

Ficci recommends two models to reform education system

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The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) has called for education reforms in the country with greater emphasis on developing skills that would be relevant to market economics.

To achieve this goal, it has suggested greater private sector participation, to work in tandem with the government, and offered two models for the revamp: the East Asian model and the German dual system of vocational education.

In a paper titled "Education, human capital and reforms", Ficci says that there is an urgent need to revamp the liberal education system "by modifying the syllabi in tune with the market demand for specific skills and building connectivities with the commercial dynamics of the market-place".

Besides, it adds that higher education should help students develop critical and independent thinking skill which would be "crucial in a market-driven and innovation-based economy of tomorrow".

According to the chamber, the most glaring fault in the higher education system is that the syllabi has no connectivity with market demand for specific skills and the commercial dynamics of the private place.

Similarly, on the technical education, it is of the view that the syllabi in the specialised institutions should be revamped with focus on emerging areas like telecommunications, information technology, computer hardware and software, networking, food processing and consumer electronics.

Detailing the two models it

puts forward, the paper says that in the east Asian model, public funds are utilised to provide universal primary education and private funds cater to the needs of higher technical and vocational training.

Under the German dual system of vocational education, students attend a vocational school and work as apprentices in industrial units, gaining on-the-job experience.

According to the paper, it is imperative to revamp the education system and develop skills of the human capital to generate employment, eradicate poverty, control population growth and create a congenial social climate.

Quoting a world development report, the paper says that an extra year of schooling can augment wages by more than 10 per cent after allowing for other factors.

An additional year of schooling has raised farm output by nearly two per cent in Korea and five per cent in Malaysia.

The paper says that the Indian primary education scenario is dismal. Even though the total number of primary schools increased from 2,09,671 in 1950-51 to 5,72,541 in 1992-93, only 51.36 per cent of areas had primary school/section within the habitation and 84.45 per cent had a primary school within one km in 1986.

The dropout rates are also very alarming.

In 1988-89, out of 23.9 million children entering school in 1984-85 only 13 million children continued till class V.

India has the highest number of pupils per teacher among the developing countries.

The literacy rate of India at 48.2 per cent is very low compared to Korea (96.3 per cent) and China (73.3 per cent).