



Department of Higher Education



Tamil Nadu State Council

Report on
Conference on Reforming & Rejuvenating Higher Education
29th November 2016 (Tuesday), Hotel Hilton, Guindy, Chennai

FICCI – Tamil Nadu State Council in association with Department of Higher Education, Govt. of Tamil Nadu organized the Conference on Reforms & Rejuvenating Higher Education at Chennai on 29th November 2016 wherein more than 200 delegates from various universities and colleges across Tamil Nadu participated in this conference. Great Lakes Institute of Management was the Associate Sponsor for the event.

Prof. Dr. M Bhaskaran, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Open University, in his address as the Chief Guest, paid rich tributes to the parents and school teachers in moulding the character and keenness to learn of an individual. “Both parents and teachers fanned the quest for seeking knowledge. With adequate and comprehensive infrastructure in the neighborhood, students can gain valuable insights. He said that only 25% of people from rural areas were opting for higher education and this need to improve vastly. He further lamented that the current stress was on studying by learning as opposed to studying by doing ... a concept hugely popular in develop nations. If students can learn skills of adaptability and analytical skills, they would be far better placed to face the future with confidence” Dr Bhaskaran said.

Dr. T. S. Sridhar IAS (Retd.), Former Additional Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu and presently Director – General, SRM University, Ramapuram & Trichy Campus, in his special address, stated that the education system in India was a legacy of British colonial system. “While Britain had moved on with significant reforms in higher education sector, India held on to almost of the earlier practices”. He cited the instance of 18 regulatory bodies governing the higher education sector as a good example. In the higher education sector, globally most education institutions enjoy a great degree of autonomy with minimal interference through regulation. However, in India, the reverse is true to a vast extent.”

Thiru. Vivek Harinarain IAS (Retd.) former Principal Secretary to the Government of Tamil Nadu, also labeled as the architect of IT evolution in the state, stated in a highly illuminating speech peppered with several examples. Mr. Harinarain stated that skills development can be explained as moving a person from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence. He lamented that the employability of graduates was a lowly 20% in the engineering education while the same scored even lower levels of 10% for legal education and 7.5% for management education.

Dr. S. Ramachandran Former Vice-Chancellor, University Madras and presently Vice chancellor Hindustan University observed that skills and human capital are the backbone of economic prosperity of the nation. “Progress of the nation is driven by technological advancements in higher education and higher education plays an important role in success and sustainability of knowledge economy” he said.

Thiru. P Murari IAS (Retd.), Advisor to FICCI President and Former Secretary to the President of India in his concluding remarks highlighted that value based living was the purpose of quality higher education. He added “Skills development is a key focus area for both the State and Central governments. Work by the officials of the government, the academia and the industry

were being carried out in a coordinated way and this should lead to successful results in the immediate future” He concluded.

Prof. Dr. D Viswanathan, Convener, Education Panel, FICCI TNSC & Former Vice Chancellor, Anna University said value based education, skill development in higher education, entrepreneurship and research orientation were important for rejuvenating higher education in India.

Thiru. Ruban Hobday, Head – FICCI Tamil Nadu State Council, proposed the vote of thanks.

The main objectives of the conference were (1) Entrepreneurship Orientation in Higher Education System, (2) Promoting Research & Innovation (3) Employability skill development, (4) Future scenario in Higher Education which was addressed by eminent speakers such as **Thiru. K. Rajaraman IAS.**, Principal Secretary/Director, EDI, Government of Tamil Nadu, **Thiru. Rajendra Ratnoo I.A.S.**, Director, Directorate of Technical Education, Guindy, Chennai **Thiru. R.M.P. Jawahar**, Executive Director, Tiruchirappalli Regional Engineering College, Science and Technology Entrepreneurs Park, TREC-STEP, Tiruchirappalli, **Thiru. Sarathbabu Elumalai**, Founder and CEO, FoodKing, **Prof. (Dr.) Kuppuswamy Anantha Padmanabhan**, Former Director, IIT Kanpur, **Prof. Krishnan Balasubramanian**, Chair Professor in Mechanical Engineering, Dean of Industrial Consultancy and Sponsored Research (ICSR), Head of Centre for Nondestructive Evaluation (CNDE), Indian Institute of Technology Madras, **Dr. B. Chandrasekaran**, Director, CSIR-Central Leather Research Institute (CSIRCLRI), **Dr. V. M. Periasamy**, Pro-Vice Chancellor & Vice Chancellor (Officiating), B.S. Abdur Rahman University

Padma Bhushan Dr. B.M. Hegde, Indian Medical Scientist, Educationist, Author & Retired Vice Chancellor, Manipal University gave the Valedictory Address. He said that Education must aim at making healthy minds and not just a wealthy career. It should have nothing to do with money. Dr. Hedge said outdated and old concepts were still being taught or believed because there was money in them. Teachers should be like “midwives” helping deliver the best out of the students he added.





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Caption: L to R: **Thiru. Ruban Hobday**, Head, FICCI Tamil Nadu State Council, **Dr. T. S. Sridhar, IAS (Retd.)**, Director General, SRM University, Ramapuram & Trichy Campus & Former Additional Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu, **Thiru. P. Murari IAS (Retd.)**, Adviser to FICCI President & Former Secretary to President of India, **Prof. Dr. M. Bhaskaran**, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Open University, **Thiru. Vivek Harinarain I.A.S., (Retd.)**, MD & CEO, Tonnex Consulting Pvt. Ltd, **Prof Dr. D. Viswanathan**, Convener, FICCI Education Panel & Former Vice Chancellor, Anna University, **Dr. S. Ramachandran**, Vice-Chancellor, Hindustan University