

SKILLS AND EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Following almost two years as Railways Minister in the central government, Mamata Banerjee was sworn in as Chief Minister of West Bengal in May this year. After 34 years of Communist rule and relative decline, this change of Government has generated a new sense of optimism in West Bengal. It is still early days for the new administration, and the transition from Left rule will naturally take some time. It is therefore important not to expect big improvements from Ms Bannerjee and her team too quickly.

It is, though, highly encouraging, to see that education and skills, healthcare, and infrastructure are top priorities. The State authorities, supported by business, see skills provision as a crucial building block for the long term sustainable economic development of the city. They want to build both capacity and quality, and there is a welcome sense of urgency.

The **UKIBC delegation**¹ to Kolkata on 12 and 13 September is therefore particularly well-timed. It is the ideal opportunity to position the UK as West Bengal partner of choice.

The bulk of the opportunity will be in and around Kolkata but North Bengal (the Darjeeling area) and the state's tier 2 cities also hold prospects.

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¹ http://www.ukibc.com/ukibc_events/events_all.aspx?type=forthcoming&eventid=1180069&month=09&year=2011

FURTHER INFORMATION

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MARKET UPDATE

NEW NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY EXPECT

Following suggestions on the composition of an Education Commission by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has already started work on the commission that will formulate a new education policy over the next twelve months. This is a potentially significant development as the country's present education system is based on the National Policy on Education of 1986. The new policy is expected to look at the entire spectrum of education and learning.

"We are planning to setup an Education Commission on the lines of the D S Kothari Commission of 1964-66 that will chalk out the new education policy. Some work has started and consultations with all stakeholders, including civil society, will take a year after which the new policy will be ready," said a ministry official.

The Kothari commission consisted of 16 members, 11 being Indians and 5 foreign experts and set up 12 task forces and 7 working groups for higher, technical and agricultural education besides educational finance and teacher training, among others.

The existing policy — based on the framework set in 1986 — talks about free and compulsory education along with development of languages and emphasises

on education for industry and agriculture. At the secondary education level, it asks for increased technical and vocational education. It is at the university level education where the old policy cautions on the number of students being enrolled in the university system and that it is consistent existing education infrastructure.

In fact, for vocational education, the Kothari Commission had suggested that for a majority of occupations, university degrees were not necessary; and these jobs could be competently performed by trained higher secondary students. The commission said that it should be possible to divert at least 50% of students completing 10 year education to the vocational stream, which would reduce the pressure on the universities and also prepare students for gainful employment.

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VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOLARSHIP FROM MANIPAL EDUCATION

India Skills, a vocational training initiative from Manipal Education and skills assessment firm, City and Guilds, have launched a

merit-cum-means scholarship for learners in Bangalore. Under this scheme, students who opt for the scholarship course at the Bangalore centre will have to pay only Rs 2,500 for the Certificate in Retail Skills that actually costs Rs 10,800. Successful candidates will be given placement in leading retail firms such as Reliance Retail, Caf  Coffee Day, Shoppers Stop and Madura Garments. India Skills has tied up with all leading retailers for placement of students. It currently it has four thousand job mandates in the retail sector in Karnataka².

USING TECHNOLOGY FOR SKILLS TRAINING IN INDIA³

To train at scale it is necessary to leverage IT (information technology) for skills development, says Srinivas Rao Cheedella, Managing Director, Laurus Edutech P Ltd, Chennai

IT could play a major role in developing various tools and technologies for skills development, he suggests. "IT went through a similar phase as what skill development is facing today, and can therefore share experience to make the learning quicker."

Can you outline the different ways in which IT can help in skills development?

Skills development is a complete cycle that begins with assessments, leading to training, and then on to certification, placement, and monitoring and tracking. Assessments refer to the process whereby the current skill sets of a student are

captured and a counselling process brings out the skill development needs and an up-skilling plan for skill enhancement.

Given the diversity of the country, cross-cultural differences, and local languages, a country-wide network will have to take into account the varied facets of skill development. For example, a technology backbone that tracks all of the assessors — their skills sets in terms of trades, local language, proximity to assessment centres, and qualification to assess — could help map the appropriate assessment opportunity to an ideal assessor. A student from the assessments and counselling process understands the sequential skill development programmes, and also where all of that can take him or her.

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Interestingly, these can today be easily tracked on an online solution, and there are off-the-shelf products. Those that are built on a SaaS (Software as a Service) model could help even save costs on hosting, maintenance of data centres, etc, as they are typically pay-as-you-use facilities with complete data protection.

It would be a wonderful world if technology were to work like a robot on the internet and take over some of the monitoring and tracking components, such as students'

² <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/todays-paper/tp-others/tp-states/article2293958.ece>

³ <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/features/eworld/article2116046.ece>

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attendance, training hours, and progress, and capture these in the system.

Today, biometrics devices with GPRS that can authenticate a student, RFID cards that track students, and logical actions built into an application platform can make such a dream a reality.

A fully-networked platform and a standardised framework could help all skills centres spread across the country to effectively communicate with one another and help dynamically aggregate and help with cross-dimensional views of information, in real-time.

With the workforce of today spread out across the country, and migration being all-time-high in recent years, what is needed is a system that can help service students in any of the centres, and a service that is available to several industries. (Also, in terms of technology, given the subscriber and user base, mobiles have a far-reaching impact. A simple wrapper to connect the web to a mobile technology can help reach to a larger community today.)

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Some of the technology initiatives are under way, as the government has allocated sizeable budgets and has engaged the services of some of the large IT and skill development companies to help in putting all of this backbone and framework in place.

Are there best practices that we can readily adopt as regards skill development?

There are several best practices that India can draw from other advanced countries. For example, Australia has most of its workforce covered by competency standards. India has adopted this in its recent modular employability scheme framework. In countries such as China and Latin America, the participation of technocrats in private industry has been high and we are adopting that model through the public-private-partnership (PPP) projects which are now on the rise.

In what ways can policy drive skill development using technology?

Besides the financial layout in the budgets, one key component of skill development planning is to understand the skill gaps in the country and align the initiatives to work at reducing these gaps. This is a big policy driver to ensure we aren't training skills that would not be absorbed by the market.

Your views on the skill development issues faced by the Indian IT industry and how we can tackle the same.

The Indian IT industry, in the last couple of decades, has been on a continuous growth path. From almost no resources in the country in IT, today India is one of the most sought-after countries for its resources.

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One of the ways in which IT managed was that when it started it modularised the IT resources, and enabled people to quickly adapt to those modules and deliver on the job. It was like swim-lanes, where an IT professional has been confined to the lane. Over the years, plans were drawn to continuously invest in exposure to newer technologies, plan and anticipate, and up-skill the IT resources.

This is crucial as the industry has evolved, and will continue to be crucial as we move forward. For example, today there are several IT professionals building platforms for mobile devices, tablets, etc, using newer tools and technologies.

Some of the gadgets, such as the digital diary, are things of the past, and if yesteryears' IT

professionals do not evolve in line with the developments, they could hit a roadblock

UK INDIA SKILLS FORUM DELEGATION TO KOLKATA AND NEW DELHI

The UK India Skills Forum will host a delegation to Kolkata and New Delhi in September 2011. In Kolkata we will meet with the Government of West Bengal with a detailed UKISF response to their skills requirements. The second day will be spent with the Globsyn Group, an established skills and training provider with two campuses in West Bengal.

In Delhi, UKISF members will take part in the FICCI skills summit, a two day flagship summit with participation from a number of countries seeking to provide training in the Indian market. The UK is "Partner Country" for the Summit, with an exciting array of activity to delegates available. More information on the summit can be found here: www.ficciskillforum.org

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY HOSTS INDIAN STUDENT COHORT

Over the past few years, Lancaster University has been doing brilliant work in facilitating student leadership exchange programmes between the UK and India. Their most recent

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conference brought together a selection of its international students from India, Malaysia, Pakistan and the UK to interact with government and business to develop a better understanding of the graduate market.

Over the past few years, Lancaster University has been doing brilliant work in facilitating student leadership exchange programmes between the UK and India.

Students took part in interactive and developmental workshops around leadership, employability and public speaking. Leading international companies joined together to speak about the importance of community and social responsibility and the impact this has upon their business, to students from Lancaster University (UK), Goenka World Institute (India), Sunway University (Malaysia) and COMSATS CIIT (Pakistan). Students and business leaders shared ideas to create partnerships for positive change.

UKIBC Chair, the Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt delivered the keynote address at the Parliamentary session on 4th August.

INWARD MISSION OF INDIAN SKILLS PROVIDERS

The UKIBC will also host an inward mission of Indian skills and training providers in October, shortly after the FICCI Global Skills Summit. The first day will focus on how training is delivered in the UK, with site visits to a further education college, a vocational training centre and an employment intensive company. Day two will address the role of sector skills councils, training of trainer and other programmes. The Indian delegation will then attend the World Skills Conference in London. More information on WorldSkills 2011 can be found here: <http://www.worldskillslondon2011.com/>

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INVESTMENT UPDATE

CENTUM LEARNING AND TATA MOTORS UKISF OPPORTUNITIES

Centum Learning

The next engagement will focus on the implementation and commercial discussion with the shortlisted organisations and the setting up of ATI Consortium for further agreements and rollout. Centum Learning is currently working on their internal process for the ATI initiative, which is expected to be completed by the 3rd week of September 2011.

Tata Motors

Following a meeting in Mumbai with Tata Motors, more detail regarding the programme and business model have become apparent. The UKISF consortia has now submitted a draft proposal submission for their consideration.

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INDIA COMPANY PROFILE - CAREER LAUNCHER LTD.

NAME	Career Launcher Ltd.
MAIN ACTIVITIES	Educational Services
DESCRIPTION	<p>Career Launcher is Asia's leading education service provider led by a team of IIT-IIM alumni, with a passion for education. Since its inception in 1995, it has focused on academic excellence, technological innovation and domain expertise.</p> <p>Over the last 15 years, CL has established itself as a national player in the field of test prep. Today, it functions across a broad spectrum of educational services including K-12 schools, higher education and vocational training. Currently, CL is present in 175+ cities/towns of India with educational infrastructure in the form of learning centers in excess of 225 in number⁴.</p> <p>CL also has international presence in Dubai and Abu Dhabi and offers various educational services to its students in these countries.</p>
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	3000 with 65% of this being only teachers/trainers/academicians
STATE	Uttar Pradesh, India
KEY EXECUTIVES	Gautam Puri, Director Nikhil Mahajan, Managing Director
WEBSITE	http://www.careerlauncher.com

Sources: ISI Emerging Markets; Career Launcher Ltd.

⁴ <http://www.careerlauncher.com/company/aboutcl/index.html>

CASE STUDY - CITY & GUILDS OF LONDON INSTITUTE - STUART SKINNER, SENIOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

1. Tell us about your business – its origin, offering and coverage?

City & Guilds is still the biggest provider of vocational qualifications in the UK, with two million people every year starting one of our qualifications, and we have centres in over 80 countries. The City & Guilds Group also includes the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and our own research and development institute, the Centre for Skills Development (CSD).

2. When and where did you make the first investment in India? In which cities do you currently have business relationships and/or business activity in India?

City & Guilds began to seriously focus on India as a crucial market for international skills development in 2008. We already had an office in Delhi, but it was clear that a big investment push was necessary to make inroads into this enormous market.

City & Guilds realised that it needed to find a local partner to open up distribution channels and ensure our qualifications are

tailor made to India. We found our ideal partner in Manipal Education, and the idea of IndiaSkills was born: a joint venture combining our long expertise in vocational education and international pedigree with Manipal's track record in higher education and reach into the Indian market.

IndiaSkills was launched in September 2009, based in Bangalore near to Manipal Education's HQ. The first year was all about developing the organization's operational capability. City & Guilds transferred its technical knowledge and know-how in qualification development and quality assurance from its teams in London to the new team in Bangalore. We also created an effective national sales force using offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore in order to maximize coverage across the country.

3. What were the main drivers of your decisions to foray into India?

India is quite simply the most exciting place to be in terms of skills development right now. It is an open market that

welcomes foreign investment and cross border trading, and whose government has recognized the role of a skilled population in ensuring its impressive growth continues in the coming decades. The opportunities are immense and the need for skilled workers by Indian employers is becoming critical.

4. What was your business strategy for entering India?

Our byword in India, as elsewhere, is quality. We sought out a high calibre partner with complimentary strengths to those of City & Guilds, and invested heavily in transferring our know-how on quality assurance to IndiaSkills. This ensures that the IndiaSkills offer matches the increasingly high expectations of Indian employers, and that ours is a name you can trust.

5. What key factors would you attribute your success in India to?

Understanding the market, a clear strategy, great products, and having the right partner!

6. What have been your biggest practical challenges of entering and operating in India? (Infrastructure, identifying suitable partners, hiring suitable staff, etc.)

Cross sector vocational education is a new market in India and providing a benchmarked quality provision comes with challenges. These are a few of the major issues:

- Sourcing appropriately qualified faculty
- Government funding that directly supports the learner
- A lack of recognition by learners of the benefits of undertaking vocational qualifications
- Convincing employers to use high quality vocational qualifications as a benchmark for employment



CASE STUDY - CITY & GUILDS OF LONDON INSTITUTE - STUART SKINNER, SENIOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

7. From a regulatory perspective, what have been the main barriers to doing business in India? (Regulatory framework, bureaucratic impediments, legal or taxation issues, corruption). Are any of these impediments specific to the sector you operate in?

Foreign investment applications can be complicated, bureaucratic and time consuming. It sounds obvious but you have to make sure you develop a well thought out project plan with tolerances for time and use a reputable local legal firm to support the process.

8. What is your candid view on future opportunities within India for your business?

The Indian vocational education market is only going to get more exciting. For City & Guilds along with other UK education providers it offers a wealth of opportunities. India's goals are ambitious, and the country can benefit from the kind of expertise we can help provide.

India is developing a vocational education market from scratch and there are opportunities for UK providers to support its creation in so many ways. If the government is to train 500 million people by 2022, it will need more suitably qualified trainers, quality qualifications, and greatly improved training delivery. The emerging network of Sector Skills Councils and the future National Qualifications Framework will need to be designed with India's specific needs in mind. These are all areas where City & Guilds is ready, willing and able to contribute.

9. What advice would you give to other businesses in the UK looking to do business in India?

Look at what you offer and take the time to understand how your product or service can benefit the Indian market. Do not presume that if your product is successful in the UK it will be in India. Look at how it might be localized to be more relevant.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact:

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UK Trade & Investment can also support your company to succeed in the Indian market. For more information on the skills and education sector in India, you may contact:

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