

Training to Enable Livelihood and Employment

Amitabh Rath, Ravi Bhushan, Amresh Deshpande and Ankur Tulsyan

Background

With a population of over 1.2 billion people, India is the second most populous country in the world and projections suggest that we will be the most populated country by 2050. More than 50% of today's population is below the age of twenty five and more than 65% below the age of thirty five¹.

Looking at the education sector in India, there are Primary, Secondary and Higher Education structures. Reports suggest that there are over 1.25 lakh secondary schools and 22 crore children go to school in India. Of these, only around 12% students reach the university level. A large part of the eighteen to twenty four years age group in India does not reach college.

Considering that we are a 'young' workforce, the requirement for skilled manpower is going to increase many folds in the years to come. Though approximately 13 million persons enter the job market every year, only 3 million vocational training seats are available in country². A report published by Boston Consulting Group quotes that vocationally trained, diploma holders, and graduates comprise only 10% of the overall workforce.

The Government is taking proactive steps to fill the existing skill gap. The private sector too is undertaking several initiatives through industry led training programs to meet the requirement of trained manpower. In one such industry led initiative, Schneider Electric India Foundation (SEIF) has launched an electrician training program in partnership with different NGOs and NPO across many states of the country such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The program provides education and employment opportunities for the urban youth and entrepreneurial opportunities in the rural areas. This in turn serves the purpose of promoting safe and reliable electric installation. Employment wise, more than seven thousand and five hundred trained electricians have been able to find jobs. The goal of this program is to train at least fifty thousand people as skilled electrician in the country by 2015.

How this initiative of Schneider Electric India Foundation and SNS Foundation has changed the lives of youth living in urban slums around rapidly developing Gurgaon, led to employment of over on hundred youth and improved the quality of life for their families over the past two years is something that will be covered in this case.

¹ Census of India - 2011

² Ministry of Human Resource Development - A challenge faced by a developing India

A Partnership to Transform the Lives of Youth through Imparting Skills Training

About Schneider Electric and Schneider Electric India Foundation

Schneider Electric is a global specialist in Energy Management. Headquartered in France, it has operating units across the globe. Schneider Electric India Pvt Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Schneider Electric France. In India, Schneider Electric has about seventeen thousand employees employed in thirty one factories. Schneider Electric's global turnover in 2012 was more than € 24 billion.

Schneider Electric India Foundation is a trust registered in 2008. Its principal office is located in Bengaluru. The mission of SEIF is "to help people change their lives through Access to Energy". The training programme of SEIF is aligned to the global program BIPBOP which is an acronym for Business-Innovation-People for Base of Pyramid. The activities undertaken by SEIF are around five themes:

- Education
- Employment
- Electrification
- Entrepreneurship
- Emergency during Natural Disasters

About SNS Foundation

Operating from Gurgaon, SNS Foundation was institutionalized as a family trust in the mid seventies (1976) by Anand Automotive Ltd. The Mission of the Foundation is to enlarge benefactor pool for working towards:

- Education
- Health
- Livelihoods
- Natural Resource Management
- Governance

Taking cue from India's demographic dividend of a relatively large and young workforce (35% below twenty years), majority of whom do not have access to quality school and college/vocational education, making them largely unemployable, SNSF has accorded top priority to enhancing employability of youth through skills training.

The Place for Action: Gurgaon, Haryana

With a burgeoning population of over 1.5 million, Gurgaon is the second largest city of Haryana. It is also a part of NCR. The Delhi - Jaipur Highway (NH - 8) passes through the city dividing it into the upscale areas of newly constructed offices and high rises and the west which is Old

Gurgaon. The State Government of Haryana has notified twenty two slums in Gurgaon, which have become the centre of community involvement activity for SNS Foundation. The team members of SNF studied the problems faced by the inhabitants of slum. Education came to the forefront along with high incidence of unemployment amongst youth.

The Partnership

Schneider Electric India Foundation and SNS Foundation partnered to undertake the initiative to improve the lives of youth coming from slums by providing them with skills in the Basic Electrician Course, to enable them to earn their livelihoods.

To execute the programme, the two organisations entered into an MoU on May 16, 2012 to partner towards imparting basic electricians training course at SNSF training centre in Gurgaon. This training became operational from October 2012 and the first batch started with twenty three students from nearby slums.

Roles and Responsibility

SEIF's core competence as knowledge partner and SNS Foundation's expertise as the implementation partner provided the right formula for a successful partnership.

Schneider Electric India Foundation provided the basic course curriculum and the necessary lab infrastructure. SEIF also conducted Train-the-Trainer of the faculty appointed by SNS Foundation.

Once the programme was launched, SNS Foundation team conducted mobilization drives in the local community area, speaking of the problems that the youth faced because of lack of employable skills and how this training programme could bring about a turnaround in their lives and enable them to earn a decent livelihood out of electrical installation jobs. The team placed advertisements through local cable TV operators, banners on auto-rickshaws, and undertook community awareness drives. Counseling was also undertaken for family members of the local youth so that they could be influenced to undergo training.

The Skilling Process

The program began with the selection of candidates. For the technician training, the person must be ITI qualified and should have passed standard twelfth. For entrepreneurship, candidates must additionally, be graduates. For the electrician training program, the candidate must be standard eighth to standard twelfth passed or a dropout.

Candidates selected as a result of the mobilisation drive were invited to the SNS Foundation Training Centre located in Sector 14 Gurgaon, where they

were underwent an induction programme for the course. Twenty three students then participated in this journey of transformation.

The entire course was of four months duration divided into 3 months of classroom and practical sessions and one month of On-Job-Training. The course content is extensive. The trainees were taught the basics of house and building wiring along with electrical safety. There was an introduction to electrical products and handling of tool and instruments. The candidates learnt how to monitor the electrical installation in residential and commercial building and then troubleshoot in case of any malfunction. They were also exposed to renewable energy solutions through training on solar energy solutions.

The medium of delivery was Hindi. In addition to their technical skills, the candidates were also provided an opportunity to hone their written as well as oral English to improve their communication skills.

To add on to their theoretical learning, the trainees also worked on the electrical boards in the lab where they were taught to carry out electrical installations in household and domestic infrastructure. They were also taught on various household appliances which they were likely to encounter in the course of their employment.

Given the industry networks of SNS Foundation, the trainees were also exposed to practical aspects during On-Job-Training. They were taken on field visits to various construction sites where electrical installations were being carried out. This reinforced their understanding of various aspects of the job by observing it in field.

Changing the Youth's Attitude

The faculty and SNS Foundation team faced a major challenge in getting a regular attendance of trainees. To counter this, the experienced faculty for electrical course also took sessions on motivation. The operational tactic of conducting theory and practical classes on the day's topic on the same day proved to be instrumental in improving the attendance. Trainees began to realize that complete involvement led to better understanding.

Linkages to Employment

There was no point in training the youth in a livelihood generating skill without providing them with employment at the end of course. For this, SNS Foundation engaged its placement team to reach out to prospective employers and share with them about the programme. By virtue of an excellent industry presence, SNS Foundation began tapping into the manufacturing units and real estate developers around Gurgaon. Prospective employers were invited to the campus where they observed the entire training process. This gave them confidence in the programme and the trainees. Having their corporate headquarter in Gurgaon also provided an excellent scope to Schneider employees to visit the centre and

interact with the trainees. The students were positively encouraged on hearing the experiences of senior officials from the company. Internally too, SNS Foundation reached out to the group companies of Anand Group and shared the nuances of the programme.

Certification and Employment

After the successful completion of the course, the students were jointly certified by Schneider Electric India Foundation and SNS Foundation. More than 60% of the students were placed in various organisations in and around Gurgaon. This early success aided in spreading the word of the positive impact of the programme in the local community.

Key Aspects of Training Programme

Sustainability

SEIF firmly believes that sustainability is a long-term process a step-by-step approach. Since its inception in 2010, the training programme has been evolving to make sustainability its focus. From entire funding of operational and capital expenses in beginning, the model has been following a step-by-step approach to sustainability through leveraging funding from CSR, NGOs, donor agencies, social enterprises and government programme. It also aims to increase the candidates' stake by charging training fees. The next evolutionary phase involves forging a co-operation among banks, MFIs, private investors and the above mentioned contributors wherein these players along with SEIF could build together a system for lending loans to underprivileged candidates undertaking the course.

Figure 1: Sustainability of the Programme



Gender Perspective

As of now, the Chennai training centre has been catering to train women electricians where SEIF has been able to train seventy five women electricians every year.

Trainer-Trainee Ratio

1:25 - One trainer for twenty five candidates in every training batch

Training expenses

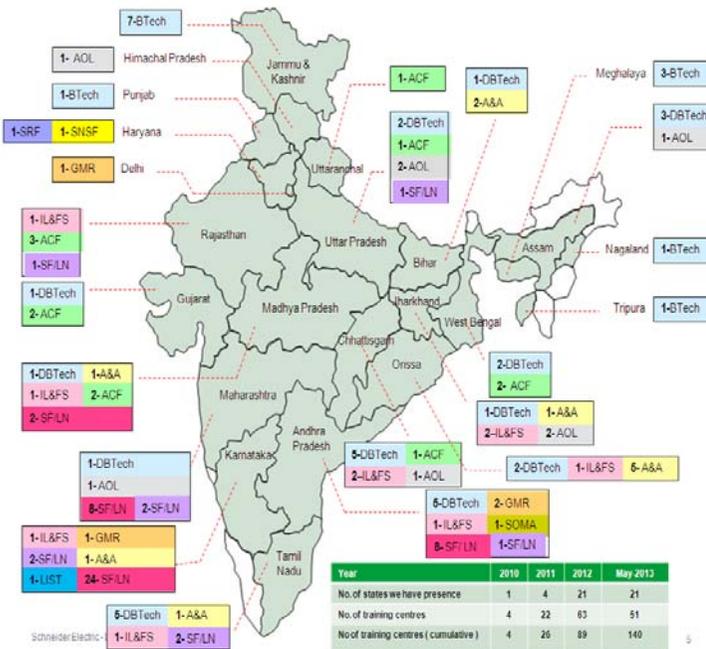
Initial investment to set up the physical infrastructure (work shed and classroom): In all cases all our partners have either a permanent structure or rent out the facility which is a part of operational cost.

One time fixed cost: Rs. 5.25 lakhs for lab equipment.

Operational cost: Ranging from Rs. 14 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs based on whether it is non-residential or residential training (for a 4 month training program)

Journey So Far

Figure 2: SEIF Electrician's Training Centers Across India



As of May 2013, one hundred and forty electricians training centres have been established in twenty one states across India. It is projected that in

2013, over ten thousand youth would be trained in electrician's course. Further, there is an exclusive women electrician training centre in Chennai where the trained women electricians are placed at Schneider's Chennai Manufacturing facility.

Trained women electrician



Employed at Schneider Electric India Chennai Plant

Delivering Socio-Economic Impact

The training center has been able to cater to skills training of over one hundred youth since 2012 and trainees have been able to improve their livelihood earning opportunities. This model is an excellent set-up wherein the knowledge partner, the implementation partner and community have been able to create a positive socio-economic impact in the lives of many families in Gurgaon.

From a background of limited financial ability, trained electricians have been able to earn a living by application of the skills acquired from the training programme.

While this is the story of one training centre, this successful model has been replicated at various locations across the country. SEIF has been able to create livelihood opportunities for youth from similar backgrounds with the help of other partners like SNS Foundation. SEIF's expertise as knowledge partner has been a critical element in forging many partnerships with other NPOs and youth not only from urban areas but also from rural hinterlands.

The challenge is to reach out to millions of youth still untouched by this transformation and to connect the training set-ups with organizations looking for trained manpower. Industry linkages are one of the key enablers that determine the future scope of this initiative.

Training Class in progress



At Electrical Lab



Trainees at Electrical Lab



On the Job exposure



ANNEXURE 1

Case 1: Mr. Devendra from Jhajjar - Story of an Entrepreneur

Mr. Devender Prajapati, thirty years old is a permanent resident of district Jhajjar Haryana. His family shifted to Rajendra Park, Gurgaon thirty years ago. His father Mr. Chotu Ram Singh was a retired supervisor in Delhi Development Authority and mother a house wife.

Devender dropped from his regular studies after receiving supplementary in standard twelfth class. Devender got married in 2003. He had two sons of age nine and six years. After marriage Devender started working in a private company at a monthly salary of Rs. 2500. It was very difficult to sustain his family on such a low salary in Gurgaon. His wife had undergone a certificate course in Cutting & Tailoring, so, she started contributing in family earnings by tailoring work.

Between 2005 & 2012, Devender switched various jobs to support his family remuneration was low and working conditions poor in all these jobs.

On seeing Schneider Electric India Foundation - SNSF electrical training advertisement on cable TV, Devender approached the training centre to get more information. He was encouraged by seeing the lab infrastructure and experience of the faculty. This motivated him to join the course.

Devender completed his three months training which included electrical theory, practical, English Communication, Life skill and Financial Literacy. He also completed one month On Job Training at renowned construction site in Badshahpur, Gurgaon. After completion of training Devender started getting job offers with attractive salary but due to his previous experiences he didn't opt for job. Rather he decided to become an entrepreneur. This decision aided with the skills he got through the training centre enabled him to handle three-four contracts on electrical installations every month. He is now able to earn almost thrice of what he was getting in full time jobs.

