

No frills, only skills

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Largely considered unorganised, the construction sector is on its way to reskilling its people and boosting its overall output.

In 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Skill India, aimed at equipping people with various skills.

Among the many sectors that will benefit from this initiative, the construction sector too will receive a major impetus.

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Consolidating existing skills:

According to Make in India, construction contributes about eight per cent to the national GDP. This huge industry requires reskilling to enhance its growth. According to Sahil Vora, Founder and MD of Sila, a real estate services company, "General contractors and labour contractors are important links in the construction value chain. General contractors are in the organised space while labour contractors need to

be further organised in this fragmented market. Labour contractors ensure that fitters, masons, plumbers, carpenters, etc are hired for a project. These are labourers, migrants or residents, who are

paid daily wages and not trained properly. It is only a select few who have a thorough knowledge of the construction plans; the rest do not."

Plan of action:

Since it is an unorganised sector, the emphasis on employee training is all the more important. Some developers organise in-house programmes to train the workers. The government too has dedicated programmes working in the same direction. Lance Cutinha, Head HR, Mahindra Lifespaces, says, "Training modules comprise a combination of classroom lessons, practical demonstrations and on-the-job training. Training is conducted for a minimum of 30 days, as mandated by the Construction Skill Development Council of India (CSDCI) and NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation), in order to qualify for the government scheme and avail monetary and certification benefits."

The big impact:

Equipping the workforce with the right skill-set will certainly help in the growth of the sector. And customers, who form an important part of the sector's stakeholders, will also benefit. "Earlier end-users would not be bothered about the process, as long as they got their houses. But today, they continuously monitor it. Buyers are quick to email complaints about plumbing or carpentry issues. We need to give them quality construction. Reskilling our workforce will enhance the overall quality of work," explains S Sivagurunathan, Secretary, CREDAI, Chennai. The pan-India programme of this real estate body educates workers about the latest technology, gives specialised knowledge in electricals, plumbing, etc. "Examinations are also conducted post these training programmes so that the workers can get certificates that will add value to their work and the sector as well," he adds.

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