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Editor's Pick

Skilled growth

India's skill development initiative is gathering momentum, reports Diptiman Dewan

The skill initiative in India is on a fast track. **The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has drawn a ten-year plan to skill 150 million people by 2022. One of the biggest challenges is building capacity, from 4.3 million that existed in 2008-09 to around 40 million by 2013-14.** Besides skilling, India is also focusing on innovation and research by setting up university innovation clusters, which will support the same.

Bodies like the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) is one of many institutions across the globe, including governments, educational and vocational training institutions, etc, that are trying to play a key role in aiding India's skilling efforts.

One of its main focus areas is leadership development, specifically in school leadership. "Teachers and principals in private schools in India still get opportunities to participate in structural leadership development. But those in government schools hardly do. We are looking to work with the MHRD on school leadership. The UK has a National College for school leadership, which does a

similar function, and India has expressed its interest to set up a similar body and is in dialogues to create a blueprint. The vocational leadership space is not very strong in India. We want to get organisations with their core strengths in vocational skills to create a resource pool of trained manpower in India,” said Malyaj Varmani, head, UKIERI scholarships & skill development, at a press briefing held recently at the British High Commission in New Delhi.



The NSDC, in India, has decided to set up sector skill councils, which are industry-employer led organisations that support development within particular skill sectors. It has already identified 21 high growth sectors in India. Varmani says that since the UK has a similar structure, they will be able to work closely with the government on this initiative. Institutional capacity building is another area of focus for the UKIERI where it is trying to get UK colleges to partner with their counterparts in India. The idea is to build capacity and mutual learning in areas like building training models, training the trainers, etc, so that ITIs and polytechnics benefit from it. Enhancing mobility, both for scholars from India to the UK, and vice-versa, is the other focus, Varmani added.