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## CHALEIN SAATH-SAATH TOGETHER WE MOVE FORWARD

*India-U.S. Declaration of Friendship*

# THE BUREAUCRAT EXPRESS

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ART DIRECTOR : Sunil Singh

GRAPHIC DESIGN : Shri Shyam Graphics

PRODUCTION MANAGER : Avadh Narayan

PHOTOGRAPHY : Surender Saini

Anup Jindal

Vishal Goyal

CONTRIBUTORS : Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Dr. Kiran Bedi

Shri Pravir Krishn

Neetu Sharma Joshi

Shri Joginder Singh

Prof. R. Vaidyanathan

(VIF India)

Dr. Neelesh Tiwari

Roli Jindal

## CONTACT THE FOLLOWING

### FOR ALL ISSUES RELATED TO

#### Editorial

editor@bureaucrateexpress.com

Sending editorial contributions  
editor@bureaucrateexpress.com

#### Advertisements

marketing@bureaucrateexpress.com

#### Subscription

info@bureaucrateexpress.com

#### Letters to the editor

editor@bureaucrateexpress.com

## FOR MARKETING QUERIES CONTACT

### MANISH PATHAK

Mobile : +91 9971496420

Email : marketing@bureaucrateexpress.com

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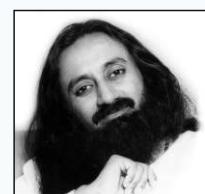
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**"It is smart to be ethical"** Sri Sri Ravi Shankar inaugurated the annual 2-day conference "Corporate Culture and Spirituality" in Bengaluru on January 31, 2015.



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# SKILLED INDIA

**A mission that should begin with skill readiness training at schools**

**DR. KIRAN BEDI, First Lady IPS Officer, Eminent Social Activist and Magsaysay Award recipient**

**S**killed India is the latest buzz. Everyone is talking about the need to impart skills to the youth to address the huge skill gaps that exist between the market need and the employees. It is said that only 9 per cent of our country constitutes the so-called "skilled population". Remaining is either unskilled or deficiently skilled. Ever since this need has been realised, here has been a wave in the country to support the movement towards skilled India.

Numerous short-term and long-term skill training courses have come up in an effort to bridge this gap. Almost all the models being taught have the component of soft skills along with technical skills in an attempt to make it as comprehensive and as industry relevant as possible.

However, the requirement today is not as straight forward as it appears. There are some very intricate and latent aspects that need to be addressed simultaneously if this movement has to reach close to what as a nation we are truly aspiring for. The feedback in this direction will come directly from the beneficiaries.

Here is a firsthand account of feedback analysed from one such group who came to attend convocation

ceremony in Navjyoti Community College located in Karala Majri, North West Delhi.

They were asked about the impact of the course that they underwent in the community college—impact indicators included their current status of employability, change in earnings, pattern of spending, impact on their personality, future aspirations, and post-employment needs.

#### **Following trends were observed:**

(I) On asking a question about what they have been doing upon completion of courses, about 52 per cent of the students were found to have engaged in some or the other economic activity immediately after completing the training.

(ii) 27 per cent were still looking for jobs and the rest were into higher education.

(iii) Average income of the passed-out students ranged from Rs. 3,000 per month to 8,000 per month. Some of them were even pursuing part-time and assignment-basis jobs earning from Rs. 300 to 1,500 per month.

(iv) Almost all of them were spending their earning in the families. Thus, spending patterns does not show much of inclination towards

savings or even investing in higher education or upskilling.

(v) Almost all the students reported to have gained confidence in the course. Other aspects which impacted their overall personality in the course included leadership skills, discipline, time management, anger management, self-defence training, team work, teaching skills, etc.

These trends clearly indicate some good practices as well as road map for all the organizations involved in skill training:

(i) Mostly the youth enrolled in skill training programmes come with very little orientation about outcomes to be expected out of the course. Most of the preference for the course is not necessarily due to his own personal interests or aptitude but because of peer/societal influence. Thus, it becomes the responsibility of the organisation to work on these at the very commencement of the courses so that the students have a clear road map ahead of them for the remaining period of the course.

(ii) Many a times, the youth enrolled comes with a very weak foundation of personal skills and learning aptitude which creates a huge mismatch between his current level and



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## Towards Self-Reliance

aspirations. Constant feedback and individualised approach on each and every student becomes imperative in such cases.

(iii) So many times, placements are viewed as the only success indicator of any skill training programme, while enhancing employability ought to be the most important indicator. It should not end in just ensuring that "first placement" to be the outcome of the training. For most of the students for first set of skills attained through training is only the stepping stone to enter the industry. However, to be able to categorise them into absolutely skilled manpower is a miss. Constant upskilling and mentoring for at least one year is the key that would lead to developing the right mind set in the students to aspire for a continual process of learning and upskilling.

(iv) Aptitude mapping for the preferred job role even within the same industry is also the key to come closer to the goal. For instance, not everyone learning IT skills can be competent data entry operators or handle front office successfully. This needs to be assessed on regular basis so that focussed training can yield desired results.

(v) Post-placement training should include critical aspects like employee-employer relationship management, team work, negotiation skills, labour laws, sexual harassment at work place, etc. Constant feedback on their

experience and need for further training need to be explored regularly.

(vi) Training on savings, planning road map for growth, future planning for personal and professional inner and outer well being also need to be organised.

Unfortunately, our schooling system is only directed towards imparting content-based knowledge of subjects. Life skills, employability skills that can create good team workers and leaders are missing in our education system. This becomes a challenge to be covered in a short period of skill training. This must become an integral part of our education and skill training process.

Another aspect which is totally ignored is sensitization of our children and youth towards contributing for well-being of society. Time has come to integrate as the most important skill set to be taught and learned in our entire education process. It is no longer a desirable but a mandatory trait in all the children and youth of our country.

Thus, churning out competent individuals is not an overnight mission that can be achieved through 6 months or one year courses. If we truly want our youth to be competent, conscientious and compassionate, and change makers, efforts have to be initiated right at the school level so that just as play school serve as a medium for school readiness, schools should

serve as a training ground for skill readiness.

*(This article has been written by Neetu Sharma Joshi, ED, Navjyoti India Foundation, under guidance of Dr. Kiran Bedi. Working with NIF for the last 14 years, Neetu Sharma Joshi is a Gold Medallist in Social Work from Delhi University, with specialization in Women and Child Development. She has been playing key role in the growth of the Foundation and has the experience of heading the urban development programme being run in resettlement colonies of Delhi reaching out to more than 10,000 beneficiaries every day, largest being children through education and skill upgradation programmes)*

*Navjyoti India Foundation is a premier not-for-profit organization in the country working since 1987; it is well-known worldwide for its commitment to work with marginalized sections of the society and help them attain dignified quality life. It was registered as an organization in 1988 by Dr. Kiran Bedi and 15 other likeminded officials of Delhi Police, as a result of the inextricable link that existed between crime and drugs. It is working with a vision to mobilize and harness the power of children, youth, women and people at large to combat illiteracy, ignorance, gender discrimination and the evil of addiction with an ultimate aim of crime prevention and development.*

