituency, Tamil Nadu focused on the huge human resource the country has to link that to skills development and Vocational Training programmes. She also emphasised to train youth to exploit perishable natural

resources to market as profitable products, especially in north-eastern region that is full of natural resources.

Thematic Sessions

Youth and Skill Development – an Inclusive Approach

Dr Mukti Mishra, Chairman, Centurion Group of Institutions, Odisha spoke of best practices adopted by the institution focusing on skill Development of young generations coming from rural and distant places. The session was chaired by Mr Jagadananda, State Information Commissioner, Odisha. Mr Pawan Kumar Varma, Chief Mobilisation Officer of Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai highlighted the training programmes and work integrated competency development for disadvantaged youth by the institution in his presentation. Mr John Mundakayam, Chief of Malayala Manorama, Thiruvananthapuram made a deliberation on role of media, youth and skill development.

Promotion of Entrepreneurial Leadership

Speakers: Dr KP Wasnik, Director, Vocational Education, NIOS, New Delhi; Ms Rita Sengupta, Director, NIESBUD, New Delhi and chairperson of the session Mr Samarendra Sahu, IES, Additional Development Commissioner, MSME, New Delhi spoke of various initiatives taken up the institutions they represent for the promotion and encouragement of entrepreneurship development among the young generation of the country.

Salient points of other presentations and reflections include:

- Detailed planning needs to be undertaken for re-skilling the youth in relation to the specific context and political economy in society
- Investment in skills should be transformative
- The conference should come out with a number of recommendations to be submitted to the state and central governments
- Strong civil society pressure should be built up for effecting desired policy changes
- Entrepreneurship is not merely a matter of technical skills; it is a philosophy of life, a life choice and attitude
- Development of soft skills and life skills is as important as imparting technical skills

Release of Conference Souvenir and Research Book ‘Skills Watch’

The conference Souvenir and the research book named ‘Skills Watch’ documented by Dr P Basak, Former Board Member, FVTRS was released by Shri KM Mani, Hon. Finance Minister, Govt. of Kerala.

Dancing Skills

The first day of NSC started with a charming exhibition of entrepreneurial innovations: the Drum Dance performance by the members of Vanitha Band from Thodupuzha. Another thrilling experience was women entrepreneurs demonstrating innovative ways of climbing coconut trees.

Founder Memorial Lecture

Mr Devinder Sharma, Founder member of Chakriya Vikas Foundation delivered a brilliant public lecture on Food Security and Factors Threatening Indian Agriculture. The session was chaired by Mr Binoy Acharya, Director, Unnati, Ahmedabad.

Day-02: 21 September, 2012

Dr Paul Comyn, Skills Specialist, ILO, New Delhi spoke on ILO's initiatives on skill development during his presentation on second day of the conference. Fr Michael Vettickat, Executive Secretary, KSSS, Kottayam highlighted the success stories of youth undergone various training programmes. The session was chaired by Dr J Alexander, IAS (Retd), Advisory Committee member, FVTRS.

Thematic Sessions

Thematic Session on Precision Farming and Its Role on Stimulating Agriculture growth was presented by Dr E Vadivel, Project Officer, Precision Farming and e-Extension Programme, TN agricultural University, Coimbatore. The session was chaired by Ms Aruna Sunderarajan, IAS, Vice-President, Kudumbashree Initiatives, Government of Kerala.

Session on Innovative Skill Training Models by selected partner-organisations of FVTRS was held wherein Ms Naheed Aqueel, CEO of Prayatna Foundation, Lucknow; Dr Shalini Saxena, President of PECSS, Bhopal; Fr Corlis Gonsalves, Director of Don Bosco Technical Institute, Pune and chairperson of the session; Ms Hemal Kamat, Director, Concept Society, Indore shared their success experiences as the outcome of implementation of innovative skill training models such as challenging trades for women trainees, collaboration with local self-governance system, industries and educational institutions, schemes of Kishan credit cards to artisans.

A Note to Prime Minister

Group Discussion was held on drafting a note to be send to Prime Minister on the issue of skill development of workforce (91% of total workforce) engaged in the unorganised sector in the country. The session was moderated and facilitated by Dr P Basak, outgoing Board Member, FVTRS.

Valedictory Session

Shri Shibu Baby John, Hon. Labour Minister, Govt. of Kerala emphasised on the need to change the mindset of youth and society to be more receptive to the benefit of initiatives taken in the field of skill development and entrepreneurship development programmes in his valedictory address, the concluding session on second day of the conference. Ms Koely Roy, Vice-President and Mr Albert Joseph, Executive Director of FVTRS were also present in the dais. Vote of Thanks was proposed by Mr ML Satyan, EU Project Manager. Ms Anita Sharma of GTZ, New Delhi moderated all sessions of the two-day conference.
