

## **Ramakrishna Mission Industrial Training Institute – A Polestar in Skill Development in Tripura<sup>1</sup>**

Origin of “**Civil Society**” is linked with “*Societas Civilis*” philosophy of Aristotle. This refers to all such organizations, which are outside the government and outside the army. It covers the wide range of Non-Government Organizations (NGO) or voluntary organizations, as popularly known. It has been established that presence of vibrant civil society in large number is essential for success of democracy. Out of the numerous civil society organizations present in our country, **Ramakrishna Mission** has been an exception. Committed to the high ideals preached by Shri Ramakrishna and Shri Vivekananda, this organization has spread its wing, rendering outstanding services for the peace and prosperity of the nation. It has set standards rising above political controversies and financial irregularities, being a rare of its kind in the modern society. Ramakrishna Mission math, located near the state capital at Viveknagar, has been actively participating in various welfare activities in the state. I had the opportunity of visiting the Ramakrishna Mission and addressing the passed out candidates on the second foundation day of the Industrial Training Institute (ITI) set up by the Mission on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016.



In a simple, yet dignified, function typical to the philosophy of the Mission, three batches of young boys, who have successfully completed courses in plumbing, electrician and refrigeration trades from the institute were felicitated and fresher trainees were welcomed with flowers. Swami Hitakamananda, Secretary of the Mission reiterated commitment of the institute to core human values and good behavior that the mission has consciously tried to instill in the young minds in his advice to the young boys. Swami Atmavikasananda, Principal of the ITI referred to the excellent standards maintained and the

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fact that they are the **first organization (ITI) to get ISO certification on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016**, after the rigorous process of examination and scrutiny. Shri Sushanta Debnath, Shri Dipayan Choudhuri and Shri Surajit Sutradhar (best trainees) and Shri Raju Das, Shri Supratim Acharjee and Shri Uttam Sarkar (best teachers) were honored for their outstanding performance on this occasion and were congratulated by all.



While sharing my own experience, I referred to the **importance attached to work irrespective of its nature** in the Indian culture and philosophy. As a part of the rituals in the Shri Jagannath Rath Yatra held in the month of July, the king has to sweep the floor first, before the deity is brought on the Rath (chariot). Further, the Rath is dragged by all devotees irrespective of caste and creed and not by only a selected few. These rituals reflect the core values of Indian philosophy that **even the King has to do sweeping - meaning thereby that the work of a sweeper is as important as the work of a king in our society**. Mahatma Gandhi had also stressed on this by taking up sweeping and cleaning himself for adding dignity to labour. The second aspect of Ratha Jatra about dragging the chariot indicates the **importance of team work and unity for doing any work good for the society**. This point was made to **underline the importance of manual work** in the trades in which skill has been imparted to the trainees as **dignified and much above the traditional mindset prevailing in the society** in favour of white collar jobs of a clerk or a peon.

On the future of the trainees, I had referred to the fact that we are living in a society, which is in transition and new opportunities are emerging every day, which are required to be exploited. In these changing times, winning the **“Trust of the consumer/ customer is the most important factor”**. There is no dearth of work in the state for a trained electrician or plumber or refrigerator mender. As a matter of fact, ordinary people have to **wait for days together** for getting a leaking tap or an electrical device or a freeze repaired by a skilled person. The most important requirement in winning the trust of the consumer lies in **“being responsible in terms of commitment to time, the quality of work and charging the right price”**. Further, it is necessary to go for **“low margin - high turnover approach”**

instead of “**high margin - low turnover approach**” by providing **quality services** and winning the satisfaction of a large number of consumers.

The passed out trainees were advised to **form a company** and avail bank loan for starting their own enterprise. With the help of information technology, they can **create their own website** with details of the fees to be charged for the services and their contact mobile number. This will be the **cost effective method** of getting linked directly with the interested customers needing such services. This will provide them a better alternative to seeking government job with uncertainties.



I requested respected Swamiji to consider **holding short duration (two-month) training in these trades**, preferably in places like Gandacherra, Ambassa and Kanchanpur, for training youth with support of the ITI trained persons and funding support from the Tripura Skill Development Mission.

This **short, yet meaningful, visit** to the institute reminded me of the good old days when ships navigating in the high seas, without any modern gadgets, used to look at and follow the **Druba tara (Polestar)** on the north and guide their ships to the destinations. I feel there is no doubt that Ramakrishna Mission ITI will similarly act as the **Druba tara** showing path to the unemployed youth in acquiring quality employable skill and in solving the problems of unemployment and poverty in the state.