

Address by Shri Harish Rawat, Hon'ble Minister of State for labour & Employment during the inaugural session of FICCI "Global Skill Summit" on August 20-21,2009, New Delhi

Dr. Narendra Jadhav jee, Member, Planning Commission, Shri Harsh Pati Singhanian jee , President, FICCI; Shri Anurag Jain jee, Chairman, FICCI, Skill Development Forum, Shri Rajan Kohli; representatives of employers, workers, Central and State Governments; captains of industry, member of print & electronic media, distinguished guests, ladies & gentlemen. It gives me immense pleasure to be here this morning, I extend a very warm welcome to all of you, specially, delegates from UK, Germany, Switzerland and Australia in this Global Skills Summit on the "Emerging Skills-India 2020". I am told that last year in August, 2008 also, Global Skills Summit was organized by FICCI and this summit is to take forward the lessons learnt from the earlier one. I congratulate FICCI for their initiative in catalysing the process of Skill Development in the country through multifarious activities.

Friends, as we all know, India is a fast growing economy and has its share of challenges as well as opportunities, similar to many other nations. The opportunities are in terms of flow of foreign direct investment and the availability of large young and educated population. India has been labeled as one of the youngest nations of the world, primarily because about 54% of our population is under the age of 25 years where as many other economies have either aged or aging population. However, one of the biggest challenges which the nation faces is the mismatch between the available skills and the required skills in terms of quantity, quality and relevance. A huge challenge is to train a large number of youth in the skills which are required by the industry. In order to sustain the high rate of economic growth and also for socio-economic upliftment of our people, we need to pay serious attention to skill development in our country with an eye on emerging skills. By proper skill development strategy, the youth can be converted into great national asset. Therefore, due importance has been given to build human resources and the same has been articulated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in his various speeches. It was in this background that India's 11th Five Year Plan included "generation of productive and gainful employment, with decent working conditions and simultaneously achieving inclusive growth of the nation" as one of the basic objectives.

Hon'ble Prime Minister has also given us a vision of skilling 500 million persons by 2022 to meet the challenges of independent India @ 75. Therefore, skill development in the country like ours needs huge amount of expansion of capacity, matching investments and innovative delivery approaches. All the governmental and private efforts for development of skills will have to be oriented towards all sections of society including women and disadvantaged groups such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, minorities, economically challenged and physically challenged.

The problem of skill development is also aggravated due to the fact that a large number of children drop out of their school education. As per available data, about 20 million children enroll in the first standard every year, however, by the time they reach 10th standard, 63% of the children drop out from their schools and by the time they reach 12th standard, 90% children drop out due to various reasons. All these children who could not carry on with their education look out for some avenues for gainful employment.

To meet the challenges of providing skill training to our youth, we have 17 Ministries/Departments/Organizations offering various training programmes for various skill sectors under their control. Though all these ministries were doing their part of the jobs for skilling persons but it was observed that there was no coordination and convergence mechanism and common direction for their efforts. Therefore, Ministry of Labour & Employment took lead in formulation of "National Policy on Skill Development". The policy has understood the constraints of skill development in expanding its reach in different corners of the country. Therefore, the policy has suggested ways and means to provide skill development opportunities in rural areas, hilly areas, border and difficult areas, naxal affected and remote areas of the country.

While the "National Policy on Skill Development" was under finalization, government of India also took various other initiatives like formation of a "National Council on Skill Development" under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister and a "National Skill Development Coordination Board" under the Chairmanship of Dy. Chairman, Planning Commission. As an apex body, the National Council on Skill Development gives vision and policy direction while the Board helps in carrying out the directions of the Council and evolve a co-ordination mechanism. Besides these two government bodies a "National Skill Development Corporation" under the Chairmanship of a prominent industrialist has also been set up under the Companies Act, 1956 to support and guide private sector efforts in skill development. The Corporation is also expected to constitute Sector Skills Councils for identification of skill development needs of various sectors of economy, development of sector skills developmental plan, etc. I am happy to say that FICCI is very closely involved in the activities of the "National Skill Development Corporation" and I hope to get more and more cooperation and involvement of FICCI in skill building and employment of the youth of this country.

In order to meet the aspirations of large number of school drop outs, the Government launched a new scheme titled the "Skill Development Initiative" to train one million persons in the next five years and thereafter one million every year. Under this Scheme, training is provided in demand-driven short term courses which are based on Modular Employable Skills. 450 Modular Employable Skill Courses have already been developed under the scheme. The most important aspect of this Scheme is the flexibility in conducting training programme and assessment is made by independent assessing bodies and certification by National Council for Vocational Training. The most important aspect of the scheme is that the cost of training of the successful candidates is borne by the Central Government. It is hoped that this Scheme would meet the ever increasing skill needs of the Industry and would simultaneously help the youth of the country to find gainful employment in formal and informal sectors, as well as help them to take up self employment ventures.

Hon'ble Prime Minister announced setting up 1500 new ITIs and 5000 Skill Development Centers in Public Private Partnership. In this regard, my Ministry has initiated action to set up these 1500 ITIs and 5000 Skill Development Centres in the country in PPP mode. These facilities will be created in the un-serviced blocks including hilly, difficult & backward areas so that large unskilled labour force of these areas could acquire skills and mainstream with workforce in advanced regions of the country. These efforts would facilitate an accelerated and sustainable transformation for expansion of outreach of the vocational training.

Government has also taken up modernization of all 469 employment exchanges in the country and create a world class web portal which, on the one hand, will have skilled manpower needs of the industry and on the other availability of skilled persons. Though some of the Employment Exchanges are computerized, majority of the work manually resulting in serious handicap in dissemination of information both to the employers as well as job seekers. These constraints are now being overcome by introduction of this e-Governance project which will provide solution for speedy and easy access to employment related information to job seekers as well as employers.

I am sure that the deliberations in this Global Summit will throw up a number of ideas and best practices and participation of different countries in this summit will subsequently develop into meaningful partnership between countries, industries and organizations. I wish the Global Summit all success. FICCI has always been in the fore front of economic development of our country. I wish them all the best in their efforts.

Thank You and Jai Hind