

Proposed Skill Development Society in J&K

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With an aim of bringing all the departments undertaking skill development activities under one umbrella, the Jammu & Kashmir Cabinet gave nod to the creation of a separate Skill Development Mission Society, as an inclusive and dedicated structure for implementation of all skill development initiatives in Jammu & Kashmir State. The said Skill Development Society which shall be set up under the name and style of Jammu & Kashmir Skill Development Mission Society' (JKSDMS) will work to integrate the skill development programmes of Centre and the State government in consultation and collaboration with all the concerned departments. The decision taken by the Government is indeed a welcome step, but in addition to this, Government needs to create several Practical Training Centers across state under the auspices of this proposed society. These centers would be very helpful for the budding entrepreneurs who would be imparted practical training under one roof in different trades. It is impossible to impart skills and to create potential entrepreneurs by making them to go through lectures in

class rooms, conference halls or auditoriums and not make them practically familiar with the trade which they opted for during any skill development course.

The only Government institute which imparts Skills training in J&K along with necessary funding is Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI). EDI would definitely be taking its trainees to visit poultry farms, handloom centers, dairy farms, sheep farms, car workshops and other similar places, but without staying in these centers and farms and living in such an atmosphere, I believe that Government won't be able to create dedicated and skilled Entrepreneurs in our state. As of now the training module has been built in such a way that all the focus and thrust during entrepreneurship training is given on theory. Power Point Presentations (PPT's), distribution of attractive pamphlets etc and one field visit cannot help these young men and women to shape their future as professionals.

The newly created J&K Skill Development Mission Society (JKSDMS), Entrepreneurship Development Institute's (EDI), and other training centers imparting skill development training in hospitality, retail,

agriculture, carpentry, dairy, sheep, trout farming, floriculture etc should have their own farms, workshops where these kind of activities would be undertaken so that budding entrepreneurs get better skills and training. In addition to it these institutions must help the entrepreneurs with market linkages as well.



EDI lays special emphasis on dairy & sheep farming, but they don't own even a single own dairy or sheep farm. At least one model dairy farm or sheep farm should have been established by this institute as they get sufficient funding from the Government to carry forward its activities. EDI lays emphasis on youth for taking up sheep farming, but EDI does not own even a single sheep

farm in any part of state? Youth are being trained in cut flower business by EDI team in Srinagar and Jammu but this institute hasn't developed its own floriculture farm. Youth are being trained in hospitality skills, but the EDI does not even own a small tourist guest house. This should not be the case with newly created Skill Development

Society.

Ideally Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) located on the outskirts of Srinagar at Sempora Pampore should have been located in some village with vast farms and agricultural land because of the tremendous potential for sheep farming, animal husbandry, poultry, floriculture, horticulture, trout farming etc. It is unfortunate that

our planners only focus on construction of multistoried buildings which have nothing with agri based activities or related entrepreneurship.

Recently I visited few skill development centers in Bangalore run by Nudge Foundation. This foundation is run by few young men with corporate background. The Nudge Foundation offers residential courses in Driving & Computers. In addition to it a batch of girls hailing from remote districts of Karnataka are trained as Beauticians at the centre run by this foundation. The trainees are made to undergo a residential course for 6 months or so and after passing out they are placed in some reputed institutions who offer them handsome salaries.

Tailpiece:

I would sincerely appeal EDI Management and Government, that instead of spending crores on reconstructing of a new building, let them create a single Practical Training Centre for young entrepreneurs. We need a place where youth would be trained in different trades under one single roof. We need to create Electricians, Masons, Carpenters, Dairy experts, Sheep farmers, Florists etc under one roof. A separate Ministry for Skill Development has been created at national lev-

el last year. It is the duty of our Government to stress upon this ministry to provide funding for green and agri based skills in J&K which have a better future and market across state. Why cannot EDI have its own brand of milk and milk products which could be supplied to towns and cities from its "Practical Training Centres". As of now we are importing 85% of our milk and milk products from Punjab. We need to create organic dairy farms in our state. These organic dairy units are being run in several states of south India and have a tremendous potential in our hilly areas which are still not inflicted with chemical fertilizers. If Government is not in a position to make all this happen, why cannot they encourage Development organisations, social enterprise groups, NGO's, cooperatives, Self Help Groups (SHG's) or even entrepreneurs to create such models across Jammu & Kashmir? Before the newly created Skill Development Society starts functioning in J&K, Government must allot enough land to this society both in Jammu and Kashmir divisions, so that this proposed society is able to establish these "Practical Training Centers"