India Case Study: World of Work

Modular Employable Skills: Including Recognition of Prior Learning in the training programme

Background

The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) is responsible for vocational training offered at two levels: (1) through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) that fall outside the formal school curricular system, even though the training is institution-based. Around 5,000 ITIs offer 107 trades for students with an 8–12 grade qualification. The duration of the training is 6–36 months. Graduates of ITIs are viewed as semi-skilled workers; and (2) through shop floor training or apprenticeships offered in 24,700 establishments in 188 trades to students with an 8–12 grade qualification and an ITI certificate. The graduates of such training are perceived as skilled workers.

In order to provide marketable skills, MoLE has developed a Skills Development Initiative (SDI) called Modular Employable Skills (MES), which includes the assessment of prior learning. MES provides training and updates skills for school leavers, existing workers, child labourers, the unemployed and early school leavers from ITIs (DGE&T, 2008).

Main activities

MES is a competency-based training pathway, providing a set of minimum skills needed for gainful employment.

A trade committee identifies the courses and competences that meet the demands of industry and labour market and it develops a course matrix and curricula. The courses are delivered in a short time and in a flexible manner.

A so-called apex committee: (1) assesses the labour market demand; (2) invites applications from vocational training providers; and (3) is responsible for the accreditation of the institutes that provide MES training.

To ensure that the trainees’ skills are tested impartially, independent bodies, which are not involved in delivering training, conduct the testing (DGE&T, 2008).

MES involves 5,200 vocational training providers, 22 assessing bodies, 48 sectors, and 1,109 modules, which take anywhere from 60 to 600 hours to complete.
There are programmes of different kinds (foundational, as well as programmes for skills upgrading) to meet the demands of various target groups.

Courses are available for people with a minimum of grade five education.

In addition to testing and certification of skills acquired upon the completion of a training course, skills acquired informally are also recognised.

**Outcomes and ways forward**

Presently, the minimum skills standards of the MES have a component of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), wherein direct testing and assessment of skills can be done. However, as the Ministry of Finance, Government of India (2013, p. 14) acknowledges, ‘efforts for recognition of prior skills are limited. By introducing RPL though the NSQF, such efforts will gain momentum and allow learners to benefit on a larger scale. The National Skills Qualifications Committee (NSQC) will develop process for Recognition of Prior Learning/traditional learning for a given job role against the relevant level descriptors and notify the same for skills training providers, vocational training providers as well as certificate awarding bodies for use in assessment and certification.’ (p. 14).

**Resources and references**


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