

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	<b>SMART SKILLS: BRIDGING THE SKILL GAP FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT</b> <i>DR. MANJARI AGARWAL &amp; K. K. PANDE</i>	1
2.	<b>THE NEED TO FOCUS ON HRD CLIMATE IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT</b> <i>DR. PRAVEEN CHOUGALE &amp; DR. GURUNATH J. FAGARE</i>	8
3.	<b>PERFORMANCE OF INDO-RUSSIAN TRADE DYNAMICS: AN APPRAISAL FOR THE YEAR 2003-2006</b> <i>MANMOHAN SINGH &amp; S. P. KAUSHIK</i>	13
4.	<b>KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS REGARDING PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS IN VADODARA CITY</b> <i>GAURAV JD &amp; NIRAJ P</i>	16
5.	<b>EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT</b> <i>DR. R. ANNAPOORANI &amp; M. SHANTHI</i>	19
6.	<b>REVEALED COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE AND TRADE FLOWS AMONG SAARC COUNTRIES: AN ANALYSIS</b> <i>DR. B. P. SARATH CHANDRAN</i>	24
7.	<b>FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KERALA AND TAMIL NADU</b> <i>DR. SANTHA S.</i>	31
8.	<b>CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS ETHICS IN IT SECTOR: SOME REFLECTIONS</b> <i>DR. BADIUDDIN AHMED, SYED HAMID MOHIUDDIN QUADRI &amp; MOHAMMED ABDUL LATEEF</i>	38
9.	<b>WORK-LIFE BALANCE (WLB): A CAUSE OF CONCERN IN BANKING SECTOR</b> <i>RITU ATHEYA &amp; DR. RENU ARORA</i>	42
10.	<b>PRIVATIZATION – IS IT A SOLUTION TO PRIORITIZATION?</b> <i>DR. JEEMON JOSEPH &amp; SHIBU ITTY MATHEW</i>	46
11.	<b>A STUDY OF STRESS AMONG FACULTY MEMBERS IN COLLEGES OF JALANDHAR</b> <i>MEGHA JAIN &amp; DR. INDERPAL SINGH</i>	49
12.	<b>HRM PRACTICES IN THE NEW ECONOMY</b> <i>THOTA AMRUTHA VALLI &amp; DR. P. ARUNKUMAR</i>	55
13.	<b>THE IMPACT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON THE ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS: PERCEPTION OF RESIDENTS' OF GONDER AND ITS NEARBY RURAL COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA</b> <i>DR. GETIE ANDUALEM IMIRU</i>	57
14.	<b>THE NATIONAL CHALLENGES AND POLICY OPTIONS OF ETHIOPIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EFA GOALS: A FOCUS ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL</b> <i>DR. BIRHANU MOGES ALEMU</i>	63
15.	<b>ROLE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR IN ETHIOPIA: A STUDY BASED ON NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY</b> <i>CHALACHEW GETAHUN DESTA</i>	73
16.	<b>GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE OF AREA, PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY OF NATURAL RUBBER IN INDIA</b> <i>M. KANNAN</i>	80
17.	<b>EMPLOYMENT GENERATION AND COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES IN EAST SIANG DISTRICT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA</b> <i>TOKU CHOKIO</i>	85
18.	<b>LOVE, COMPASSION AND SPIRITUALITY: A TRULY RELEVANT ETHOS IN MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS</b> <i>GEETU SHARMA</i>	90
19.	<b>CLAUSE 49: AN ATTEMPT TO DISCIPLINE CORPORATE</b> <i>SUVIT DAS</i>	92
20.	<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF STUDENTS STUDYING IN GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS - WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BELLARY DISTRICT</b> <i>KOKILA H S &amp; PRASHANTHA RAMACHANDRA HEGDE</i>	98
21.	<b>THE CLIMATE OF COOPERATION IN SWEDEN</b> <i>VINCENT DODOO</i>	101
22.	<b>GREEN FINANCE IS ESSENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY</b> <i>TASNIM UDDIN CHOWDHURY, RAJIB DATTA &amp; HARADHAN KUMAR MOHAJAN</i>	104
23.	<b>INSTITUTIONAL CREDIT AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT</b> <i>DR. R. GOVINDASAMY</i>	109
24.	<b>A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES IN INDIA AND HARYANA</b> <i>ANNU</i>	112
25.	<b>IMPACT OF MICRO FINANCE IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SHGS</b> <i>M. ANNAM</i>	115
26.	<b>FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROGRESSIVE USE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES BY ITS PATRONS</b> <i>BIMAL CHANDRA NAIR</i>	120
27.	<b>QUALITY EDUCATION: ISSUES, CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES</b> <i>BHAVNA JOSHI</i>	123
28.	<b>THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS EFFECT ON STUDENT MOBILITY</b> <i>MUNEEB HUSSAIN GATTOO &amp; MUJEEB HUSSAIN GATTOO</i>	126
29.	<b>CONTRIBUTION OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN HOUSING FINANCE IN HARYANA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY</b> <i>HARDEEP &amp; SATISH KUMAR</i>	132
30.	<b>REGULATION OF INDIAN MUTUAL INDUSTRY</b> <i>MONIKA SAINI</i>	135
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK</b>	145

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- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

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**SMART SKILLS: BRIDGING THE SKILL GAP FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

Education is the most important and crucial element for a growth of a country and discernibly significant for developing economies. A well-educated human resource contributes substantially to the economic, social and technological development of a country. However, India is witnessing serious dearth of skilled manpower in various industries. According to the 'Employment and Unemployment Survey 2012', India's official unemployment rate is 3.8 percent, with rural areas having an unemployment rate of 3.4 percent and urban areas having an unemployment rate of 5 percent. Further, according to NASSCOM, each year over 3 million graduates and post-graduates are added to the Indian workforce. However, of these only 25 percent of technical graduates and 10-15 percent of other graduates are considered employable by the rapidly growing IT and ITES segments. Work placements are a valuable way of helping students to develop work related skills and are highly regarded by potential employers. Those students unable to secure a work placement can be disadvantaged when competing with those who have undertaken placements. Even those students returning from an industrial placement may have gained variable experience due to the wide diversity in the placement experience. Therefore, the provision of department-based activities designed to develop employability skills and career awareness can be justified for all students. Hence, what we today face is growing skill gap between skills required and skills provided. Sensing the need Smart Skills, a company based at Haldwani (Nainital), a venture of professionals having hands on experience Industry experience in Automotive and allied industries and corporate training, came with an innovative idea of providing the schools drop out youth employment as a part of their corporate social responsibility, as an innovative program conducted jointly with the industry. Core strengths of the company being corporate training, curriculum design, delivery and imparting practical training. The Company with active support to the idea from TATA Motors developed an Industry specific curriculum to train the drop out youth for TATA Motors. On the other hand it collaborated with Uttarakhand Open University to get the syllabus approved and program certified so that the student gets climbing the education ladder while learning and working. This case documents the success of this model of collaboration, distinct from pure academic university's conventional education, bringing together higher education institution and employers, with an aim to solve youth employment problem for the State in particular and country at large. The program has then been started by Ashok Leyland, TVS group and Rane Madras and Maruti Suzuki India Ltd has signed MoU for starting the first trail batch for them with 60 students. This case may help the learners to understand about industry specific human resource needs, tailor made courses which includes business expectation in higher education institution and above all participation of corporate leaders with education institutions as a step towards Corporate Social Responsibility and creating new workforce.

**KEYWORDS**

Vocational Programmes, Employability, Industry-academic partnership.

**HIGHER EDUCATION SCENARIO IN INDIA**

Education is the most important and crucial element for a growth of a country and discernibly significant for developing economies. A well-educated human resource contributes substantially to the economic, social and technological development of a country. However, India is witnessing serious dearth of skilled manpower in various industries. According to the 'Employment and Unemployment Survey 2012', India's official unemployment rate is 3.8 percent, with rural areas having an unemployment rate of 3.4 percent and urban areas having an unemployment rate of 5 percent. Further, according to NASSCOM Report, each year over 3 million graduates and post-graduates are added to the Indian workforce. However, of these only 25 percent of technical graduates and 10-15 percent of other graduates are considered employable by the rapidly growing IT and ITES segments. Further, National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) in India has mapped skill gaps in 20 high-growth sectors and the unorganised sector till the year 2022. These Skill Development Sectors are a classification of industry sectors where an array of jobs are available, for which skilled workforce is required and hence a need for industry specific skills training. Eventually, Work placements are a valuable way of helping students to develop work related skills and are highly regarded by potential employers. Those students unable to secure a work placement can be disadvantaged when competing with those who have undertaken placements. Even those students returning from an industrial placement may have gained variable experience due to the wide diversity in the placement experience. Therefore, the provision of department-based activities designed to develop employability skills and career awareness can be justified for all students. Hence, what we today face is growing skill gap between skills required and skills provided. Sensing the need Smart Skills, a company based at Haldwani (Nainital), a venture of professionals having hands on experience Industry experience in Automotive and allied industries and corporate training, came with an innovative idea of providing the schools drop out youth employment as a part of their corporate social responsibility, as an innovative program conducted jointly with the industry.

**ABOUT SMART SKILLS**

Smart Skills is a company based at Haldwani (Nainital) which is a venture of professionals having hands on experience in Automotive and allied industries and corporate training. **Smart Skills** is engaged in providing Consultancy and Training since 2005 to Manufacturing and Service Industries. Core strengths of the company are curriculum design, delivery and imparting practical training. It has collaborated with Uttarakhand Open University and Industries viz. Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland and TVS group for Certificate Courses in Basic Engineering Skills for developing and developed a unique concept of collaborative technical and vocational course especially for students with low literacy and low income groups. This idea was conceptualized in February 2010 when they along with Uttarakhand Open University conducted a human-resource survey in the state. The survey revealed that there is a huge mismatch in demand and supply of skilled workers. "In the survey we found that Tata Motors Ltd., Pantnagar itself required 200 skilled people every month at the entry level. At that time they were producing 750 Tata Ace and 200 Tata Nano with 3300 operatives, whereas their requirement was of 5000 operators. SIDCUL, Pantnagar had become an Auto Hub and required skilled manpower to produce vehicles. All industries in the region were falling short of their manpower requirements. Based on the above survey, we found that the shortage was not only of number of students but also in terms of the frequency with which these students were passing out of

their respective institutes i.e. July/August or December/January, whereas the requirement in industries is constant. Therefore while designing this course we deliberately decided to have six batches in a year without compromising the quality." Says Mr. Ashutosh Joshi, Director, SMART SKILLS.

After exploring various models of co-operations, a collaborative model was accepted as opposed to adoption by any one party. In this pursuit, they launched a six month programme called "Certificate Course in Technical Excellence". The objective of this course is to enhance the employability prospects for 10<sup>th</sup> pass students by empowering them knowledge and skills which would qualify them both academically and with hands-on skills to make them employable in industries.

"While thinking of the eligibility we wanted early dropouts to be part of this scheme since they have limited scope for employment. Therefore we kept the academic qualification to be 10<sup>th</sup> pass with age limit of 18-25 years". says Mr. Deepak Bisht, Director, SMART SKILLS

This innovative training scheme has offered more than 1200 students in a span of 22 months, an opportunity to get trained and certified in high technology areas in a very cost-effective way. These courses have a flexible system that allows students to accumulate both their knowledge and skills and convert them into certificate, advanced certificate and diploma through Uttarakhand Open University in a phased manner.

Companies like Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, TVS Group and most recently Maruti Suzuki along with their vendors are showing genuine interest in these courses by having direct involvement in training these students. These companies provide on-the-job training to students with a good stipend which acts as a powerful motivation for students to take up these courses without financial liability. This is also creating a choice and competition among industries ultimately benefitting students with improved employability.

They came with an innovative idea of providing the schools drop out youth employment as a part of their corporate social responsibility, as an innovative program conducted jointly with the industry. "We take this opportunity to underline the importance of these courses in terms of their significant contribution to further development of technical and vocational education and their potential in offering employment opportunities to youths of today", says Mr. Deepak Bisht, Director, SMART SKILLS.

#### VISION

PROVIDE EXCELLENCE IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INNOVATIVE QUALITY TRAINING SCHEMES

#### UTTARAKHAND OPEN UNIVERSITY-THE SUPPORTING HAND

Uttarakhand Open University was established vide an Act of Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly in 2005 (Act No. 23 of 2005) with an aim to disseminate knowledge and skills through distance learning with introduction of flexible and innovative methods of education to ensure 'independent learning'. The University believes in imparting higher education by disseminating knowledge and skills through distance learning using novel educational programmes, various modes of communication technology and contact sessions.

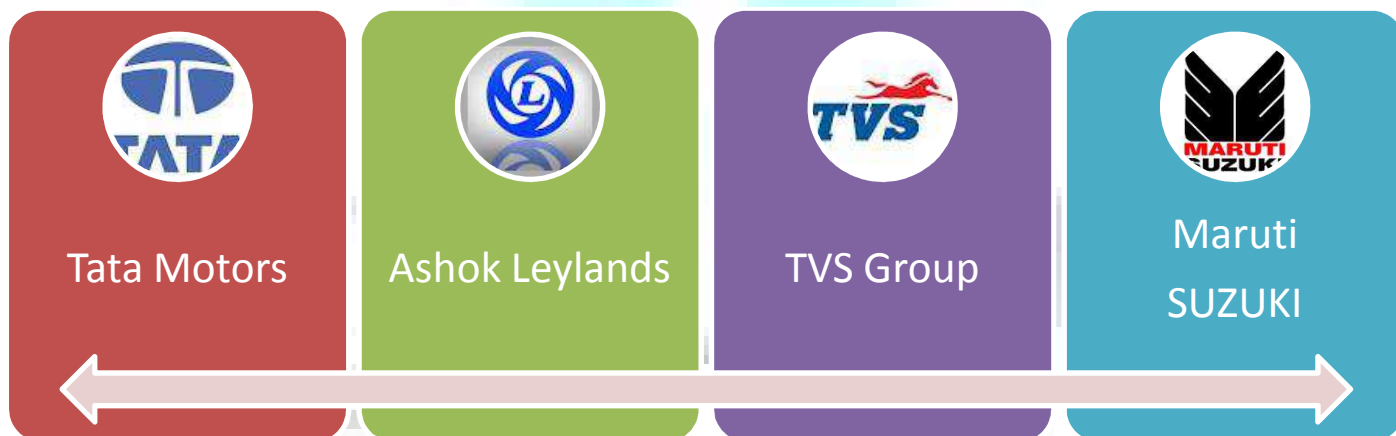
The major objective of the University is to cater to the educational needs of the target groups through the open systems of learning and to create skilled and knowledge based human resource for speedy upliftment and development of the State in particular. The University is making all out efforts to impart quality education by maintaining high academic standards. University has exhibited the potential to reorient itself in view of the rapid changes in the sphere of professional and technical education and it has come out with a number of new and innovative self-employment/employment oriented courses of study. Uttarakhand Open University is especially focusing on the women, the tribal and the other marginalized sections of this state located in the distant and difficult places. The University has made its presence felt even in the remotest corners of the state. It has signed MOUs with different providers with the aim of sharing the scarce resources and knowledge for the benefit of the people. The vision of the University is to provide the most critical component of growth, through quality higher education, to the state of Uttarakhand.

Uttarakhand Open University presently has been carrying out its studies through its 253 Study Centers established at different locations of the State under 8 Regional Centers working at Dehradun, Roorkee, Pauri, Uttarkashi, Ranikhet, Bageswar, Haldwani and Pithoragarh. Thus, the university has been contributing to the development and training of qualified human capital for the state. Uttarakhand Open University has also signed Memorandum of Understanding with several leading research institutions, companies and professional bodies for the benefit of the students.

#### CURRENT INDUSTRY PARTNERS

"Companies that are breaking the mold are moving beyond corporate social responsibility to social innovation. These companies are the vanguard of the new paradigm. They view community needs as opportunities to develop ideas and demonstrate business technologies, to find and serve new markets, and to solve longstanding business problems." **Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Harvard Business Review.**

The following companies has extended their support



**TATA MOTORS** - Tata Motors Limited is India's largest automobile company and is the leader in commercial vehicles in each segment. In order to meet the growing demand for TATA Ace product, Tata Motors has set up plant at Pantnagar in Uttarakhand. The plant was set up in a record time of 11 months and has set benchmarks for such projects. The company has invested about Rs.1000 crores in the plant. Its operation intends to generate about 10,000 direct and indirect jobs in the plant, among vendors and service providers in the area. Tata Motors is committed to improving the quality of life of communities by working on four thrust areas employability, education, health and environment. The activities touch the lives of more than a million citizens. The company's support on education and employability is focused on youth and women.

**ASHOK LEYLANDS** - Ashok Leylands are the flagship of the Hinduja Group, one of the largest commercial vehicle manufacturers in India with a turnover of US \$ 2.5 billion in 2011-12 having consistently delivered profits to our stake-holders since inception. Ashok Leyland's Pantnagar manufacturing facility! Located in Dev Bhoomi, Uttarakhand, this is now their largest manufacturing unit, spread across 190 acres of land. It is one of the most integrated manufacturing facilities in the Indian commercial vehicle industry and the technology pinnacle for the company. The plant is capable of churning out trucks at the rate of 75,000 vehicles a year; built with an investment of Rs. 1500 crores, they assure that their real investment is the employment opportunities that they are creating for over a



thousand people in the area. A number of development initiatives are taken in communities around their manufacturing facilities and in far-flung areas, through constant and well-monitored support to educational, medical and charitable organizations.

**TVS GROUP** - TVS Group is an Indian diversified industrial conglomerate with its principal headquarters located in Chennai and Madurai. The largest and the most visible subsidiary is TVS Motors, fourth largest two-wheeler manufacturers in India. TVS Group, headquartered in Chennai, with group revenue of more than USD 10 billion is a automotive conglomerate company in India, specialized in manufacturing of two-wheeler, three-wheeler, auto-electricals components, high tensile fasteners, die casting products, brakes, wheels, tyres, axles, seating systems, fuel injection components, electronic and electrical components and many more.

**MARUTI SUZUKI** - Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL, formerly Maruti Udyog Limited) is a subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation of Japan. Maruti Suzuki is a leading manufacturer of passenger vehicles in India. Lovingly referred to as the people's car maker; over the past three decades Maruti Suzuki has changed the way people in India commute and travel. Significant efforts have been taken to contribute to society at large, through its corporate activities, especially in the areas of Road Safety and Vocational Training. Maruti Suzuki has set up dedicated teams with requisite expertise to steer the social projects.

## BACKGROUND: THE CHALLENGE

From time to time on different platforms right from counseling at Employment Exchanges, Gram Panchayats and presentation at FICCI, CII, IITs and other platforms they highlighted the importance of Technical Vocational education which is required for the socio-economic development of any State.

Further, they also highlighted this course at IIT Delhi, the objective was to state the challenges like:

- Poor bankability of the skills due to poor training, resulting in low employability of passouts.
- Disconnect-skills provided and skills required by Industry.
- Weak industry-academic interface
- Develop simple, easily understood "core" employability skills & competency standards.
- Provide a common platform for collaboration amongst industry, university and students in the state.

## WHEREAS KEY FEATURE OF THIS MODEL INCLUDES

- Curriculum designed after extensive industry and market research.
- Training is an optimum blend of theory and on-the-job.
- Industry led outcome measured with high acceptability.
- Absorption by industry concerned with large part of trainees.

## BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

- Students benefit from an early introduction to real world.
- Their prospects in labour market rise due to practical work experiences.
- Enable students to learn varied trades/courses at a low cost.
- Possibility of obtaining additional income which serves as a motivation to join such courses.
- Finally, such education bridges the gap between theory and practice.

## BENEFITS AND ROLES OF PARTNERS

- Benefit through advice of Industry to adapt their curricula to the needs of the labour market.
- To have access to the latest technology and additional sources of income.
- Industry gets time to evaluate the performance of students for final absorption of trainees.

The question faced by them was whether they could adopt a particular vocational course, or develop a course on its own, or simply leave things unchanged. Leaving things unchanged seemed unwise. Duplication of various courses and reinventing the wheel are already features of the system and if such course is to grow substantially, some guiding framework is essential. Customizing and developing a uniquely local course keeping in view available opportunities in the State seemed the only way to proceed.

It was clear that for such vocational course to succeed,

- ✚ The model should be self-sustainable without putting burden on any one. Therefore they kept the fee low i.e. Rs 6,000 so that students can afford it initially, since they need to have some stake to remain in the course and at the same time they can get back triple of that amount in terms of stipend only if they perform.
- ✚ Involvement of Industry is critical. Their involvement is needed at every stage right from the curriculum development to the ultimate employer of the skills.
- ✚ Without investing in having a separate infrastructure it was wise to use the existing infrastructure of partnering industries to provide hands on training to students since training is largely performed on-the-job.

The mandate of the course is to make early drop outs employable without putting any financial burden on them. While developing the course, the emphasis was to have a demand driven short term course including easily understood core employability skills and competency standards.


Theory part is imparted and monitored by the Institute whereas Industry Partner is entrusted with the responsibility of providing support to students in putting what students have learnt in the classroom to practical use on the shop floor. Ultimately, Uttarakhand Open University provides certification after conducting a written exam.

Direct exposure to students in Industries is leading to high employability and thus providing a common platform for collaboration amongst Institute, Industry and students.

## THE MODUS OPERANDI

Uttarakhand Open University (UOU) invites application through Advertisements. Further, regular Job Fairs are also conducted through Employment Exchanges. Selection of students is also done by UOU. Initially two months theory classes (4 hrs a day) are conducted at Center of Technical Excellence through Smart Skills at various centers. After the completion of theory classes, learners are trained by Industry Partner for next four months, with stipend, Group insurance /ESI and evaluation. Further, continuous evaluation is also done in the form of assignments and written exams in every semester by UOU. On successful evaluation and clearing the written examination certificate is awarded by UOU to the learner.

Further, they have also created a powerful MIS system to monitor daily faculty report, attendance and curriculum taught in all the centers. Quarterly 'Train the Trainer' Programmes are organized to standardize quality of training in all centers. They also execute monthly review of performance and take necessary corrective actions wherever necessary. Moreover, Monthly visits are also done in the associated companies and their feedback is also ensured. Further, quarterly performance of students undergoing OJT in different industries is also evaluated.



<b>Uttarkhand Open University</b>	•Curriculum development, Monitoring, evaluation & certification of course
<b>Smart Skills</b>	•Assistance in Curriculum development and Imparting of theory classes.
<b>Tata Motors Ltd/Ashok Leylands/Maruti SUZUKI/TVS Group</b>	•Assistance in Curriculum development and Providing On-the-job training

The model fine-tuned at Haldwani (Distt. Nainital) is being replicated into the remote and hilly regions of Uttarakhand. Starting August 2011, five additional Centers of Technical Excellence have been established.

Area Covered	Students Enrolled
• Pithoragarh	50 students
• Bageshwar	50 students
• Kotdwar	50 students
• Bhowali	50 Students
• Karnprayag	50 Students

“Yes, since the state of Uttarakhand has a very scattered population with very limited scope for higher education. It was important for us to reach to such students and provide them initial two month theoretical sessions without moving them from their hometowns. Keeping that in mind we opened seven centers of Technical Excellence in the remotest regions like Pithoragarh, Karnprayag, Kotdwar, Bhowali, Ranikhet, Bageshwar and Almora”. quoted Mr. Ashutosh when asked about this diversification.

Presently, capacity of Haldwani center is to train 1200 students and other centers is to train 600 students a year.

**COURSES CURRENTLY OFFERED**

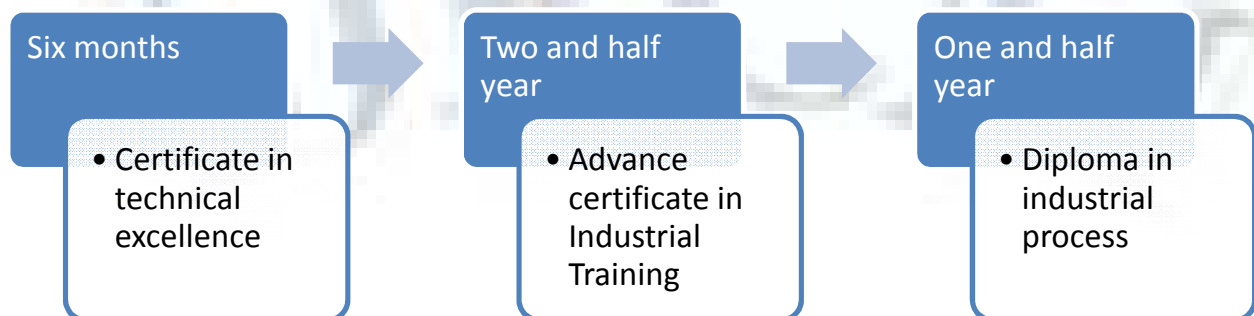
Sl. NO.	Course	Duration	Curriculum
1	Certificate course in Technical Excellence	Six Months	150 Hours Theory and 4 Months practical training at Industry partner
2	Advance course in Industrial training	Two and half year	5 semester, Practical training in industry and theory classes on Sundays and Holidays
3	Certificate course in workshop practices	One month	Full time
4	Diploma in Industrial process-Proposed	One and Half Year	After ACCIT-11, 3 semester practical training in industry and theory classes on holidays

**OTHER COURSES DESIGNED AND IN THE PIPELINES**

- Certificate Course in Technical Excellence
- Advance Certificate Course In Industrial Training
- Certificate In Basic Workshop Techniques
- Certificate Course In Basic Maintenance & Repair
- Management Information Science & Technology for Rural Youth
- Diploma in Industrial Process
- Certificate in Automotive Manufacturing
- Certificate in Automation Assembly

**CAREER PATH FOR THE TRAINEES**

The courses offered are modular in nature, where learner will start will six months certificate in technical excellence, moving to Advance Certificate in Industrial training of two and a half years. Last level, introduces learner with a specialized programme of one and half year tilted Diploma in Industrial process.



**SALIENT FEATURES OF CERTIFICATE IN TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE**

- Short duration certificate course – wherein students roll out every 2 months with appropriate level of competence (2 months theory with UOU) to gain hands-on experience(4 months) in industries.
- Serves as a bridge between employer needs and those of job seekers (students)

- 20:80 ratio of theory and hands-on experience- attempting to match as closely as possible the “real work environment” that student will face while entering the industry.

## STUDENTS ENROLLED

SUMMARY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED FOR CERTIFICATE COURSE IN TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE			
Course : Certificate course in Technical Excellence		Share	
	No of Students till date	Stipend per month(Rs.)	Total Stipend paid(Rs.)
Tata Motors	345	3,500.00	4,830,000.00
Ashok Leyland	327	5,000.00	6,540,000.00
Delphi TVS/Lucas TVS	150	5,000.00	3,000,000.00
Rane Madras	32	5,000.00	640,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>854</b>		<b>15,010,000.00</b>
Course : Advance Certificate course in Technical Excellence		Share	
	No of Students till date	Stipend per month(Rs.)	Total Stipend paid(Rs.)
Tata Motors	66	5,500.00	4,356,000.00
Ashok Leyland	36	5,500.00	1,188,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>		<b>5,544,000.00</b>
<b>Total Stipend received by the students till date</b>			<b>20,554,000.00</b>

## INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

The following are the remarks about this venture by the associated industry leaders-

- Students of Uttarakhand Open University possess good knowledge and discipline. They adapt to the organization culture quickly and our experience with them has been so good that we have decided to increase their intake for further training in the organization”  
- **U J Salvi Div. Manager (Training) Tata Motors**
- “This is the first time an academic institution has designed a course keeping in mind the needs of business organizations”  
- **Sunil Mishra DGM (HR) Ashok Leyland Rudrapur**
- “Knowledge possessed by students of certificate course in Technical excellence demonstrates the efforts made by the University towards their skill enhancement”  
- **K Balasubramanian GM (HR) Lucas TVS**
- “We talked to few trainees during our visit to Uttarakhand and we were quite amazed to see the knowledge and sense of responsibility in them, we would definitely like to have them at our plant”  
- **M K Gupta GM Maruti Suzuki Training Academy**

## INSTITUTION FEEDBACK

- “The program run by UOU and Tata in Uttarakhand is a perfect working model which can succeed as it has an inbuilt ROI for the industry, very similar to German Model”  
- **Mr.Ulrich Meinecke, Counsellor, Social and Labour Affairs, Vocational Education & Training, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany at FICCI SDF Meeting**
- “I am happy that Uttarakhand Open University is doing such an excellent work by involving the industry and providing employable skills to the youth of Uttarakhand. I wish you the very best in your efforts.”  
- **Mr. Sharda Prasad, Director General, Employment & Training and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India**

“Tata Motors have initiated various CSR activities to bring about a radical transformation in the quality of life of people living in and around the operation areas of the company through positive intervention in social upliftment programs.

They have adopted few ITI’s in PPP mode and also introduced V-SAT through which the training can be provided by online lectures and demonstrations. Tata Motors was the first company to join Smart Skills and Ashok Leyland, TVS group, Rane and Maruti Suzuki followed later. Tata Motors introduced this scheme at their suppliers’ end thus making this course acceptable to them and encouraged them to recruit the students who have completed the course. By providing the necessary facilities of Food, Transportation and uniform, Tata Motors has set a benchmark for all other industries that followed them”.

**Mr. Santosh Kumar, Manager CSR Department, TATA Motors**

## UNIVERSITY’S FEEDBACK

“Programmes of SMART SKILLS provide vocational training opportunities to youth in Uttarakhand and have been very successful. Certificate in Technical Excellence is one of the flagship programmes of the University in terms of skills development. This course has helped young talent to gain job skills which allows them to return more successfully to the community as productive citizens. Vocational training, the erstwhile CSR activity for companies and Universities, is now seen in terms of its social outcomes and through such project we signal a positive change in the society.

The primary objective of Education in the present scenario is not only aimed towards creating knowledge but also towards imparting practical skills to prepare students for gainful employment. Further, moving cautiously in future, our focus should now be in developing similar programmes for other manufacturing industries in the region.” says Professor R. C. Mishra, Registrar, UOU

## FEW SUCCESS STORIES

- ✓ Jeevan Chandra Pandey, is from a very poor family student and was just metric pass. He was struggling for job. After completing certificate of technical excellence course, he was absorbed in Tata Motors for training. During his training he won the first prize for offering Best Suggestion at Tata Motors.
- ✓ Manish Sharma after completing his intermediate enrolled for basic and advanced level programmes. He got through Moser Baer, Noida with an annual package of Rs 3.80 lacs only because of his on-the-job training at Tata Motors under the basic course.
- ✓ Gaurav Pandey has a similar story, he hails from a small village near Haldwani. During his training he also received Quality and Safety Award from Tata Motors.

## MINDS BEHIND THIS SUCCESS STORY

Deepak Bisht, CEO, SMART SKILLS, has done MBA and has over 8 years’ experience in consumer durable industries like BPL Ltd and Schneider Electric. He started his career as a **Freelance Trainer** with **Honda Siel**, Rudrapur where the training focus was to train their staff on Personal Effectiveness and Communication. He has over 6 years of experience in Behavioral Training with Industries like Parle, Britannia, Escorts, APC, Perfetti Van Melle etc.

Ashutosh Joshi, Director, SMART SKILLS, has done BTECH and has over 25 years of experience with Maruti Suzuki and 8 years’ experience in training with industries like Hyundai, Volkswagen and many other reputed manufacturing industries.

### THEIR NOTION BEHIND THIS MODEL

"I always had a desire to work for Uttarakhand and that is the reason I left Maruti and Hella. I was looking for avenues to work in my home state and in our first meeting with Vice Chancellor, UOU, Dr. Vinay Kumar Pathak, we discussed about the program. I was awestruck by his dynamism and decision making ability and my words to him at the end of the meeting were "Sir, you have given wings to my desire and surely hastened my working for Uttarakhand by few years".

We surveyed to find that there is a huge gap in demand and supply of quality work force in the factories in SIDCUL. Tata Motors was the first company to come forward to start the course. When we designed the course content I always remembered my Maruti days and as a supervisor knew what I was looking for in a technician. We put the same skill sets in our course and this was duly approved by Tata Motors.

Our course has also been appreciated by one and all in various meetings of Skill development forum of FICCI". says Mr. Ashutosh Joshi

Deepak his copartner in this venture also shared similar story-

"After conducting various training programs in SIDCUL in Uttarakhand I realized that training on behavioral aspects which was a major part of soft skills training was missing. We incorporated these in our program along with technical skills and found that our students stood out. They have done exceedingly well in whatever assignments were offered to them and continue to do so.

I have seen a great amount of transformation in the behavior of these trainees after their training and their confidence level to take upon the world is really amazing.

I have decided to take this program to far flung areas by conducting various Rozgar melas and meets and got tremendous support from local people and leaders of various political outfits.

It also gives us great satisfaction to see the development of our trainers and students in last couple of years. We are constantly improving and modernizing our efforts and methods and we definitely strive to become one of the best vocational training providers in the country".

### POSITIONING SMART SKILLS

They have stuck to the basic methodology for creating awareness about this programme by counseling prospective students at the grass root level like organizing job fairs at employment exchanges, Schools, gram panchayats and by involving NGOs and other government agencies.

They also promote the programme through advertisements in newspapers but since the geographical conditions of the State is such that these newspaper have limited reach they considerably focus on physical campaigning.

### SMART SKILLS's USP

The unique selling proposition (USP) lies in their offering-

**TRANSPARENCY IN OUR DEALINGS WITH THE STUDENTS (OUR CUSTOMERS) IN TERMS OF FEE, JOB PROSPECTS, CODE OF CONDUCT AND TRAINING EXPECTATIONS I.E. CLASSROOM AND OJT**

### TEETHING TROUBLES

- The first and foremost problem they faced was that of a narrow mindset of the people in the state since for them the only opportunities existed in government sectors and people were averse to work in the industry. They also conducted various campaigns to highlight the advantages of acquiring technical skills.
- Another problem was to get good trainers and they started this program in collaboration with a local private ITI and used their instructors for delivery of the program but they found that their training method is not suitable for the program. Since it is very difficult to alter their training method they moved out and recruited their own trainers and put them through rigorous training. This helped in improving the quality of the delivery and better accountability of the trainers as they were now their employees.

### CONCLUSION

This case study reviews successful collaboration between industry and academic team for creating pool of skilled manpower. Such type of innovative practices can enhance the employability prospects for the youth in India by empowering them knowledge and skills which would qualify them both academically and with hands-on skills to make them employable in industries. Further, such type of CSR initiatives of corporates with local organizations would surely help in solving social problems in the region. Smart Skills was smart enough in collaborating with the University for establishing credibility of the courses offered on one hand and partnering with the industry on the other, as they have expertise, human resources, capital and above all strategic planning for transforming society.

"Companies get involved in education for a number of strategic reasons, including building a positive reputation and goodwill among consumers, employees, investors, and other stakeholders; developing brand recognition, whether to increase consumer loyalty, boost sales, or establish the company as an industry leader; building a more educated workforce; raising consumer awareness about a particular issue; and fulfilling a company mission or mandate. Students, schools, and the general public can benefit from the experience and expertise that corporations bring to the table, particularly if the groups work together to ensure the right needs are being met on both ends"....[1]

The bottom line is that educational outreach efforts have the potential to make a real and lasting difference for all players involved.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Q1. What are the main features of the collaboration that make it successful? Do you think they have done something realistically and differently?
- Q2. Do you think such initiatives can work towards the needs of human resource development while helping corporate in participating in social initiatives?
- Q3. Trace the successful examples where companies have partnered with other organisation in strengthening their CSR programmes.
- Q4. What are the different types of industry-academic collaboration that are possible, particularly in the Indian scenario? Discuss.

### PEDAGOGICAL OBJECTIVES

- To understand about industry specific human resource needs and formulation of tailor made courses which includes business expectation in higher education institution.
- To assess the need and importance of participation of companies with the local organisation and industry associations for building industry specific training programmes thereby captivating trained manpower in the Industry.
- To find out the alternatives of participation of corporate leaders with education institutions as a step towards Corporate Social Responsibility.
- To discuss the collaborative model of industry-academic interface in Indian scenario.

### SUMMARY

This case is about the group of professionals who have collaborated with a distance learning university and major corporates players in their region for developing skilled and trained manpower in the State. This venture has brought sea change in the lives of many youth across the state through an innovative course on technical excellence. This venture has helped corporate giants in strengthening their CSR programme by involving in this social initiative right from the curriculum development to the ultimate employer of the skills.

Core strengths of the company being corporate training, curriculum design, delivery and imparting practical training. The Company with active support to the idea from TATA Motors developed an Industry specific curriculum to train the drop out youth for TATA Motors. On the other hand it collaborated with

Uttarakhand Open University to get the syllabus approved and program certified so that the student gets climbing the education ladder while learning and working.

In nutshell, the objective of the courses offered is to enhance the employability prospects for the youth by empowering them knowledge and skills which would qualify them both academically and with hands-on skills to make them employable in industries.

### THE SCOPE

The scope of this case is to sensitize the budding management professionals with social and economic issues and concerns and may enable them in developing pertinent competencies and skills for chalking strategic decisions which may contribute to economic, social, technological and organisational development. This case study also intends to paint the new insights about corporate social responsibility which these professionals can share with different organizations say education providers, NGOs, Government, research organizations trade and industrial associations. Further, this case will help the reader to think about innovative ways of bridging the gap between demand and supply of skilled manpower in the country.

### ISSUES FOR ANALYSIS

The case may be analyzed on the following outlines-

- Corporate Social Responsibility gaining new dimension, moving from charity to empowerment and partnership.
- Collaboration between Government, educational institutions and corporate can contribute tremendously in economic and societal development.
- This working model can be reciprocated in other states to create a pool of skilled manpower.
- Multiple modes of partnership/ collaboration can be developed by corporates for strengthening their CSR activities.
- More in a form of Public-Private-Partnership model, companies can adopt, initiate or partner development projects.
- Adopting this model, employers will receive security in terms of worker's skills, services and cost.
- Corporate as consumers/users of trained/skilled manpower may partner with Universities/Academia in numerous ways.

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### INTERVIEW

9. Telephonic and Personal Interview with Mr. Deepak Bisht and Mr. Ashutosh Joshi , General Manager – Corporate Sales (with Dr. Manjari on August 23 and August 24, 2012)

## **REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK**

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I am sure that your feedback and deliberations would make future issues better – a result of our joint effort.

Looking forward an appropriate consideration.

With sincere regards

Thanking you profoundly

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In this age of Commerce, Economics, Computer, I.T. & Management and cut throat competition, a group of intellectuals felt the need to have some platform, where young and budding managers and academicians could express their views and discuss the problems among their peers. This journal was conceived with this noble intention in view. This journal has been introduced to give an opportunity for expressing refined and innovative ideas in this field. It is our humble endeavour to provide a springboard to the upcoming specialists and give a chance to know about the latest in the sphere of research and knowledge. We have taken a small step and we hope that with the active co-operation of like-minded scholars, we shall be able to serve the society with our humble efforts.

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