

# Skill building is key to inclusive growth

Industry leaders and policymakers pin their faith on a multi-faceted approach that includes education and vocational training

**I**ndustry captains and key policymakers attending the India Economic Summit have unequivocally called for more steps to beef up skill enhancement in order to make the economic growth process more inclusive.

Achieving inclusive growth is the biggest challenge in a country like India, according to Kamal Nath, Minister of Commerce & Industry. Nath said in a democratic country like India, bringing 600 million people living in rural India into the mainstream was the biggest concern. The best way to achieve inclusive growth is through developing peoples' skills, he added.

"This is a challenge through the world, be it in China or South Africa. There should be a multifaceted approach including aspects like education and vocational training," said Jeffrey Joerres, chairman and chief executive

officer, Manpower, USA.

R Seshasayee, managing director, Ashok-Leyland, India, said schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme had done their bit in increasing demand in rural India, which, in turn, has also contributed to the India growth story. "But in the middle term or long term, we will have to develop skills in rural India as well," added Seshasayee.

**Skill acquisition cost is an issue for the rural population**

Commerce Minister Kamal Nath, who was confident that the Indian economy would tide over the over the current global economic gloom, pointed towards a programme taken up by NIIT at his constituency Chindwara (in Madhya Pradesh) to promote soft skills. "The programme has helped graduates in my constituency to get trained in skills required by them to work in an environment, which they are not familiar with," he said.