Asian Journal *of* Distance Education

http://www.AsianJDE.org

ISSN 1347-9008 Asian J D E 2012 vol 10, no 2, pp 78 - 89

Face-to-Face Collaboration with Industry for ODE in India

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ABSTRACT :

Continuing education as a means for capacity building at the grass-roots has gained momentum in developing countries. Such an effort has been optimised by Institution-Industry Collaboration. India, a developing nation, has resorted to the use of distance teaching to fulfill the needs of continuing education. Since its inception, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has focussed its efforts on catering to the needs of the Indian society. It has joined hands with industry to meet the continuing education needs of the under privileged and less privileged in the society. The witness to this move is the collaboration between IGNOU and Hero Honda Motors Limited. The outcome of such collaboration is the IGNOU-HHML Motorcycle Technicians Competency Development Project. The present study is an attempt to collect the opinion of the targeted beneficiaries about the Programme that they had undergone. The opinions or views have been collected using non-participant observation technique and structured interviews. The views of an expert, who functioned as an examiner in the term-end trade test of the participants, are also collected. Results reveal that the institution-industry collaboration between IGNOU and HHML has opened an avenue for continuing education of the mechanics in India.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Lifelong learning and continuing education has made the Distance Education System (DES) to attract more audience of whom some are really new to the system and first generation beneficiary. One of the categories of the new audience of the DES is the Automobile mechanics who have enrolled into IGNOU-HHML Motorcycle Technicians Competency Development Project (IH-MTCDP). The move towards the certification of the education of the mechanics is a milestone in India, where automobile purchase is a lifetime dream aimed to be fulfilled by a common man and yet legal specifications by means of having license to run a mechanic shop is yet to be made mandatory. In addition, this move towards certification is expected to improve the quality of the services rendered to the automobile in general and two wheeler - motorcycle in particular.

The IGNOU - HHML Motorcycle Technicians Competency Development Project (IH-MTCDP) is needed, as Indians stick to a vehicle (first purchased) for their entire life-time. Maintenance of the automobile (vehicle) after purchase is one of the constant challenges for the customer. It is also a concern of considerable magnitude for the manufacturer, as customer satisfaction is ensured and customer loyalty is strengthened with the

length of trouble-free after sales service. Even though, IGNOU-HHML Motorcycle Technicians Competency Development Project (IH-MTCDP) is a joint venture between IGNOU and Hero Honda Company (and appears to be company specific), the knowledge gained by the mechanics during the Programme can be used appropriately for other brands also.

The closed Indian market opened up after the liberalisation of its economy, has been a place for joint venture for many products, one of it being the automobile industry. Among the automobile, the two wheelers are commonly used in India, as pooling-travel in four-wheelers is not yet a common feature and placing a request for travel in some other's vehicle is considered to be a expression of parsimonious behaviour in India. In addition, unavailability of Public Transport at frequent intervals, crowded Public Transport System, increased spending power, makes an Indian to purchase an automobile. Fuel consumption in Two-wheeler is less that the other means of self-owned transport and hence, individuals who commute frequently prefer to own a Two-wheeler for its economy and convenience. Preference for imported vehicles has made the Indian market suitable for the non-Indian companies to enter into the Indian market. In order to evade the fear of service after purchase (especially when brought from a foreign company), many non-Indian companies collaborated with Indian companies. Such joint venture commercial practices proved to be a win-win situation for the non-Indian companies (who found it economical to procure the raw materials in India) and the Indian companies (who found it a means for easy access of technical know-how). For an average Indian Family, preference is given to the male member to own a vehicle. Studying the psyche behind the Indian society, many collaborating non-Indian companies launched their initial products targeting the men. Obviously, among the two-wheeler automobile vehicles like Scooters and Motor cycle the latter was targeted towards the men.

"India has the largest three wheeler market, the fourth largest car market in the world and the second largest producer of two wheelers in the world" http://www.automobiles.mapsofindia.com

One of the Countries, which have effectively used the liberalised Indian economy and the fascination for motor cycle among Indians, is the island country Japan.

"Japan is one of the world's leaders in the development of new environment-friendly technologies. Honda and Toyota hybrid electric vehicles were named to have the highest fuel economy and lowest emissions" http://www.ucsusa.org . "Japan is the second largest economy in the world, after the United States, at around US$4.5 trillion in terms of nominal GDP" http://www.imf.org and "third after the United States and China in terms of purchasing power parity" http://www.nationmaster.com . "Japan has a large industrial capacity and is home to some of the largest, leading and most technologically advanced producers of motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals, textiles and processed foods " http://www.cia.gov .

"The joint venture between India's Hero Group and Japan's Honda Motor Company has created the world's single largest two wheeler company which is also one of the most successful joint ventures worldwide. India's Hero Group was started by Brijmohan Lall Munjal, who began his business history after partition in 1947, when he and his brothers relocated to Ludhiana in Punjab State. The family set up a company that provided poor people with basic transport (bicycles). Time and again, Brijmohan Lall Munjal managed to steal a march over his industry peers. When Honda Motors of Japan was looking for a collaborator in the 1980s, the Hero Group was not high up the pecking order as there were other more eligible and established suitors. Yet it did not take long for the astute Japanese to realise that the Hero Group and Honda had a lot in common. The common features between the two companies were the sharp focus on financial and raw material management, and a low employee turnover. Honda officials were

also amazed to find that the Munjals were already practicing "Just-in-time-inventory" (JIT) at the time. It turned out that Brijmohan Lall Munjal's aspiration to provide cheap transportation to India's poor by default ensured lean and cost-effective operations. This in turn increased vendor efficiency and led to near-zero inventories " http://www.herohonda_corporate_profile .

"During the 80s, Hero Honda became the first company in India to prove that it was possible to drive a Four-stroke engine vehicle without polluting the roads. The company introduced new generation motorcycles that set industry benchmarks for fuel thrift and low emission. A legendary 'Fill it - Shut it - Forget it' campaign captured the imagination of commuters across India, and Hero Honda sold millions of bikes purely on the commitment of increased mileage. Over 20 million Hero Honda two wheelers ply on Indian roads today. The four stroke engine of the motorcycles is fuel efficient and is the main reason for the growth of motorcycle segment in India".

"Hero Honda's extensive sales and service network now spans over 3000 customer touch points. These comprise a mix of dealerships, service and spare points, spare parts stockist and authorised representatives of dealers located across different geographies. After having reached an unassailable pole position in the Indian two wheeler market, Hero Honda is constantly working towards consolidating its position in the market place".

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is a Single mode Distance Teaching Institution, which offers an array of programmes suitable for the various target groups. It is one of the mega universities in the world. It is with IGNOU that the "Hero Honda Motors signed the training deal on 18th October 2004 by means of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to train motor-cycle mechanics and technicians under a three-year industry-academia project. The MoU was signed between IGNOU Registrar A S Narang and Hero Honda Motors Executive Director (Business Operations) Atul Sobti. The programme, launched in February 2005, aimed at the development of trade-level human resources engaged in motor cycle service and repair across the country by offering structured training in skill development. The programme was launched in Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderbad and Pune" http://hinduonnet.com18/10/2004 .

2. METHODS :

The need for the development of the competency of the mechanics has been felt both by the Company (Hero Honda) and the education Institution (IGNOU). The choice for the Company to choose a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) to fulfill this educational need amongst the mechanics has facilitated the DTI to have a new set of audience in its fold. The outcome of this educational project was launched as "IGNOU-Hero Honda Motors Limited Motorcycle Technicians Competency Development Project (IH-MTCDP)". This educational project is a model for institution-industry collaboration and public-private partnership in fulfilling the educational needs for a specific sector (in this case mechanics).

The Project, by throwing in the Ivory Towers open to the mechanics, has paved the way for dissemination of information/skills in a free-to-access form - thus making a closely guarded knowledge, (shared only in parts over an undefined period of loyal apprenticeship), available to all mechanics in the field; and perhaps, over a longer term, to the clients as well. This Project may enhance the performance of the mechanics, and provide for an informed utlisation of the product by the customers. This may in turn result in a longer period of trouble free service of the product leading to better customer satisfaction and a stronger customer loyalty. The fidelity of the mechanics will also grow firmer, and the mechanics may even campaign for the brand, unobtrusively, with the existing and the prospective customers. Thus, a kind of win-win situation is expected where the manufacturers, dealers, service providers and the customers are sure to gain.

Definition of Mechanics: "Mechanics usually specialise in the service and repair of one type of equipment, although they may work on closely-related products. When a piece of equipment breaks down, mechanics use various techniques to diagnose the source and extent of the problem. The mark of a skilled mechanic is the ability to diagnose mechanical, fuel, and electrical problems and to make repairs quickly. Quick and accurate diagnosis requires problem-solving ability and a thorough knowledge of the equipment operation".
http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos198.html

Why Mechanics: Even though many middle and supervisory level cadres are involved in the service of the motorcycle, this programme has intended to target the Mechanics alone. The following are the reasons for selecting the Mechanics as the target group.

- Mechanics are the grass-roots linkages between the company and the customers.
- Mechanics are generally self-employed and by and large remain an unorganized sector (though of late organisations like 'Two Wheeler Mechanical Shop Owner's Association' have sprung up).
- Mechanics are generally individuals, who have learnt the job by observation while working under another 'acclaimed' Mechanic. Amateurs stay with the established Mechanic till they grow confident to discharge the duty individually. Such confidence coupled with opportunities for necessary inflow of finance and availability of infrastructure, makes them branch out and start a Mechanic Shop on their own.
- Reliability of the Mechanic is generally based on goodwill and faith. In India, every owner of a two wheeler has a mechanic on whom there is immense confidence-not only on their ability to repair the vehicle, but also on safe custody of the vehicle, its parts and the extra fittings- and in a sense mechanic is more like a family Doctor.
- Mechanics do have a say in the assessment of preowned vehicles and in gauging the value of a vehicle through the eyes of the Insurance companies.

Even for the Company, there are benefits if the mechanics are trained. The benefits for the Company are enumerated below:

- It is an after sales strategy to retain a customer to stick to their product for ever.
- It helps to standardise the procedure for repair and service, and to do away with trial and error method.
- Genuine branded Spare parts are costly and sometimes make the customer go in for a spurious brand, if the vehicle fails frequently. Trained mechanics indirectly increase the life of the parts of the vehicle, which leads to customer satisfaction.
- Maintenance of the vehicle in a stable form keeps the customer loyal to the brand bought and also makes him stick to the brand in his future purchases.

In the nomenclature of IGNOU, Programme refers to the item on offer for enrollment from aspirants who fulfill the eligibility criteria prescribed for the same. In the following paragraphs, the details pertaining to the IGNOU-HHML Motorcycle Technicians Competency Development Project (IH-MTCDP) has been given.

IGNOU-HHML Motorcycle Technicians Competency Development Project (IH-MTCDP) is a joint initiative of IGNOU and Hero Honda Motors Limited—While IGNOU is a leader in Distance Education and HHML is a pioneer in motorcycle industry. This Programme was launched through the School of Engineering and Technology (SOET) located at the IGNOU Headquarters (New Delhi-Capital of India).

A large number of motorcycle owners visit untrained technicians for the service and repair of their motorcycles due to the absence of skilled and certified technicians in the neighbourhood. These untrained technicians might either experiment the skills learnt while on-the-job, on the vehicle received for service/repair or lack in appropriate skills deemed necessary or appropriate to handle the services and repair

requirements. They need training aimed at certification of the knowledge gained in expert handling of service and repair needs. The programme (IH-MTCDP) aims at offering such expert training to the working mechanics.

Eligibility for the Programme: Motorcycle technicians who are functionally literate and working are eligible to get enrolled into this Programme. The duration of this Programme is two months.

Aims of the Programme: Even though this programme is a non-credit competency based skill development programme, it can help upgrading the competency level of working motorcycle technicians. This is because, under this programme, various competency statements (Performance standards for motorcycle technicians conforming to HHML standards) have been developed. For each performance standard, corresponding performance criteria and evidences have also been listed. The performance of a learner is assessed by means of the laid down performance standards. Thus, the generation of requisite evidences of having acquired the necessary skills by the learners, to meet the prescribed performance standards, is the key for the learners to successfully complete this programme.

The Objectives of the Programme are the following:

- To enhance the quality and productivity of motorcycle technicians through competency based training,
- To provide more accessible skill development training that meets the real work needs of auto industry,
- To train, assess and certify the skills and competencies of motorcycle technicians, and
- To develop entrepreneurial skills in the learners.

The Courseware for the Programme is available in English and Hindi. The medium of Industrial training is English and Regional Language. But, the Self-Instructional materials are available in the English Language only.

The programme, comprises three courses.

Courses (in terms of IGNOU) refer to the subjects offered under a specific Programme). The Course codes for the three courses are NET-001, NET-002 and NET-003. These courses describe different aspects of motorcycle servicing and most commonly undertaken repairs. The courseware designed and developed for the programme is teacher inbuilt and self-instructional in nature with optimum illustrations, which make even an amateur to understand what has been said. The Description of the Course Units is given below

1. NET-001 The Starter Kit
   Unit 1 : Introduction to Service Sector
   Unit 2 : The Motorcycle
   Unit 3 : Entrepreneurship Development
2. NET-002 Motorcycle Service and Maintenance
   Unit 1 : Tools and Equipment
   Unit 2 : Motorcycle Servicing
   Unit 3 : Service and Maintenance Procedures
3. NET-003 Motorcycle Repair and Troubleshooting
   Unit 1 : Motorcycle Repairing
   Unit 2 : Basic Troubleshooting of Motorcycle
   Unit 3 : General Safety and Service Tips

Because the study materials are self-instructional, a learner can study the courseware and comprehend on his (the gender bias is intentional as the domain of mechanics is exclusively dominated by the male as of date) own the concepts and procedures explained therein and practice the same in the workshop.

The courseware is supplemented by

- Contact sessions organised once a week (for four weeks), mostly on Sundays, at the designated IGNOU-HHML Training Centres.
- Induction/orientation sessions before the commencement of contact sessions.
- Hands-on job training, imparted at the Dealers Workshop of Hero Honda Motors Ltd continuously for one week.
- An additional one-day counselling session just before the trade test is is held at IGNOU-HHML Training Centres to clear the doubts (if any).

Table 1 : Process Flow of Educational Administration

Activity	Duration	Days of Conduction
Induction and Orientation Session	1 day	Any day before the training
Training and Demonstration Session	4 days	Consecutive four Sundays
Hands-on Job Training Session	6 days	Continuous six days
Concluding Counselling Session	1 day	Sunday
Trade Test	1 day	Sunday

An illustrative process flow of educational administration as put forth by the School of Engineering and Technology, during the programme duration is shown in the Table 1.

The Learning Environment comprises the Training and demonstration sessions organised at the IGNOU-HHML Training Centres; Hands-on Job Training at one of the designated HHML Dealers' Workshops; another Concluding counselling session held at IGNOU-HHML Training Centre. The final evaluation of the learning is done at the IGNOU-HHML Training Centre, mostly on the last Sunday of the programme, where the learner appears for the trade test. Here, the learner is assessed for his skills and competencies through oral examination and specific demonstration of service and/or repair job(s) to be carried out by the individual examinee independently.

A learner has four nodal points to get help and support, besides his own resources. These nodal points are

- IGNOU-HHML Training Centres working as Study Centres. The calendar of schedule of activities may vary for different IGNOU-HHML Training Centres and the same are communicated to the learners by the respective training centres at the commencement of the programme. The Induction and Orientation Session is conducted either at the Regional Centre concerned of IGNOU or at the IGNOU-HHML Training Centre, where the whole process of training and certification under this programme is explained. Tips to cultivate a habit of self-study and for successful completion of the programme are also given.
- Respective IGNOU Regional Centre — for teleconference sessions
- HHML Dealers Workshop –for practical hands on experience
- IGNOU-HHML Project Office located at the School of Engineering and Technology, IGNOU, New Delhi

The Present Study focuses on the opinion of the mechanics (who appeared as examinees in the trade test) about the Programme that they had undergone. In conducting the Research, the key ethical issues were identified at the outset. The issues included the right of a participant to withdraw after perusing the questions to be asked in the Interview, the right to remain anonymous, confidentiality of what the participants have said, and assurance that participation or non-participation would not affect the personal or official standing of the participant.

Non-participant observation technique and structured interview method were used for data collection.

The non-participant observation technique was used to observe the behaviour of the examinees in handling the tasks assigned to them in the practical exam. The Non-Participant Observation technique is a data collection method in which the observer observes as a detached emissary (Kothari, 1992). This approach helped in gathering the valuable qualitative

information, and an insight into the qualitative values.

The interview was structured with a set of preset questions to be posed to the examinees. For this Study, direct Personal Interview was held, where there was a face-to-face contact with the examinees from whom the information was obtained. The interviewer asked the examinees questions and collected the information through responses to the questions posed. During the interviewing process, every effort was made to keep a friendly atmosphere, so as to facilitate the examinees to respond with ease and without constraint of reservation of any sort. Great care was taken while interviewing to minimise the filter-effect (reduction of the total situation) so that accurate information as given by the interviewee is reflected in the Study.

Open-ended questions were posed to the examinees, focusing on the following points during the interview, as follows ;

1. Age of the individual
2. Previous Educational Qualification
3. Period and nature of Experience as a mechanic
4. Process undergone for learning the job of the mechanic
5. Reasons for choosing and sticking on to the mechanic job
6. Owner-mechanic or serving mechanic
7. Number of Hero Honda bikes serviced or repaired in a day/week/month
8. Source of information about the IGNOU-HHML Training Centres
9. Funding for this Programme of Study
10. Usefulness/relevance of the counselling session
11. Extent of benefit from course material
12. Reading skill vis-à-vis readability of the course material

Table 2 : Characteristics of the Participants

Participant No	Age in years	Experience in years	Age of entry in years old	Educational Qualification*
1	31	10	21	8th Standard
2	30	12	18	6 th Standard
3	25	10	15	10 th Standard + ITI
4	28	12	16	5 th Standard
5	28	18	10	5 th Standard
6	22	5	17	10 th Standard
7	38	20	18	10 th Standard
8	26	9	17	6 th Standard
9	24	10	14	8 th Standard
10	43	36	7	Not Attended school
11	38	30	8	Not Attended school
12	21	8	13	10 th Standard
13	23	8	15	10 th Standard
14	25	8	17	8 th Standard
15	27	10	17	10 th Standard + B.A#

After interviewing the examinees as participants, the researcher interviewed the examiner also to get his views on the content and coverage of the study materials and on the calibre of the participants.

3. RESULTS :

The Results of the Study are discussed under two sections - the findings obtained after interviewing (i) the participants and (ii) the examiner.

3.1 Interview with the Examinees :

Among the 25 examinees, 15 examinees participated in the Study. The results obtained are being tabulated in Table 2 and is depicted in Figure 1. Table 2 and Figure 1 are being referred while discussing the results obtained under the Age (in years), Length of Experience (in years), Age of entry of the individual into the Profession (in years), Previous Educational Qualification.

The age of the participants in terms of years is given in Table 2, Column 3 and represented diagrammatically in Figure 1.

From Table 2, Column 3 it can be found that the mean age of the participants was 28.6 (SD being 6.445375). The age ranged from 21 years (lowest age) to 43 years (highest age). The mode i.e., the age which occurs with the highest frequency was ill-defined as there were two values (Age=28 and 25) having the same frequency. The individual age series of the examinees revealed to be bi-modal in nature.

The length of experience of the participants in terms of years is given in Table 2, Column 4 and represented diagrammatically in Figure 1.

The mean length of Experience of the participants was 13.73 years (SD being 8.770622), with the range stretching from 5 to 36 years. The mode i.e., the length of experience which occurs with the highest frequency was 10.

The Age of the individual at the time of entry into the mechanic profession for all the participants is given in Table 2, Column 5 and diagrammatically in Figure 1.

The mean age of entry of the participants was 14.18 (SD being 3.90), with the range being from 7 to 21 years. The mode i.e., the age of entry of the participants into the profession which occurs with the highest frequency was 17.The mean age of entry of the individual into the mechanic profession stands as a witness to the practice of employing child labour.

During the interview, it was understood that mostly young school dropouts and those who intentionally aspire to take this profession as a vocational career, have entered this profession. All the participants expressed that they learnt the job by observation, gaining practical exposure by trial and error especially when the owner of the workshop was not around. All the participants had the family history of someone in the family having a mechanic workshop, who encouraged them to enter this profession, inculcating in them the belief that it is one of the means for a person with a low educational qualification to have higher earnings.

The educational qualification of the participants when they entered into the mechanic profession is given in Table 2, Column 6.

Among the participants, two have never attended the school. Two Participants each have passed fifth and sixth Standard. Three Participants have passed eighth Standard. Six Participants have passed tenth Standard. Among the participants who have passed the tenth standard, one has completed the ITI training and the other pursuing the B.A Degree.

Participants who have the qualification of eighth standard and below expressed that they found the material difficult to read. These individuals said that they sought the help of friends, family members, customers and strangers to get a grasp of the content of the course material. This implies that the compatibility of the readability of the course materials is directly proportional to the educational background of the individual. However, this needs to be verified with a larger population of participants.

All participants welcomed the suggestion that the Study Materials should be available

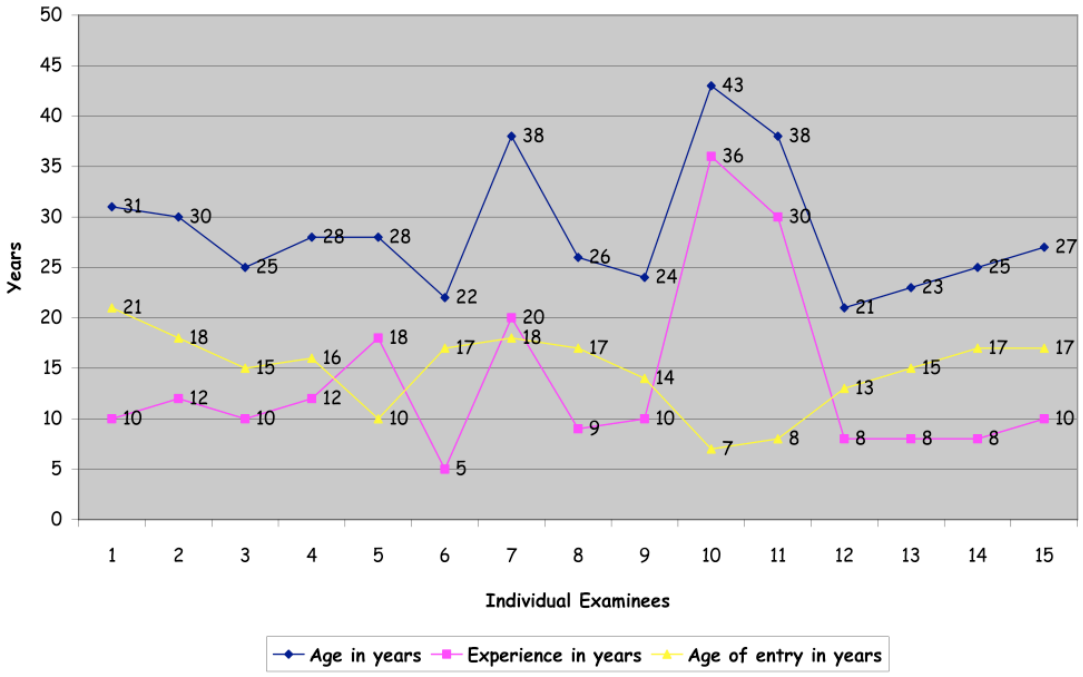

Figure 1 : The characteristics of the participants

in the Regional Language. Even though, there was no fixed schedule for study, all the examinees who participated in the study, have gone through the study materials before attending the Face-to-face session, for the fear of being questioned in front of others by the teacher. All of them opined that what was generally termed as "trade secrets" are vividly explained in the study materials and this pepped up their participatory morale and boosted their confidence level to execute the job.

All the Participants expressed that they enjoyed attending the contact sessions and that the informal approach of the trainers in the contact sessions enabled them to pose their questions to their peers/teacher, without any fear and also facilitated in firming up their mind to face the practical examination after attending the Hands-on Job Training Session.

Eight Participants said that they came to know about this programme from the Hero Honda Dealers, whereas the remaining seven participants said that they came to know about this programme from the Two wheeler workshop-Owners' Association.

This finding imply that this programme which intends to increase the competency of the mechanics has been welcomed by the main stakeholders in the sustainability of the mechanic profession — the Dealers and the Two wheeler Mechanicshop-Owners' Association (Dealers render mechanic service till the warranty period and the Mechanicshop-owners thrive by rendering mechanic service after the warranty period until the vehicle deemed unfit for the road).

Eight Participants (who are currently employed with the dealers) expressed that they have the intention to own a workshop in the near future. Three Participants expressed that they prefer to continue the joint venture of operating the workshop with their relatives. Four of the participants are owners of the workshop and among them, one individual entered the profession at the age of seven and is now 43 years old and has never attended any school! This specific case encourages the authors to suggest that the Distance Teaching Institutions should open avenues to assess and certify the experiential learning in an individual so as to set a baseline for helping

such individuals to continue their studies by the distance mode. Keeping the current Indian scenario, no weightage is being given to the experiential learning in an individual. Similarly, assessment of Prior Learning is also not done by an Institution before admitting an individual into a Programme of Study. This issue has not been addressed so far mainly because physical proof of knowledge exhibited by possession of a Degree/Diploma/Certificate is preferred than the know-how gained through experience. Specific regional and national government policy authorizing the educational institutions to quantify the experience of the individual and equate it in terms of the qualifications prescribed for a specific Degree/Diploma/Certificate, will facilitate more entry points for a particular Degree/Diploma/Certificate and at the same time make many to be found qualified for a job which demand this particular Degree/Diploma/Certificate, thereby raising competition and unemployment.

All the participants said that they paid the fees from their own source of income. Parting with one's own money to acquire a qualification indicates the value that the mechanics attach to formal qualification.

In India, micro finance is generally encouraged by the financial institutions - both banking and non-banking sector - to start small scale industries on self-employment scheme. It is suggested that a joint venture between the Hero Honda industry, the Financial Institutions and IGNOU be moved to educate the unemployed youth for mechanic profession - funds for investment may be provided by the Financial Institutions, physical infrastructure for training by the Hero Honda Industry and academic expertise by IGNOU. This trifocal interaction will go a long way in fulfilling the social responsibility of the all the three agencies.

All the examinees felt that they were deprived of chances of education in their younger days because of the poor economical status at home and that they entered the mechanic profession, as it was expected to give a high monetary return and pave way an independent avenue for earning one's own livelihood. Including the two participants who have never attended the school, all opined that Education should be provided on the basis of the calibre of the learner and that job oriented vocational education should be available in all Schools (instead of free education). Except one participant who is studying B.A, others did not view the distance teaching institutions to suffice their thirst for education - they all expressed that they do not expect to qualify to have an educational status in the society. All the participants of this Study are not aware about the existence of the Open Schooling system in India.

Four categories (100cc /125cc /150cc /above 150cc) of Bikes are available through the Hero Honda. The Brands under 100 cc Bikes are Splendor, Passion, CD Dawn and CD Deluxe. The Brands under 125 cc Bikes are Super Splendor and Glamour. The Brands under 150 cc Bikes are CBZ, CBZxtreme and Hunk. All the Participants expressed that a minimum of 5 Hero Honda Bikes per day comes for service after the warranty period. Eight Participants (who are currently employed with the dealers) expressed that the Bikes which are covered under the free service during the warranty period are the frequent visitors to the Dealer's mechanic shop and that around 15 to 20 Hero Honda bikes per day are serviced in Dealer's mechanic shop.

All the participants expressed that the Programme was useful and that it gave them mental satisfaction that they have undergone a study for certification.

3.2 Interview with the Examiner :

There was one examiner for all the 25 examinees. As part of the study, after the conduct of the Trade test, the examiner was interviewed to get his views on the content and coverage of the study materials, and on the calibre of the participants.

The following are the results obtained.

The examiner rated the study materials to be excellent both in content and coverage. The examiner also conveyed that those who are in the mechanic profession for a longer period fared well in the practical test; those working at a Dealers' mechanic shop, could

name the parts with ease as they are generally involved in the sales counter (for spare parts) also. The examiner also conveyed that this programme is more of a nature of an academic get together for the mechanics and is serving the purpose for which it was intended.

4. DISCUSSION :

Based on their involvement in the implementation of the programme in the State of Tamil Nadu in places under the jurisdiction of the Chennai Regional Centre and on the basis of the performance of the examinees in the Trade test, the authors make the following observations during the conduct of the trade test

- The examinees could recognise the part in the motorcycle but could not name of the same, when asked verbally.
- The examinees could give the general name and not the technical name for eg., Cooling pump Vs Air injection pump /Bad gas Vs Blow by gas.
- The examinees were conscious about their performance and frequently said that they knew the answer, but could not express it within the specified time limit. They also found it difficult to vocalise in continuous stretches of 'sentences'.

It is suggested that the following additional Programmes can be offered to the Candidates who have successfully completed this Programme

1. Entrepreneurship Management: This is mainly to facilitate the learners to start their own shop and manage it to break-even.

2. Personal grooming: This was mainly felt by the authors' personal experience of visiting a mechanic shop. At times, when an automobile fails at a place away from the neighbourhood of the owner, it is customary to go for service to the nearest service centre. Many-a-times, personal grooming of the mechanic is used to judge the ability and skill of the mechanic. However, it is a reality in India that soiled dress; unkempt hair is often associated with a mechanic. A Programme in personal grooming will then enable them to sell better in their work front and that too to the new customers with ease.

3. Front Office Management: Many times, the mechanic shop is either without a front office or with a poorly maintained one. Dissemination of the importance of the front office management will not only improve the business scenario for a mechanic, but also will enable the customer to feel welcomed and relax while the vehicle is being repaired or brought after repair from the garage. Inspite of the space constraint in a mechanic shop, the knowledge about the front office management will make the mechanic to earmark atleast a make-shift space in his shop for this purpose.

4. Micro finance: Expansion of business is directly proportional to the finance that can be mobilized. Mechanic shop, being a small scale business sector, a knowledge about the micro finance will enable the mechanic to gain knowledge about the ways available for resource mobilization through banks, government agencies, private agencies (like hire purchase financiers) to expand their business, to procure new machinery, save money for future needs.

5. Communication skills: The most common reply heard from the mechanic by a customer is "all problems are set right-move on please". However, in reality the customers prefer a detailed case history for every problem set right and the measures necessary to prevent the faults in the vehicle in future. Hence, communication skills are necessary to facilitate smooth communication with the customers and also to nullify communication-gaps when the job is delegated to the juniors (especially the beginners) by the mechanics.

These programmes may be supportive in capacity-building of the mechanics and enhancing their productivity and effectiveness. These may be used as parallel or add-on courses, or they may be combined to offer a Diploma level Programme.

The study material of this programme can be used to create awareness among clients about the maintenance of bikes. Just like the manual given along with the vehicle, these can be used as a 'must' to be sold along with the bike including pre-owned bikes.

A Book Bank may be created with course materials which can be used to facilitate a prospective learner to enroll for the programme with a corresponding discount in the Programme fee to be paid. They can pay for and own a copy of the material, if they so desire, subsequently. For the successfully completed learners who want to retain the study materials, a retention fee can be levied by the University.

It is also suggested that the study materials for this programme be provided in the Regional language. At present, the Study Materials are available in English and the teaching is done in the vernacular. If the Study Materials are available in the local Regional language, it is sure to attract more clientele to benefit from this programme on the long run.

The findings of the study have certain definite pointers to those in the field of Corporate learning/Training, Industry-Institution Collaborations, promotion of skills and updating of knowledge of the skilled employed man force. However, the study is primarily based on the opinions of the participants, opinions of the examiner and how the opinions are understood and recorded by the researcher. The scope for subjective over-shadowing, therefore cannot be ruled out totally, in spite of the best of efforts to be objective. This study is restricted to one batch of students attached to one given centre. The Study therefore needs to be broad-based and conducted at multiple locations employing as many trained individuals as needed to collect and compile data to make the findings objective and scientifically acceptable.

Continuing education is encouraged nowadays in the industry, as evident from the rise of the corporate universities around the globe. Industry-Institution Collaboration is one of the ways to ensure constant supply of the academic input for satisfying the urge of those who aspire for continuing education. The IGNOU-HHML Motorcycle Technicians Competency Development Project (IH-MTCDP) has not only been the provider for certification for skilled labour in the mechanic profession but it is also a means to explore the avenues for further growth and expansion in the provisions for industry-linked academic pursuit.

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