

Hunar

Bridging the skill gap for Rural solar technicians



Indian Society of Agribusiness Professionals (ISAP) is implementing the 'Hunar' Training and Job Placement of unemployed youth in Solar Energy Technician domain in Bihar. R&M Reports

Skill development has been accorded top priority by the government. India aspires to become a mid-income nation by 2021 and that would not be possible if huge workforce remain unskilled. With 'Skill India' mission in place, focus of Government and Industry is on bridging the skill gap.

Skill and knowledge is the major ingredient for economic growth and social development. A majority of Indian workforce do not possess marketable skills. Moreover, recent demonetisation

move has increased unemployment across India, especially for low-skilled workers. This threat can be handled only with the government's intervention but non-government sector also needs to be roped in with wider and extensive participation. It is surprising to note that the government has made very little attempt to address this issue in Budget 2017. The government increased the allocation to its rural job guarantee scheme MGNREGA and once again investing in non productive activities. It is widely admitted that the impact of MGNREGA in rural India has been adverse so far as it has made workforce in rural India

unproductive.

But there is still hope. Several organisations have taken up the challenge. These organisations are providing opportunities for job after adequate training and skilling. Explored segments are being explored to create more job opportunities. A non-governmental organisation Indian Society of Agribusiness Professionals (ISAP) is implementing the 'Hunar' Training and Job Placement of unemployed youth in Solar Energy Technician domain at Samastipur district of Bihar. This program is supported by Indian Energy Exchange (IEX), and aims to train 175 rural youth in Bihar.

ISAP's initiative is perfectly aligned with the government's focus on scaling up clean energy through solar energy. Solar manufacturing capacity is receiving a needed boost under the "Make in India" initiative. Clean energy like wind and solar are very well suited for rural India. There is demand for energy in villages and also they have vast space to facilitate generation of clean energy. The biggest advantage of clean energy is that it can be dis-aggregated



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Navin Jha
Head (Skill Development), ISAP

rather than concentrated. There is ample scope in this sector for more employment.

However, challenges are many. An existing gap and ongoing challenge within India's workforce is the lack of employees trained with the skills needed to construct and operate solar plants. This skill gap is increasingly recognized as a barrier to realizing the country's renewable energy targets. Given the large employment generation potential of solar in India, a significant proportion of the Indian workforce would need to be trained with the necessary skills to support the market.

“There was a good response to the mobilization process, and youth in large numbers approached our team expressing interest to be enrolled in the ‘Hunar’ skill program. The primary reason

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found the ‘Hunar’ program to be highly beneficial,” says, Naveen Jha, Head (Skill Development), ISAP.

A Training of Trainers (ToT) was organized for three domain trainers and one soft skill trainer under the ‘Hunar’ program. The trainers received detailed information on all aspects of the training program including the pre-implementation stage, mobilization, classroom training, and placement. The importance of the ‘60-day Action Plan’ for the duration of the entire training program was emphasized to the trainers at the ToT. The trainers were told that in addition to classroom training, the program would also include guest lectures, field exposure visits, classroom tests, practical's and on-the-job training.

Hunar training program in the Solar Energy Technician domain was imparted to candidates of 3 batches based on the curriculum prepared by ISAP experts. Trainer's guide was provided to the trainers, which helped in planning and scheduling different activities for the training program. Classroom sessions included



livelihood opportunities for the rural poor through interventions in sustainable agriculture and livestock development, access to water and sanitation, skills development and women empowerment. Through our targeted interventions for economic and environmental sustainability through farmer aggregation, knowledge empowerment and market linkages, we contribute towards food security and rural economic development,” says Sunil Khairnar, Founder, ISAP.

“ With 25 field offices in 17 states, so far we have contributed

presentations and lectures, as well as live workshops and multimedia presentations.

The training program comprised of 45 days classroom training and 15 days of on-the-job training (OJT), and was conducted from November 2016 to January 2017. On the last day of the training program, ISAP conducted an assessment which included both the theoretical and practical tests. Certificates were distributed to the



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Since 2001, ISAP has been working for the empowerment of rural India through sustainable farm and non-farm livelihood development. It is one of the largest networks of agriculture and allied sector professionals in India and acts as a bridge between this network of Indian rural communities and other stakeholders, including governments, large development organisations and corporate entities, through large-scale field implementation projects with integrated deployment of ICT for efficiency and scale.

“We work for enhancing

to enhancing livelihood opportunities for more than 300,000 farmer households, 1675 agri-preneurs, 9000 BPL youth, 15,000 women in 3500 villages, 250 blocks, 70 districts across India,” he adds.

The rural employment generation by the government should have been based on healthy economic activity rather than charity schemes. What the government needs to do is to become an enabler rather than the food giver. Encouraging Corporates and NGOs will go long way in creating rural employment. By bridging the skill gap, India can certainly move towards becoming a mid-income nation by 2021. R&M