

With the compliments of the
Directorate General Public Relations,
Government of the Punjab, Lahore. Ph: 99201390

No.109/Majid/Rana

YOUTH CAN BE EMPOWERED BY IMPARTING VOCATIONAL TRAINING:
SHAHBAZ SHARIF

LAHORE, January 23:

Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has said that youth are a precious national asset and imparting of modern vocational training can help them not only stand on their feet but also earn much-needed foreign exchange for Pakistan by availing job opportunities abroad. He said that sixty percent of Pakistan's population comprises youth between the age of 15 to 30 years and there is a dire need for imparting modern technical education and training to the young generation. He said that Punjab government is implementing a comprehensive programme of vocational training to the youth. He said that technical training is being imparted to the youth in various districts of south Punjab under Punjab Skills Development Programme and the scope of this programme is being extended to other districts as well.

He was presiding over a high level meeting here today. Chairman Benazir Income Support Programme Senator Anwar Beg, Provincial Ministers Raja Ashfaq Sarwar, Malik Nadeem Kamran, Ch. Muhammad Shafique, federal secretaries, senior officers of TEVTA, NEWTECH, PVTC, Punjab Skills Development Programme and concerned officers were present. Various proposals to produce skilled manpower to meet market needs were reviewed in the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that Punjab government is spending billions of rupees on the promotion of vocational education in the province and a comprehensive strategy is being implemented to prepare skilled manpower in accordance with the market needs. He said that skilled workforce is in great demand in foreign countries as well and keeping in view this fact not only modern vocational courses should be introduced but short courses in Arabic language should also be conducted so that they could easily get jobs in the Gulf countries. He directed that special attention be paid to producing market-oriented manpower and chambers of commerce and industry should also be consulted for this purpose. He said that skilled workforce should be prepared to meet the requirements of private sector. He said that in view of the granting of the GSP Plus status to Pakistan, vocational training programme has also been arranged for the garments sector so that it could have skilled manpower for its requirements. The Chief Minister said that the Punjab Skills Development Programme being implemented with the collaboration of DFID of Britain is yielding positive results and in view of the success of this programme it has been decided to extend its scope to a further 18 districts. He said that the Punjab Skills Development Programme would be expanded to the whole province in phases. He said that all institutions associated with imparting of vocational education should work in a coordinated manner for ensuring uniformity in their training programmes. He said that promotion of vocational education is of vital importance and the problems of poverty and

unemployment can be overcome by providing various skills to the youth. The Chief Minister also issued instructions for the formation of a committee for improving coordination between vocational training institutions and preparation of a skilled workforce to meet future needs. A detailed briefing was given to the meeting by the officials concerned with Benazir Income Support Programme, TEVETA, PVTC, NEWTECH and Skill Development Programme regarding vocational training programmes.

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