



“We need to create around 1.5 CRORE JOBS per year for the next decade to PROVIDE GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT TO INDIA’S YOUTH”

DR S RAMADORAI, ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, INFORMS **YASMIN TAJ** THAT SKILLING AND MAKING THE CITIZENS OF INDIA ‘JOB-READY’ ARE THE GOVERNMENT’S TOP PRIORITIES



AS THE ADVISER TO THE PM ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT, WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR INDIA?

WE are a young economy, and we are only growing younger. In 2020, the average Indian will be only 29 years old – compare that with 37 in China and the US, 45 in West Europe and 48 in Japan. 65 per cent of our people will be in the working age group, and this age advantage for India is expected to continue for at least three decades till 2040. My vision for India is a country where everyone has been equipped with the skills needed to be a positive contributor to the economy. *In view of the huge demographic dividend that India enjoys, I also see Indian skilled manpower being invited to other countries, to take care of their needs.*

THE GOVERNMENT HAS FORMULATED THE NATIONAL POLICY ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND SET A TARGET FOR PROVIDING SKILLS TO 500 MILLION PEOPLE BY 2022. DO YOU THINK WE WILL BE ABLE TO MEET THIS TARGET?

As highlighted by the National Skill Development Policy of 2009, as well as the 12th Five Year Plan approved last year, *skilling our people is among the most important priorities* of the government. A coordinated strategy for skill-development has been formulated amongst key stakeholders - Central Ministries, State Governments, National Council on Skill Development (NCSDB) and National Skill Development Coordination Board (NSDCB), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and the industry.

HOW IS THE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SCENARIO FARING?

ACCORDING to an estimate, we need to create around 1 to 1.5 crore jobs per year for the next decade to provide gainful employment to India’s young population. *Large businesses in India, both in the public and private sector, will not be able to generate employment at such a large scale.* There is a need to actively focus on providing a suitable environment for entrepreneurial thinking, which can help in creating sufficient jobs to absorb our large young population.

ARE THERE ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES

AVAILABLE FOR THE YOUNG WORKING PROFESSIONAL?

ACCORDING to NSDC skill gap studies, nearly 170 million additional skilled people are required in 23 key sectors in India by 2022. A large chunk of these requirements are in the infrastructure, real estate, auto and auto components, and textiles and allied textiles sectors. Healthcare and education are the other important sectors that need skills and talent. *As a country, we are operating at half our capacity and half our productivity levels.* Not only do we have a constrained supply of trained manpower, but also we are in a situation where jobs are not necessarily where the youth is. The differential development patterns amongst states leads to a demand and supply mismatch.

DO YOU THINK THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS CONTRIBUTING, IN RIGHT MEASURES, TO THE SKILL-DEVELOPMENT MISSION?

THE INDUSTRY needs to play a major role in the skilling initiative. With a highly demand-driven labour market, apprenticeship with industries is an important way forward. Currently, such ‘earn while you learn’ models have been highly under-leveraged. More wages should be paid to highly skilled people, else training is disincentivised. *The industry needs to fundamentally buy in to the idea that training is an investment it needs to*

make. In terms of public private partnerships, setting up of NSDC was one of the most significant steps undertaken by the government. The corporation has been contributing significantly to the overall 500 million target by fostering private sector initiatives in skilling and by providing viability gap funding.

HOW CAN THE INDIAN YOUTH BE MADE MORE ‘EMPLOYABLE’?

WE need to understand the aspirations of India’s youth simultaneously, we need to match that with the demand side. We need to talk about career paths and provide career counselling, so that the youth makes informed choices based on its aptitude. At a more fundamental level, a ‘National Skills Qualification Framework’ and educational equivalence system are also needed, which can facilitate movement across formal education and vocational training systems. *There is an urgent need for all training institutions to shift focus from ‘persons trained’ to ‘persons employed’.*

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