

Community Colleges Scheme

Introduction:

India has a population of over 1200 Million and a workforce of around 510 million, to be able to provide employment to such a large number of people, the numbers of which is more than the entire population of countries like USA, is more than a daunting task and is going to get even more challenging with the population growing by more than 2% every year.

With the current levels of unemployment being around 46 million, it is likely to grow to anywhere between 50-60 million in the next 8-10 years. To put this in perspective, these numbers are more than the entire population of countries like France, Italy and United Kingdom.

In terms of demographics, almost 35% of Indians are younger than 15 years of age, whilst 18% fall within the age group of 15-24. The median age of India is 24 years, which makes it one of the youngest populations in the world. This in itself throws up huge challenges in terms of demands on the education and employment systems.

Over 200 million students enroll for school in Class I each year, but only 20 million of these are able to finish Class XII, which is only 10 % of the entire intake or in other words 90 % of the school students drop out at different stages. This signifies that a large number of people who drop-out of school do not have the necessary education and skills to be productively employed in the industry. This is over and above the 100mn children who have no access to schooling.

Sixty percent of India's workforce is self-employed, many of who remain very poor. Nearly 30 per cent are casual workers (i.e. they work only when they are able to get jobs and remain unpaid for the rest of the days). Only about 10 per cent are regular employees, of which two-fifths are employed by the public sector. More than 90 per cent of the labour force is employed in the "unorganized sector", i.e. sectors which don't offer with the social safety and other profit of employment in the "organized sector."

Skill based on Vocational Education assumes amplified significance considering the fresh stride that the industry has made in recent years in the area of Automobile Engineering, IT and Telecom, Retail, Entertainment and Media, Hospitality, Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) and Infrastructural Construction.

If the present trend continues, 109 million persons will attain working age during the period of 2007-2012. The net addition to workforce is, therefore, expected to grow to 89 million of which around 13 million are likely to be graduates/post graduates and about 57 million are likely to be school drop outs or illiterates. A significant share of incremental demand is likely to be for skilled labour - graduates and vocationally trained people are expected to account for 23% of incremental demand by 2012. The study further estimates that India is likely to increase deficit of 5.25 million employable graduates and vocationally trained workforce by 2012. Hence focusing on vocational education is of primary importance.

Government recognizes the need for empowering the youth through skill development and simultaneously giving the student an option for vertical mobility in the existing higher education system.

One of the options to achieve the specified dual target is through the scheme of Community College. Community Colleges can definitely help in building productive workforce.

The Government of India's Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) has proposed that a Community College scheme be launched in the 12th plan. Accordingly, a group of State Education Ministers has been constituted to suggest a framework of this scheme. Members of this committee along with some senior officials from government and institutions (MHRD, AICTE, UGC and IGNOU) have been deputed on a study tour to the US so that they get firsthand experience of the functioning of Community Colleges there. Philosophy of the Community college scheme rests on the premise 'for the community, by the community and of the community'. It revolves around providing opportunities towards all the sections of society, particularly the marginalized and disadvantageous ones.

It encourages students who may want to attend a three year degree, but are not academically or economically ready to begin study in the formal system. In a community college, students can choose to work towards a certificate/diploma/degree programme of varying durations in

several vocational and academic fields, which may enable them to get transferred to a regular college or university to get a degree.

Community colleges, as they exist in different countries, provide education above the secondary level and below the degree level with appropriate skills keeping in view the local needs there by leading to gainful employment and option for horizontal and vertical mobility. While vertical mobility indicates movement to up ladder in higher education and research, horizontal mobility brings to for entry into the employment market with appropriate skills. There is also flexibility for further skill development and/ or opportunity for pursuing higher education and research.

The major Aims and objectives of Community college scheme are –

- To enable the students to pursue continuing education in multiple formats - face to face, on-line, full time, part time;
- To provide a better option for a student who wants a carrier oriented qualification and may not requires a three year degree
- To help in building Productive Workforce
- To inculcate and up gradation of Skills for job seekers and existing employees
- To work towards more enrollment in Higher Education through vertical mobility (and dual enrollment)
- To provide accessible and affordable education and skill
- To impart purpose driven education and skill up gradation
- To offer courses in accordance with the local requirements and needs of the area/community.
- To provide and strengthen livelihood alternatives to the communities;
- To have involvement and participation of the local industry/business organization in framing and revising the curricula.
- To train and re-skill the existing works force of industry and business organizations in the local area.

How it works in USA?

There are at least two major models for governance of Community Colleges in USA , one of the model is the State system like Virginia Community College System where all operational norms and guidelines are decided at the state level and executed accordingly in the

community colleges (it is applicable). Another model is that of Governance by each college in an independent manner like Community Colleges in Maryland. However, in both these models the Community colleges come in to existence only through the Act of State legislature.

One third of the funding for running the community college is from Students fee. The Governments at Federal, State, Local levels contribute a major share towards meeting the budgetary requirements of these Community Colleges. In addition to it, endowments from corporate sector, foundations, etc., also contribute in meeting the financial requirements of the Community colleges.

Proposed System for India

At the pilot stage, instead of opening Community Colleges from a new building or creating new infrastructure, the proposed Community colleges may initially be established in the existing Colleges/Polytechnics/ITI and thus using their infrastructure coupled with the use infrastructure of the local industries/business organizations for 'hands on' practical training. As these colleges are to have close contact with industry including business and service sector, it shall be desirable for these institutions to be located near industry clusters including business and service centers. Therefore, it is much called for the industry to be closely associated at all stages, viz identification of trades, learning needs and trainers, transaction of syllabus, assessment, etc. Further, teaching, evaluation and certification would be the responsibility of the Institute/University to which the host college is affiliated while placement planning and review would be the responsibility of the institute, industry and that of State and Central Government.

Recommendations –

1. In keeping with the deficiency of appropriately skilled work force, it is required to have Community Colleges that will not only produce quality workforce but will also provide an opportunity to the learners for acquiring higher educational qualification.
2. For inculcating skills, it is desirable to have short-duration, focused and modular programmes that allow for quick and effective delivery of skills training. It shall enable a learner to become productive relatively quickly at younger age. The modular approach shall also mean that s/he can add on to her/his portfolio of skills for vertical and horizontal progression. At the same time, the content shall be focused to allow for

dissemination of only relevant skills. The duration of programme/s shall be decided in accordance with the objectives and content of the constituent programmes. Amongst other things, it would be based on Employer-Employee Needs, availability of Infrastructure and Equipment, Characteristics of the Training Content, etc. For programmes up to two years duration, the focus shall be more on hands-on experience. The theoretical input in such programme shall only be as much as required for the effective practice of the skill

3. **Programmes and/or Courses to be offered-** Both Credit as well as Non-Credit Programmes and Courses, depending on the need of the area, clientele, industry/business/sector services, etc. concerned, shall be offered
4. **Development of Programme and/or Course Curricula-** It shall be conceived/ revised in synergy with local industry, concerned Regulatory body/ University/ Affiliating Body, etc
5. **Faculty-** From the concerned institute and local industries/business and/or service sectors
6. **Governing Body-**
 1. Executive head of the Institution;
 2. Representative of the State Government;
 3. Representative of the local Industries Association, Business and Service sector;
 4. Representatives of the Local Elected Bodies;
 5. Representatives of the concerned industry/industries, business and service sector/s, in case of programme/s which is/are related to the given industry, business and service sector.
 6. Representative of the concerned University under whose jurisdiction the community college is to work
7. **Funding Pattern-**

The financial resources could be from learners' fee, State Government Grant-in-aid, Union Government Grant-in-aid, Industrial Houses, Business/Service Sectors Organizations, Endowments, etc.