

24. USE OF ICT IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APPRENTICES ACT

Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development for any country. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of world of work. Potentially, the target group for skill development comprises in the labour market including those entering the labour market for the first time (12.8 million annually), those employed in the organized sector (26.0 million), and those working in the unorganized sector (433.0 million)[2004-05]. The current capacity of Skill Development Programme is 3.1 million against which India has set a target of skilling 500 million people by 2022. As the proportion of working age group of 15 to 59 years is steadily increasing, India has an advantage of demographic dividend. Harnessing the demographic dividend through appropriate skill development efforts would provide an opportunity to achieve inclusion and productivity within the country and also a reduction in the global skill shortages. Large scale development is thus an imminent imperative.

There are many major challenges of skill development initiative to address the needs of the huge population of the country. National Apprenticeship training Scheme of Govt. of India is one of the way forward achieving such target, comprising of on job training to freshly qualified engineers, diploma holders in engineering and technology and +2 vocational certificate holders. In order to scale up to the extent as required it is urgently needed to put concentrated effort in this direction by all stake holders such as Central, State Govt. and local bodies, employers/industries, trade unions, civil society organizations etc. Thus the skill development initiative needs considerable amount of expansion of capacity and innovative delivery approaches and public private partnership. Some of the measures taken by Govt. of India for the expansion of skill development are:

1. Adaptation of Innovative approaches to raise the capacity of the system extensively over a limited period.
2. Development of mechanism to encourage private sector participation.
3. Expansion of public training institutions, particularly in rural, border and hilly and difficult areas.
4. Development of innovative delivery models using mobile training, distance learning, e-learning etc.
5. Promotion of skill development in villages and block level, encouraging participation of Panchayat, Municipalities and other local bodies including co-operatives and NGOs.
6. The expansion coverage by establishment to 1 lakh (for 1 million apprentices) from existing 23,800 establishments (for 2.58 lakhs apprentices)

Now, we can understand the role of employers'/training establishments in building the capacity of skill development so as to reach the national target of development of 500 million skilled manpower by 2022.

Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education, Govt. of India through the four Regional Boards of Practical/Apprenticeship Training situated in Kolkata, Mumbai, Kanpur & Chennai is implementing The Apprentices Act aiming to create a pool of skilled manpower in the country through On- the-Job Training for Engineering Graduates, Diploma Holders in Engineering and Technology and +2 Vocational Certificate Holders. All the four Boards are implementing the Apprenticeship Training Scheme on Regional basis.

However, the four Regional Boards have always been suffering from non-unified processes, faced problems in Information sharing, reporting, Integration of Regional data, Inadequate supply demand Analysis, etc. In order to overcome these challenges & issues and to unify the entire scheme, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education, Government of India developed a national portal to ensure seamless connectivity with the stakeholders for transparent administration through e-governance. With enormous effort the four Boards have finally developed the National Web Portal (www.mhrdnats.gov.in) involving other stakeholders also. This portal is in line with the Vision "Digital India" of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. It is aimed to digitally empower the technical youth of India and all its stakeholders with citizen-centric approach and Just in Time service.

The National Web Portal is developed based on four board perspectives:

1. Integration of existing four portals of Regional Boards
2. User friendly portal for Students, Industries, Institutions & other stakeholders
3. Auto Skill Mapping of Demand & Supply
4. Provide capacity building for vertical & horizontal growth of regions.

One of the components of such initiative to reach the target is contribution through structured National Apprenticeship Training Scheme of Govt. of India under The Apprentices Act, 1961 as amended time.