

06-February-2013 15:22 IST

### **International Conference on Community Colleges**

HRD Minister Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju opened in New Delhi today the international conference on community colleges. In his speech the Minister said that 200 community colleges will be started from the next academic session 2013. He said his ministry realizes the role of education in capacity building of youth. Pointing decline in quality of education, he said out of 30 lakh people are added every year only 1/4th of them worth giving jobs as per the industry requirement. He said there is shortage of skill people in critically areas including IT, because of mismatch between the outdated syllabus and the changing need of the industry. Stressing for more skill based education, Dr. Raju appealed to the educational institutions to make tailor made courses for industry. He advocated for flexibility to the education programmes. The Minister said industry, including business and service sector, would be associated at all levels viz., development of curriculum, training of trainers/teachers, supply of guest faculty, development/maintenance of laboratories workshops for 'hands on' practical training and evaluation so as to ensure employment of the learner. These Community Colleges would have short duration credit-based modules leveraging on the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) to facilitate mobility of learners into the employment sector and banking (accumulation) of credit leading to certificates, diplomas, etc.

Speaking on the occasion the advisor to the Prime Minister on skill development Mr. S. Ramadurai suggested that step should be taken to put up system where the learners give their best. Highlighting the role of community colleges in India he said that the model for the community colleges should be home grown and there should be clarity about its value with respect to other courses available in the country. He said quality should not be neglected at any cost.

The Minister of State for HRD, Mr. Jitin Prasada highlighted the changing need of education for migrating population and creating opportunities for 80 lakh people who join the work force every year. His colleague in the Ministry, Dr. Shashi Tharoor said India has a huge demographic advantage as its work force is young while of other major countries including China, South Korea, Japan have already peaked. But to take advantage of this factor we have to promote quality education by putting up infrastructure.

The US under secretary for public affairs Ms. Tara Sonenshine offered her country's idea and experience in promotion of community schools. Pointing similarity of challenges between the developing countries and the developed nations in promoting education, she said they are global in nature. Ms. Sonenshine said that community colleges provide education and skill to half of the students in USA at under graduate level.

The secretary for higher education Mr. Ashok Thakur said that 60 countries are participating in two days conference and as per the govt. priority vocational education will get top priority.

There are about 100 foreign participants coming from USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Australia and New Zealand. There are 400 Indian participants from the Central Ministries engaged in skills development, State/UT, colleges and polytechnics, Central Universities, regulatory bodies, autonomous organizations, Sector Skill Councils, representatives of PSUs and private industry.