

The ninth annual convention of the Higher Education Forum (HEF) highlighted the need for skills and creativity among students, faculty, educational institutes and industry to foster growth and development of the education space.

SKILL INDIA, BUILD INDIA



Panelists come together for a photo opportunity.

“Skills cannot be taught, they need to be learnt,” claimed A K Sen Gupta, Founder and Convener of Higher Education Forum (HEF) at the ninth conference and awards convention. This was held on March 10 at International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Pune. Focusing on the importance and need for skills in the education space, the convention highlighted the Skill India, Build India: Role of Higher Education Institutions.

Right from the welcome address given by Aruna Katara, President of Hope Foundation and Research Centre till the vote of thanks, the entire convention encouraged students, teachers, principals and industry members to build skills. Over 300 delegates of varied educational institutes of

different streams of study and industry stalwarts attended the conference.

Education can witness a revolution if the methodology of teaching is changed. “Teachers are the boss of a subject. Teachers can tune the way they teach in a classroom irrespective of the standard guidelines of curriculum and teach basic lessons in creative ways. They can make learning interesting by incorporating innovative ways of teaching,” Gupta added.

The convention witnessed panel discussions which revolved on various topics like corporate-academic partnership for bridging skill gap; myth or reality, integration of skill education in school curriculum; Understanding skill of 21st century; Big challenge ahead; Digital disruption- upgrading skill of faculty and Skill India; Build India: Role of Higher Education Institu-



Audience listening to the panelists

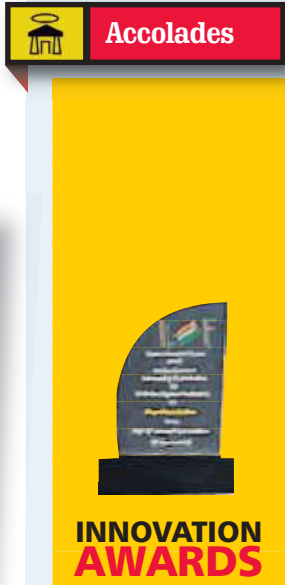
tions. Intellectual delegates expressed their views to broaden the viewpoint and bring about transformation in terms of learning and teaching.

The panelists revealed how education is beyond academics and classroom activity. “NM Konda, Former Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) University, said, “Skills, knowledge, ability, curiosity, imagination, creativity and communication can transform the education space entirely. Teachers should know their students and help them tap their potential and enhance their skill sets. Teachers should punish students but should help them overcome their shortcomings and encourage them to go beyond their limitations.”

Education goes beyond syllabus and four walls of a classroom. The panelists informed at-

tendees systems and methods should evolve with changing times. Sachin Satpute, Director of MIT Skills, said, “Students should be industry ready and should be given the current exposure regarding working systems and technology. It is the digital era now and we got to evolve with changing trends to develop consistently.”

Upgradation of faculty will help facilitate the process of offering internships and jobs to students. Pradeep Bhargava, Independent Director and Former Chairman of CII western region, said, “We got to change the way we teach. With the digital disruption we can move to an advanced form of teaching which the students can understand. Students need industries and industries need students so it is a two way process.” Ranjeev Manrao, member of HEF core committee, delivered the vote of thanks.



INNOVATION AWARDS

Every year the HEF felicitates stalwarts and education institutions on the basis of certain key factors.

The awards are decided by a designated jury which recognises, honours and appreciates the awardees for their exemplary work and contribution to the education space.

This year, four awards were given to the curious minds who have transformed and initiated a revolution in education. The awards were given on basis of various categories like outstanding and demonstrated leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives and skill initiatives.

The awards were given to:

Shravan Kadvekar,
Director of Symbiosis Skills and Open University (SSOU)

Sachin Satpute,
Director of MIT Skills

Sanjay Shivnani,
Head of Vocational Education, Aditya Birla Skills Foundation (ABSF) Aditya Birla Group

Aruna Katara,
President of Hope Foundation and Research Centre



Aruna Katara, President of Hope Foundation and Research Centre receiving her award



Sanjay Shivnani, Head of Vocational Education, ABSF, Aditya Birla Group presented his trophy

Unlearn and relearn is the new way to learn

Learn in style

The panel discussion on Skills and Corporate Academic partnership highlighted the need to unlearn in order to relearn various aspects of education space. Panelists addressed the need for change in syllabus and curriculum to bring about a transformation.

A lack of practical training is being witnessed currently in the

entire education and industry scenario as per the panelists. Shravan Kadvekar, Director of Symbiosis Skills and Open University, said, “We should provide machinery and equipment to students; and schools and colleges should have updated setups. Industry will not welcome students who are skilled but possess knowledge of outdated systems.”

Unlearning traditional methods is the way forward. Manjiri Joshi, President of Global Talent Track, said, “Problem solving, reasoning and analysis is

the new way to deal with issues which can help students gain jobs. We got to unlearn the traditional ways to adopt new methods of dealing with problems. Whenever we spot a problem at work or in college, students should analyse it, find multiple solutions and also figure out the cost of the solution.”

While skills are required in any kind of job which students take up and students should be well aware of this. Rajesh Khajuria, HEF-Gujarat Founder, said, “The world is my school. Skill development begins in early childhood. Practical approach in all forms of education can help a student to face various challenges of life.”

The industry should take interest in students and commercial outlets should find their way to campuses of various educational institutions. Suhas Kadlaskar, Vice President of Corporate Affairs and Human Resources of Mercedes-Benz, India, said, “Soft skills are not learnt in schools and colleges. Students should be provided with industry exposure while they are studying so that they get a practical first-hand experience of the application of what they are learning.”



AK Sen Gupta, Founder & Convener of HEF addressed the gathering

Every student is different with a unique set of skills

Skill uniqueness

Students can create wonders if their skillsets are tapped by teachers and enhanced through proper guidance. Questioning, reasoning and analysis can lead to creativity which can lead to innovation and development at an exponential rate.

Schools, teachers and principals should have provisions for talent and skills. Rabinder Henry, Director of Pralhad Chhabria Research Center, said, “We can use our five sensory organs and our mind to analyse everything and create something innovative. We got to create something of our own and not depend on outsourcing.”

Every student has some required set of skills. Atyachit Narasimha, professor of Department of Physics of Rani Chennamma University, said, “Do not restrict students to school syllabus but let them go out and explore their ability. Certain exercises, practical assignments and field work can help students to challenge their abilities and go beyond basics. Creativity has no limitations and students should be allowed to think.”

While, workshops and experimentation can help students to identify their skill sets. Arvind Paranjpye, Director of Nehru Planetarium, said, “Workshops can make students work in



Participants and organisers of HEF



Lighting of the lamp by organisers and participants of HEF

terms of gaining a practical exposure. When students are out in the field they will come up with better ideas and innovative methods.”

Questioning is the key to success. Abhay Jere, Secretary of Smart India Hackathon, said, “We do not like questions so we do not allow our kids to question. But it is only when students question that they can analyse, reason out and come up with different innovative ideas. As teachers we have to tell our students that we can solve problems together. Meanwhile, as students we just got to ask more questions and keep our curiosity alive.”