

# CII Telangana and TDF - USA Conference on Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurial Opportunities

## A Report



The Conference on Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurial Opportunities, organized by CII Telangana in conjunction with the Telangana Development Forum (TDF-USA), was held on February 21–22, 2024, at The Westin, Hyderabad.

The theme of this conference was focused on transformative change in higher education. The conference agenda was designed to tackle critical issues within higher education, skill development, and entrepreneurial opportunities to empower youth.

The inaugural session of The Conference on Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurial Opportunities, organized by CII Telangana in conjunction with TDF-USA, commenced with **Mr. C. Shekar Reddy, Chairman of CII Telangana and Chairman/MD of CSR Southern Region**, emphasizing the empowerment of Telangana's youth in higher education, skill development, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

**Mr. Anil Kumar V. Epur, Advisor to the CII Telangana Public Policy Taskforce and Past Chairman of the CII Southern Region**, emphasizes the critical need to adapt, innovate, and embrace comprehensive transformation to effectively tackle the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. This conference will act as a catalyst for reimagining education, fostering collaboration, and empowering students with the indispensable skills and knowledge required for success in a dynamic and evolving world.

**Dr. G. Gopal Reddy, Trustee and Past Chairman of Telangana Development Forum (TDF-USA)**, underscored the significance of vocational education and its pivotal role in the current landscape.



**During the inaugural session, the Honourable Chief Minister of Telangana, Shri Anumala Revanth Reddy, unveiled the IGBC Green Property Show, India's largest exclusive green property exhibition, scheduled for March 17–19, 2024.**

During his keynote address, **the Honorable Chief Minister of Telangana, Shri Anumala Revanth Reddy**, reiterated the importance of education, employment, and skill development in positioning Telangana competitively on the global stage. He stated that, "Hyderabad is poised for development, and we are committed to collaborating with investors and developers willing to invest in Telangana. Till now, students who opted for skill development programs received only diploma certificates, which deterred enrollment. However, we've amended our policy to now require degree certificates for further education in skill institutions. This change aims to encourage more students to join skill institutions and pursue higher education opportunities."

The Chief Minister also stated a substantial investment of Rs. 2000 crores to revamp and improve ITIs in Telangana, stressing the conversion of skill training into formal degrees. He emphasized the focus on rural areas to attract students to degree programs, expressing confidence in industry-government collaboration to bridge the skill gap and realize this vision.

## **Session 2: Case Study: Alpla Austria's Implementation of the Dual Education System**

The panelists for session 2 included **Ms. Shobha Dixit, Director, Alpla India; Mr. Julian Faessler, Site Manager, Alpla, Hard (Austria); and Mr. Surendra Babu, Vice President, HR & Academia, Alpla India. The session was moderated by Mr. Vagish Dixit, Chairman, CII Telangana Public Policy Taskforce and Managing Director, Alpla India.**

**Mr. Vagish Dixit, Chairman of the CII Telangana Public Policy Taskforce and Managing Director at Alpla India**, emphasized the crucial role of dual education in addressing the skill gap and propelling India as an emerging powerhouse in the global manufacturing arena.



Drawing from his extensive experience, Mr. Vagish Dixit underscored the significance of implementing dual education programs tailored to the manufacturing sector. He highlighted the need for strategic initiatives to bridge the skills deficit and empower the workforce with industry-relevant expertise.

**Mr. Julian Faessler, Site Manager at Alpla, Hard (Austria)**, shared insights into the successful execution of dual education initiatives, showcasing Alpla's global commitment to nurturing talent. Since 1970, Alpla has championed apprentice programs across various countries, including Germany, Mexico, China, Switzerland, and Austria. By establishing apprentice training centers, Alpla ensures a steady influx of skilled professionals, vital for maintaining high production standards. Mr. Julian Faessler highlighted the company's proactive stance in addressing talent acquisition challenges. He stressed the importance of long-term corporate engagement and strategic partnerships in sustaining apprenticeship programs, with a dedicated focus on providing the right career paths.

**Mr. Surendra Babu, Vice President of HR & Academia at Alpla India**, highlighted the challenges faced and the successful execution of dual education and apprenticeship programs, emphasizing the importance of polytechnic institutions as key sources of skilled students. He outlined a plan for implementing these programs across India, including Telangana, offering a structured curriculum of two years of education followed by two years of practical training in factories. This initiative is bolstered by a memorandum of understanding between the Confederation of Indian Industry-Telangana (CII-TS) and ALPLA India Ltd., aiming to promote the dual apprenticeship model in

diploma education, with 100,000 trainers onboard and provisions for student stipends and guaranteed job placements, thereby addressing the skills gap and nurturing a competent workforce.

**Ms. Shobha Dixit, Director of Alpha India**, spearheads diversity initiatives within the organization, notably exemplified by the Future Corner apprenticeship program at the Slynata plant. This pioneering program has successfully trained 30 girls from polytechnic backgrounds, equipping them with valuable skills for the workforce. Ms. Dixit's focus on diversity extends beyond gender inclusion, fostering a workplace culture that values skilled and unskilled workers alike and prioritizes safety and inclusivity. Furthermore, she ensures that the program's syllabus is tailored to meet the specific needs and aspirations of the students, thereby promoting their holistic development and empowering them for future success.

### **Session 3: Revitalizing Education in Telangana: Tackling Challenges and Implementing Solutions**

The panelists for the third session included session chairman **Dr. V Praveen Rao, Former Vice Chancellor, Professor Jayashankar Telangana State, Agricultural University, and Vice Chancellor, Kaveri University; Dr. N V Ramana Rao, Director and Professor of Civil Engineering, National Institute of Technology, Raipur; Dr. Raghava Cherabuddi, President and Chairman, CVR College of Engineering; and Mr. B Venkatesham, IAS., Principal Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Government of Telangana.**



**Dr. V Praveen Rao, Former Vice Chancellor of Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University and currently Vice Chancellor of Kaveri University,**

provided valuable insights into the rejuvenation of education in Telangana. He emphasized the incorporation of skilling components into higher education, highlighting the transformative impact on the ecosystem and the necessity for cross-border investments. Dr. Rao also delved into the implications of AI and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on higher education, stressing the challenges and imperatives for change in the sector. He advocated for a new business model aligned with NEP 2020, emphasizing the importance of implementation strategies and addressing associated issues. Additionally, Dr. Rao shared success stories in skill development and entrepreneurship, underscoring the need for government structures and funding to facilitate the production of qualified and skilled graduates.

**Dr. N. V. Ramana Rao, Director and Professor of Civil Engineering at the National Institute of Technology, Raipur,** delivered a presentation addressing challenges in higher education within the digital age, particularly focusing on employability. He emphasized the significance of skill development and outlined key attributes essential for students to thrive in contemporary settings. Highlighting Industry 4.0 as a transformative force, Dr. Rao underscored the evolving role of higher education in the 21st century and the imperative to address industry challenges in finding skilled professionals. His discourse encompassed strategies for enhancing teaching methodologies to promote employability and foster creativity among students. Moreover, Dr. Rao advocated for industry-university partnerships and the integration of vocational skills and experiential learning through initiatives such as the National Credit Framework (NCrF), emphasizing the benefits of embedding skills within the school system.

**Mr. B. Venkatesham, IAS, Principal Secretary of the Department of Higher Education, Government of Telangana,** underscored several key aspects regarding talent development in the state. He emphasized the importance of fostering entrepreneurship and supporting startup initiatives, with education being a top priority. Mr. Venkatesham highlighted the government's commitment to various skill development initiatives and stressed the need for job creators in addition to skilled workers. Furthermore, he advocated for the integration of embedded modules within the regular curriculum, particularly in sectors such as logistics, transportation, and tourism, to address the growing demand for skilled workers across various industries.

**Dr. Raghava Cherabuddi, President and Chairman of CVR College of Engineering,** addressed the strengths of the engineering education system, noting the success of students securing positions in product development

companies amidst Telangana's 700,000-strong workforce. He also highlighted challenges related to the credit system and the hands-on training aspects outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Dr. Cherabuddi stressed the importance of practical education for engineering students, advocating for a curriculum that prioritizes hands-on learning experiences.

## **Session 4: Exploring the Landscape of School Education and Skilling in India: Building the Future**

The panelists for the fourth session included session chairman **Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan, General Secretary, Foundation for Democratic Reforms; Mr. Avanish Kumar, Director, GMR Varalakshmi Foundation; and Ms. Sandhya Rani, IPOS (Retd.) Chairperson, NSF Creative Learning.**



**Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan, General Secretary, Foundation for Democratic Reforms,** delivered a presentation talking about government expenditures in education, learning outcomes, making supply with huge demand and redefining success, shortage of skilled workers, global comparison with formal vocational training and education, and addressing skill deficits at the low end of the spectrum.

**Ms. Sandhya Rani, IPOS (Retd.) and Chairperson of NSF Creative Learning,** provided insights into the Indian school education landscape, identifying teachers as a critical element lacking in the system. She highlighted the learning deficit and emphasized the importance of addressing quality issues in school education, particularly through focused efforts on teacher education, training, and competency development. Ms. Rani underscored the significance of integrating vocational skills at the school level and emphasized the need for

collaborative initiatives among stakeholders to foster industry-academia partnerships for the holistic development of students.

**Mr. Avanish Kumar, Director, GMR Varalakshmi Foundation,** discussed the foundation's contributions to skill training, including the implementation of standardized short-term skill courses. He highlighted the alignment of their initiatives with the focus of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on skill-based education and emphasized the importance of upskilling the existing workforce.

## Session 5: Fostering Industry-Academia Collaboration for Enhanced Skill Training

The panelists for the session included **Mr. Rajendra Srivastava, Executive Director, ISB Centre for Business Innovation;** **Mr. Shrikanth Sinha, CEO, Telangana Academy of Skill and Knowledge;** and **Mr. Sudheer Gaddam, Founder and CEO, Neumeric Technologies Pvt Ltd.**



Session 5 of the conference focused on exploring models and frameworks for fostering effective collaboration between industry and academia in education. Discussions revolved around identifying in-demand skills within the Telangana job market and outlining focus areas for skill development initiatives. The session also delved into strategies for bridging the gap between industry requirements and academic curricula through improved communication and alignment efforts. Government initiatives aimed at nurturing and facilitating industry-academia collaboration in skill development were also highlighted and discussed.



## Session 6: Panel Discussion: Constructing Support Ecosystems and Charting the Path Forward

The panelists for the session were **Ms. Rashmi Pimpale**, Chief Executive Officer, Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH), Government of Telangana; **Dr. S Surya Kumar**, Dean of Innovation, IIT-Hyderabad; **Ms. Sandhya Padala**, Founder and CEO at Rex K-12; and **Prof. Shiva Reddy**, Professor of Economics (Retd), Osmania University.

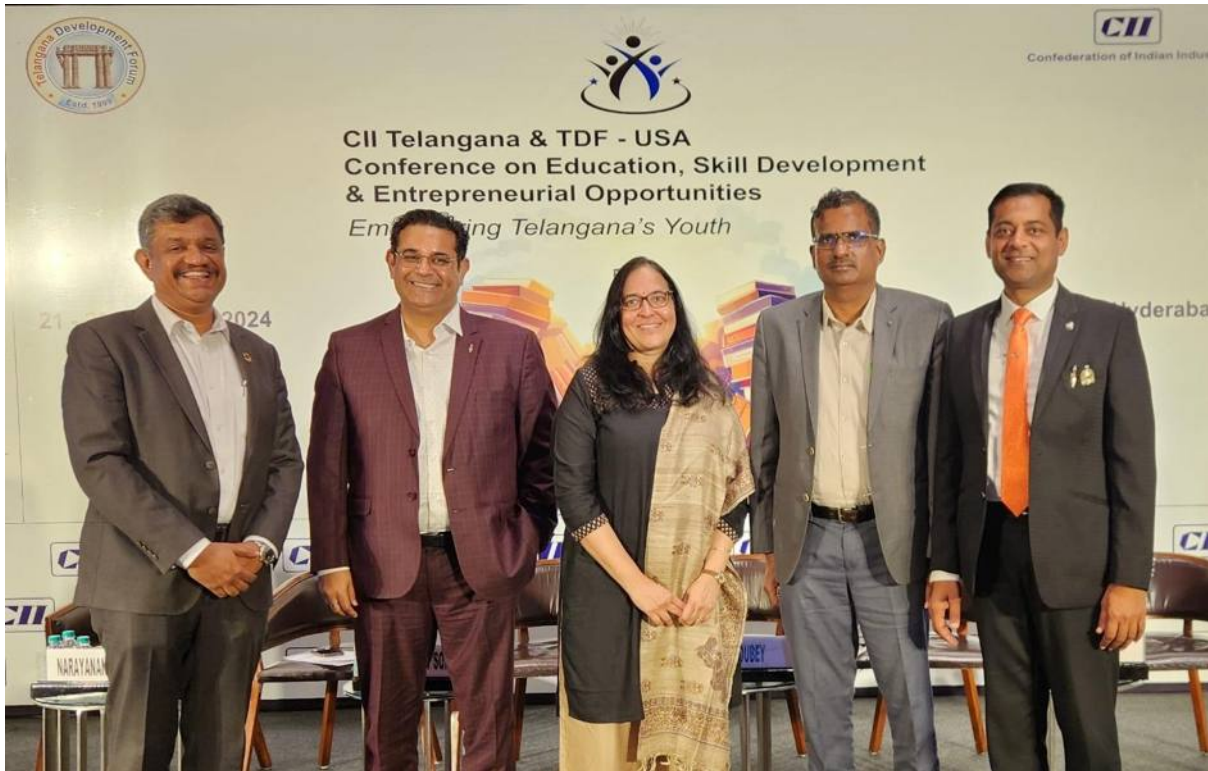


Session 6 focused on addressing challenges in Telangana's skill development landscape and their implications for the workforce and economy. The session highlighted collaborative initiatives aimed at overcoming these challenges and fostering skill development in the region. Discussions centered on emerging trends in skill development, including the importance of digital skills, sustainability, and leveraging emerging technologies. Moreover, the session explored the role of technology in reshaping training and education to enhance skill development outcomes. Participants also deliberated on the future trajectory of skill development in Telangana, with a focus on fostering economic growth and creating employment opportunities.

### DAY 2

## Session 7: Navigating the Vocational Education Landscape in the Digital Age

The panelists for this session were **Mr. Narayanan Ramaswamy**, Partner & National Head of Education, KPMG; **Mr. Mohit Soni**, CEO, Media & Entertainment Skills Council; **Dr. Madhuri Dubey**, Founder-Director, National Skills Network; **Mr. Ashish Mittal**, Group CHRO, Sreenidhi Educational Group; and **Prof. Krishna Reddy**, IIIT Hyderabad.



The discussion focused on the following:

- Overview of Vocational Education Evolution and Successes.
- Integration and Challenges: Vocational Courses in Education Systems.
- Enhancing vocational learning through technology and industry trends.
- Ethical Dimensions in Vocational Training and Future Innovations.
- Aligning vocational education with economic sectors and opportunities.
- Empowering Graduates: Employment Outlook and Prospects

**Mr. Narayanan Ramaswamy, Partner and National Head of Education at KPMG**, provided an overview of the evolution and successes of vocational education, emphasizing the centrality of digital technology in navigating the vocational education landscape in the digital age.

**Mr. Ashish Mittal, Group CHRO of Sreenidhi Educational Group**, discussed the impact of digital education and challenges in skill development, highlighting the importance of emerging technologies like AR, VR, and XR in upskilling and reskilling students and the workforce, as well as the necessity for industry linkage with education.

**Dr. Madhuri Dubey, Founder-Director, National Skills Network**, emphasized the significance of work-integrated learning and industry involvement across

sectors, advocating for the adoption of technology in education and the integration of 21st-century skills among students.

**Mr. Mohit Soni, CEO of Media & Entertainment Skills Council**, underscored the importance of industry-academia collaboration, advocating for the integration of school and higher education under one platform and emphasizing the role of digital tools in facilitating student learning.

**Prof. Krishna Reddy from IIIT Hyderabad** highlighted the importance of career counseling in addressing unemployment, presenting Career Darpan as a system for exploring and selecting career paths, thus helping individuals make informed decisions about their future endeavors.

### **Session 8: Telangana a destination for manufacturing industry centric education, learning, and talent.**

The panelists for this session were **Mr. K. Bikshapathi, Director General, National Academy of Construction (NAC)**; **Prof. Venkat Ramana, Vice-Chairman, TS Council of Higher Education**; and **Dr. Suresh Kumar, Associate President, HR & COE, Aurobindo Pharma Ltd.**



The discussion focused on the following:

- Converging the thoughts and learnings from the various sessions to help understand the way forward to create an industry-centric and future-relevant high-quality education and skilling ecosystem that is inclusive.
- What are the emerging solutions and priorities to drive, and how can we consolidate and scale up?
- Key pathways to adopt to enable implementation and create a highly skilled talent pool.
- High-level steps for enabling seamless support and collaboration across industry and academia.

## Session 9: Empowering Rural Youth: Effective Outreach Strategies

The panelists for this session included **Dr. E. Vishnu Vardhan Reddy, IFS, Special Secretary, Investment Promotion & NRI Affairs, Government of Telangana**; **Mr. Sivaprasad Reddy Rachamalla, Convenor, MSME Panel, CII Telangana, and Managing Director, Rachamalla Forgings Pvt. Limited**; **Mr. V. Rajashekar Reddy, President, CREDAI Hyderabad**; **Ms. Farida Tampal, State Director at WWF-India**; and **Mr. Anil Kumar V. Epur, Advisor, CII Telangana Public Policy Taskforce and Past Chairman, CII Southern Region**, moderated the session.



The session centered on tailoring mentorship programs for rural youth and explored the transformative power of mentorship in rural communities. Discussions delved into building sustainable mentorship programs and highlighted the reciprocal growth benefits for both mentors and mentees. Furthermore, the session focused on raising awareness about the advantages of skill development in rural areas.

**Mr. V Rajashekar Reddy, President of CREDAI Hyderabad**, shared strategies for skill development in Telangana's construction industry, emphasizing opportunities for employment and the critical need for skilled workers, along with advocating for increased focus on training and skilling initiatives.

**Ms. Farida Tampal, State Director at WWF-India**, elaborated on empowering rural youth, particularly women, through various training programs such as nature guiding, hospitality, and forest training, aimed at creating employment opportunities and fostering economic growth in rural areas.

## Session 10: Session by the Telangana Development Forum

The panelists for the session included the session speaker, **Mr. Ranadheer Baddam, Chairman, TDF-India; Mr. Madhusudhan K. Reddy, Founder and Past President, TDF; and Mr. Madhava Reddy Kalvakurthy, Secretary, Vandematharam Foundation.**

The session focused on three main topics:

- The Telangana Comprehensive Education Survey Report
- Cultural impediments to vocational and skills development within school education
- The integration of vocational education and skills development into higher secondary education



The two-day event concluded with a resounding call to action, echoing the collective commitment of industry, government, and academia to drive forward the vision of transformative change in education, skill development, and entrepreneurial opportunities in Telangana. With insights shared by esteemed panelists representing various sectors, the conference underscored the imperative for collaboration, innovation, and adaptability in shaping the future of education and workforce development. As Mr. C. Shekar Reddy, Chairman, CII Telangana & Chairman & MD, CSR Estates Ltd; Dr. G. Gopal Reddy, Trustee & Past Chairman, Telangana Development Forum (TDF-USA); Mr. Sai D. Prasad, Vice Chairman, CII Telangana & Executive Director, Bharat Biotech International Limited; Dr. B. V. R. Mohan Reddy, Past Chairman, CII Southern Region & Founder Chairman, Cyient; and Mr. Anil Kumar V. Epur, Advisor, CII Telangana Public Policy Taskforce & Past Chairman, CII Southern Region stood together, their presence symbolized a unified dedication to empowering the youth of Telangana and building a robust ecosystem conducive to growth, opportunity, and prosperity for all.

This report is prepared by National Skills Network – NSN. To know more, visit: <http://www.nationalskillsnetwork.in>