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PhD AND PG STUDENTS NEED TO BE A PART OF GARMENT AND TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Highly educated workforce is key to the economic development of any nation. And in Vietnam too, the textile and garment industry, which employs over 1.6 million people, has a large number of educated workforce – accounting for more than 12 per cent of the industrial workforce and around 5 per cent of the country's entire labour force.

Therefore, it is not surprising to see universities in Vietnam taking lead in engaging PhD and post-graduate



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students to be part of industries in Vietnam, particularly garment and textile industry. It's been happening for some time and one saw that again at a recently concluded workshop in Hanoi, where industry experts yet again urged PhD and higher degree students to connect with industries and thereby help the economy of the country to grow.

Hoàng Xuân Hiệp, Rector of Hanoi Textile and Garment Industry University, which has to date provided around 30 per cent of staff for the textile industry, averred, “We have 2 garment factories in the campus where our students can really work with partners and clients all across the globe.”

In an exclusive interaction with media, Hiệp added that apparel sector will continue to be the fastest growing industries in the country and therefore the university has been training people for the next level of success so as to make Vietnam a place that can manufacture fashion products for the entire supply chain and also boast of its own good brand in this decade. And for that, young students need to be a part of the industry.

The university has also been investing on training its post-graduate and PhD students on augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality technology in addition to teaching about several innovations in internet of things (IoT). But the



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primary question is –are there enough universities in Vietnam offering courses on garment and textile technology or fashion. *Team Apparel Online Vietnam (AOV)* had visited another such university – The University of Technical Education – some time back and was impressed with the efforts it had put to help students connect with the garment industry.



The University of Technical Education located in Ho Chi Minh City offers specialised courses in garment technology and fashion and has carved a niche for itself for its well etched out training methods. Besides, its willingness to rediscover and improve has made it stand out. “We attend seminars and conferences, which helps us to bring knowledge to the university. We are improving and with us students are also learning the best,” said **Khanh Thi Thuc Ho, Head, Fashion Design Section, University of Technical Education, Ho Chi Minh City.**

There are around 12 schools of textiles and design in Ho Chi Minh City alone and some more in other parts of the country but how many of them are engaging students to be a part of the growing industry, and are they getting support from the Government?

More on the same, Khanh said, “There are some other universities in north and central of Vietnam apart from some 12 in Ho Chi Minh City. The tuition fee of higher education programmes in public universities, which are sponsored by Vietnamese Government, is cheaper (US \$ 800 per year) than those in private universities (US \$ 1,050 per year). Also, public universities take better students by conducting entrance tests. However, now there are many good private universities in garments, textiles and designs. Young

people have more opportunities to earn a degree in this field.”

Conforming to what Khanh said, **Dmitry Sarbaev, Managing Director, FLUXMALL DTG Vietnam** stated, “As we work with universities like RMIT Vietnam, Hoa Sen University and ADS Vietnam Design Institute, we see that there are a lot of opportunities for the young generation to study and learn about the garment and textile industries.” Fluxmall is a service and solution provider that specialises in digital direct-to-garment (DTG) printing.

Dmitry added, “As we work with universities, we also want to enhance knowledge in the garment decoration industry, specifically direct-to-garment digital printing. We get a lot of

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opportunities as people from the industry speak to students. Actually, some of these students invested in machines already and have started their own businesses.”

Dmitry, who is on the jury for the 2nd year in the graduation project called ‘Fashion Creation’ in Hoa Sen University, believes that in the coming years industry will benefit and Vietnam will see much stronger local fashion market though a lot of work still needs to be done. The Fashion Creation project sees students creating fashion concepts and collections from scratch and gaining designing skills from a very young age.

However, there are many instances where PhD students are focused on becoming lecturers and therefore around 8 Vietnamese universities and companies have worked with the UK’s Portsmouth University, Cardiff University and Greenwich University on a project ‘Education Fit for the Future’ to promote the quality of internships and industrial job placement for post-graduate students.

Mai Anh Tuấn, Vice Director, National Centre for Technological Progress, Ministry of Science and Technology (Nacentech), reportedly said, “The Education Fit for the Future project is an opportunity to connect PhD students, universities and industries. The number of Vietnamese partners in the project would grow as most of them realise the importance of a high-level workforce for their future.”

Here it is important to mention that there is no exact number on how many PhD students have been trained so far and how many of them have been utilised in local industries. A decade back, the Ministry of Education and Training aimed at preparing at least 20,000 PhD holders by 2020. However, it had to terminate the project as after 5 years, less than one-fifth of the students had been trained.

Youth brings fresh ideas and therefore more universities should come forward and initiate courses to engage students to be a part of the industry and thereby help enhance the economy of the nation. A lot of work still needs to be done.