

## AMH SSC promotes Skill Development Larger vision of promoting the industry

*Among one of the basic and ongoing problems facing the apparel industry are the diminishing skills among workers and few training options to revive it. But all this is going to change, as the Government has constituted the Prime Minister's National Council on Skill Development for coordinated action for skill development, both in the public and private sector. Currently, with 31 skill councils for each sector, Apparel-Made-ups-Furnishings Sector Skill Council (AMH SSC) is looking towards a skilled workforce through this new initiative.*

**Dr A. Sakthivel, Chairman, AMH SSC, shares the mission and vision of the Council, while speaking exclusively to Apparel Online.**

**L**aunched with a primary mandate of enhancing and building the capacities in skill development, one of the salient features of AMH SSC is to design the training programmes based on industry demand and to ensure that all successful trainees are certified through an accredited assessment agency. Further, the assessment of the trainees is defined as a structured process in which evidence of performance is gathered and evaluated against approved norms by the National Skill Development Council (NSDC). This assessment involves evidence collection of a person's competence

with the training partners, who would provide the assessment fees to AMH SSC. Another scheme is the upscaling of the existing worker. For instance, if there are 1,000 workers, then the council assesses the upscaling and provides certifications accordingly. If out of them 100 workers are not up to the mark then the council provides them training and certification for the same. "Any kind of training and diploma course through the council adds to international value. Sector Skill Council Certificate is going to be valid for people going abroad for jobs and I was in Canada for an MoU," confirms Sakthivel.



**"Our Prime Minister believes in Skill India and has a very motivating influence. So involving the MPs to promote the scheme is an intelligent option as they will feel proud and will also be able to show to their constituency the progress even if 1,000 people get trained in 5 years in their respective areas."**

Dr A. Sakthivel,  
Chairman, AMH SSC

level through range of methods – tests, observations, interviews, assignments and discussions. "We have developed 45 quality pacts, which will be like a bible for everyone in the industry – a layman, embroidery person, sample coordinator, etc. which has been approved by the NSDC," informs Sakthivel.

Subsequent to the training partners providing training, the assessment agencies after verifying the results issue a certification, which once scanned will show the training history, restricting duplication. Through the Pradhan Mantri Vikas Yojana, the Government provides each worker with Rs. 10,000 that can be spent on these trainings. This is done through a tripartite agreement between the worker, the bank and the training partner. Once the money reflects in the workers account, he has to share it

Increasingly, the Government is taking a lot of efforts in supporting such skill development initiatives and all the earlier ones have to align to the new scheme of things. Apart from benefiting the workers, this scheme of things will also benefit partners and agencies alike. "If anyone aligns with the Sector Skill Council, they don't have to pay service tax of 14 per cent," claims Sakthivel. What makes this training programme different from the others is that it restricts duplication, which was possible in the earlier ones. "Now that the Government has started the Skill Development Ministry, all future money will be diverted through them, and in the future if I have one lakh tailors and if one of them wants to become a supervisor, then the Government will help him, so that for the next 28 years he doesn't remain just a tailor only," adds Sakthivel.

Currently, the council is in the process of training its 17 partners and 15 assessment agencies to monitor the whole system. The skill development trainings will not just be restricted to mere tailors, embroidery people, etc. but will also include the middle management. "Right now we have 25 quality batches and another 20 are being developed. Slowly we are thinking of initiating a skill university as well. The Government has realized that there is a gap in skills despite each ministry having sufficient money, as this money is actually not going to the right people. The method that has now been developed with the creation of the National Council on Skill Development is fool proof," reveals Sakthivel. Automatically all these trainings and conceptualization methods would lead to employment generation.

Despite all these efforts, one of the biggest challenges that still remain is to get people to attend these free trainings, which the council is trying to resolve by engaging all the MP's in their respective constituencies. Concentrating more on rural than on urban areas, the skill development initiative will also lead to opening up of factories in these areas.

"For instance Tirupur is slowly getting saturated, so now people are even going 50-60 kilometres into the rural areas where workforce is still untrained and available. So now the synergy to train would be where the workers are, hence automatically the factories would be eventually seeking these places for operational feasibility," believes Sakthivel.

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Still, what remains one of the major concerns is that though the Government realizes the potential of the industry, the budgeting needed to make an impact for it has not been to the mark. "The Government has allotted Rs. 120 to Rs. 150 crore for the industry and when you are doing Rs. 70-80 billion exports, this is peanuts. We should ask

for Rs. 1,000 crore for our industry. The Government should support marketing opportunities promoting India as a brand," maintains Sakthivel.

Nonetheless, with the current positive situation in the export industry coupled with the new Government initiatives, the 'Make in India' initiative is being well accepted and undertaken by the exporters. With the industry, especially the garment industry, employing only next to agriculture and out of which 65-70 per cent are women, the Government must notice the potential of the industry. All this is pointing towards a change in people's outlook towards the Indian Apparel-Made-ups-Furnishings industry, which will soon be further boosted through the CCP with Australia and Canada and FTA with Europe in the pipeline. "It's the new Government's attitude and upfront approach which is giving a positive vibe. Now that Tirupur has crossed a business of Rs. 21,000 crore this year, the mushroom growth is finished and now the well-established exporters who are ready for the future, are making their mark," concludes Sakthivel.