

Economic Reforms Report submitted to ERC

8th June 2020

Meeting was held between the **Economic Reforms Committee ERC** of Sikkim and the Vice Chancellors' of all universities in Sikkim on 8th June 2020 at Secretariat, Gangtok to discuss the State Economic Reforms chaired by Mr. Mahendra P Lama, Chairman of ERC and Hon'ble MLA Shri. Sonam Venchungpa. As desired by ERC, a Report on ER was submitted to the committee.

REPORT



The ICFAI University Sikkim

Economic Social Reforms and Growth Prospects in Sikkim

The economic environment is changing rapidly in the last few months due to recent pandemic. This has not only affected the production sectors but also has affected the service and education sectors in Sikkim to larger extend.

1. Higher Education system should be tailored to respond to larger market need. It is time to create proper synergies between the universities and the local industries. More involvement of representatives from industries of the region in the Board of Studies shall be practised to understand and comprehend better understanding of the present job role requirements in the industry.
2. Considering the current pandemic and post COVID-19 period, drastic upliftment in online learning technologies is expected. Most of the students will opt in digital learning and we appeal State Government for support in launching distance educations and online digital programs that would assist in reaching to school dropouts and students residing in rural part of Sikkim.
3. Education department can support private universities of Sikkim by encouraging local students to enrol and register in various professional programs offered in all the university.

4. Our university is planning to transform our newly launched certificate programs into Digital Learning through which maximum stakeholders and students can be covered in online programs.
5. IUS will also launch Digital Classroom Vans that will be utilised for delivering practical classes incorporated in digital learning and will cater to those residing in extreme rural parts of the state.
6. Administrative, leadership and professional enhancement programs for government and private employees can enhance the work efficiency and productivity if it is included in the enrolment policy of human resource planning and development. IUS have launched 45 hours professional development programs that will help in shaping managers and an employee with various skills in leadership, team building and organization management.
7. IUS has been focusing on current need of skilled and semi-skilled workforces in tourism industry in the state. The employment issues of countless youths can be solved if the unemployed local youths are converted into local tourist guides. State Government can initially make it mandatory for all international tourist groups to hire local tourist guide as per their group size. If this is made mandatory, then the demand itself will create requirement of huge man power in the industry. Gradually, when we have enough trained local guides, the government can make it mandatory for national tourist also to hire guide. In the process, there will be huge creation of jobs in the state. IUS have also introduced various 45 hrs Certificate Programs on tourist guide, homestay management, bakery, etc that will give the required skills to become self employed.
8. Considering the pandemic and requirement of skilled persons in Healthcare Management, IUS have joined hands with Apollo Medskills Ltd, a registered sector skill councils NSDC to launch programs on Healthcare Management Courses, Bachelors in Vocational Education in MLT (Medical Lab Technician), Cardiac Non-Invasive Tech and B-Voc. EMT and Certificate Programs in Healthcare Sector.
9. IUS and SICUN Cooperative Union have already in principal agreed to establish an Institute of Cooperative Management at the existing infrastructure of SICUN in Assam Lingjey. The file has been forwarded to Law Dept for vetting. If all the existing cooperatives and newly registered firms are all trained on management of cooperatives then it will without fail enhance the surviving chances of many cooperatives in the State. This will also support in bridging the knowledge gaps. Many cooperatives fail as they lack knowledge in handling and if the State Government insist all in cooperatives to undergo some trainings in management of cooperatives then the surviving chances will be enhanced to larger height.
10. Unused and unoccupied government properties in any district of the State may be provided to education institutions/universities on lease for establishment of various skill development centres which would support the universities in reaching to rural underprivileged students of the State.
11. All VCs' and Principals' of Colleges in Sikkim may hold quarterly meeting with Hon'ble Minister of Education in order to understand the issues, progress, grievances and any other educational related matters that can be reflected in the state education policy. For this, VCs' and Academicians Council may be established. Central and Government schemes may be introduced and discussed in this forum.

12. Government may support universities and other educational institutions in preparing and planning various central proposals and schemes given to Higher Educations. This support will assist the interested institutions in tracking and tactfully handling various schemes that are non-lapsable.
13. Agriculture & horticulture department of Sikkim may jointly introduce certificate programs and various skill development courses such as organic farming, crop cultivations, plant breeding, organic fertilizers etc. Sikkim being one of the renowned organic state in the country, these kinds of programs will attract many students and visitors from other states.
14. Migrant workers who have returned to own State can be provided trainings so that they can fill up gaps in the industries like pharmaceuticals and other tourism industries. If the State government supports universities in establishing relationship with local industries in understanding the present manpower requirements and if program curriculums are drafted jointly then many of the migrant returnees can be trained and inducted.
15. Existing Universities in the state should have co-defined and mutually agreed programs to bring structural change within universities. These activities can be done to eliminate over specialization and to reduce duplicity (doubling) of same programs in many universities. This can make use of the limited resources and increase the outcome level.
16. Focus can be given on creation of new enterprises through channelizing entrepreneurship and innovation programs. MSME can interact with students of university regularly to discuss the schemes that are given to start-ups, innovator and entrepreneurs. IUS have also established Incubation Centre where 4 student projects are going on at present.
17. China is a miracle to world that has survived the most disastrous "Culture Revolution" (1966 - 1976) that shocked the world by feeding 22 percent of the world's population with less than 7 percent of world's farm land. The success towards this was the De-collective approach that allowed leasing out of farming land to farmers to increase agricultural production. Agriculture was taken under heavy government regulation. Farmers had neither the autonomy to decide what to grow nor did they have a say in where to sell their products. The farmers were required to give a fixed amount to the State and keep the extra for themselves, regardless of how much they produce. This greatly stimulated the farmers' enthusiasm for increasing production in China. The central University of Agriculture and other research cell in other universities in Sikkim can discuss various mechanism that can be adopted to increase production of agriculture produce.
18. Economic development should primarily start from the preparation of human capital and knowledge should be recognised as equally important. Development of education should be given prime importance as we cannot expect great economy with old system.
19. Lack of qualified faculties to fill the teaching and research position is one core issues of every universities in our state. Education starts from school level and if there is a council consisting of school principals and higher education representatives, then many gaps that are hampering in producing the future ready students can be eliminated. Every student has their special interest in one field or the other. Teachers at school level should be taught various methods of identifying the true passions and interest of students. Today's problem is when students take up

graduate courses which are of not their interest. In whatever field student take up, if the passion and interest lack then there is high chance of diminishing in future performance and outcome.