

SKILL, EDUCATION AND JOBS FOR RURAL INDIA

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journey from job seeker to job creator has to be travelled. Skill India program has to train millions of youths in various vocational and technical courses.

Indian economy has immense possibilities to grow. Growth of economy accelerated to 7.6% in 2015-16. India is a country with around 30 crores of the youth in the age group of 20 to 40 years. Unleashing the entrepreneurship and innovative potentials of these youths is essential to boost the Indian economy. Education, skill development and job creation is key to engage them in productive manner. Budget 2016 has announced a sequence of measures to enhance rural economy through "Transform India" which would have significant impact on economy and lives of the people. Ensuring macro-economic stability with prudent fiscal policy, maintaining the pace of economic reforms, boosting domestic demand, enhancing expenditure in priority areas of farming and rural development are main initiatives to change the lives of our countrymen.

EDUCATION

Literacy in India is key for socio-economic progress. In the field of education, quality and quantity is still a concern for the country. The current literacy rate of India is 74.04 per cent. Although we have shown an immense improvement in this field but the level is well below the world average of 84 per cent. Further, India currently has the largest illiterate population in the world. It is estimated that with current rate of progress, it would take until 2060 for India to achieve universal literacy.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is meant to ensure primary education for all the children below the age of 14 years. But emphasis need to be given on quality of education. Majority of the children are being educated in government run primary schools, where lack of basic facilities and

shortage of teachers has made the situation worse. Economic growth demands a constant supply of skilled manpower for which first step is quality primary education. Budgetary focus in this regard is a positive step. Announcement to open **62 new Navodaya Vidyalayas**, will certainly enhance the quality education for rural children.

Proposed **Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)** with an initial capital base of Rs. 1000 cores would be an economic springboard for the Indian education sector. It would benefit both the students as well as the financial system. Prospect of HEFA will open up the possibility of higher education for those poor students who mainly rely on education loan. Current outstanding education loan is in the tune of Rs. 50000 cores. HEFA is just a beginning at right time in right direction to promote the higher education especially amongst the rural youth.

Indian students spend around Rs. 45,000 crore per year on foreign education mainly due to lack of quality higher education in the country. Recently in a study, one of India's universities could make it to the list of '100 most prestigious global universities'. UN Human development report 2015 has ranked India on 130th position among 188 nations listed in the HD Index. Designing a regulatory architecture to transform 10 public and private institution to emerge as world class teaching & research institution is a welcome move. Emphasis on research would benefit industry and in turn, Indian economy.

Digital Literacy Mission has been announced with the vision to empower at least one person from every household with digital literacy skills by 2020. It will cover around 6 crore additional household within the 3 years. This is expected to touch the lives

of more than 25 crore individuals. Digitally smart youth in rural India would be able to fully participate in the increasing global digital economy. Budget also plans to set up digital depository for school leaving certificates, college degrees and academic awards. This will help validate their authenticity, safe storage and easy retrieval. Of the 16.8 crore rural households, as many as 12 crore households do not have a computer. Digital India mission envisages making the Indian citizens connected via Internet. The government also aims to utilize the mission for speedier transfer of government benefits to the people. Finance Minister in his budget speech also spoke of the plans to launch a unified e-portal for agriculture. The portal will be launched on Dr B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary this year.

The Budget announced **Online Courses** to establish an all India open university, which takes nominal fees or awards free courses to everyone. Furthermore, there can be an online repository of videos of quality courses with an online self-assessment system. Entrepreneurship Education and Training will be provided in 2200 colleges, 300 schools, and 500 Government ITIs and 50 Vocational Training Centers through Massive Open Online Courses. This would certainly help meeting the demand of skilled manpower in Indian industry.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Skill development is main thrust of NDA government since it took office in May 2014. Unemployment has been a major concern. Country has to channelized 1 crore unemployed youth in productive activities. Immense growth can be achieved through skill development. Rs 1804 crore has been allocated for this in the budget. With the help of this fund, 1500 multi skilling training institute will be set up in coming year to promote skill development with the help of other ministries. Budget proposed to further gear up the **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna** to impart skill to 1 crore youth over next 3 years from current 24 lakh.

National Board for Skill Development Certification is also proposed to be set up in 2016-17. This board will be set up in partnership with the industry and academics. Skill development has to be in congruence with industry to reap its full benefits.

JOB CREATION

Indian economy needs to generate 11.5 crore non-farm jobs over the next decade to employ its workforce. Various measures have been announced to generate the job opportunity both in skill and unskilled area. 100 **Model Career Centers** are to be operational by the end of 2016-17. NIELIT (National Institute of Electronic & Info Technology) is established as the first model career centre at Calicut on 9th Jun 2015. This scheme is purported to make available the skills sought by the local industries and at the same time be compatible with the aspirations of youth. It will roll out the industry oriented courses for employability of the local youth in rural India.

Much talked about Job creation scheme **MGNREGS** has been given utmost importance in this budget. A sum of Rs 38500 crore has been allocated for MGNREGS. At least 5 lakh farm ponds and dug wells in rain fed areas and 10 lakh compost pits for production of organic manure will be taken up by making productive use of the allocations under MGNREGA. Asset created by this scheme can do the wonders in promotion of agriculture by making check-dams, Animal husbandry, forestry (by planting more trees) and other sectors such as cleanliness, transportation, education etc. The inclusion of agricultural activities such as weeding, irrigating, sowing and harvesting may be ensured for effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana has been another highlight of budget. 89 irrigation projects will be implemented, which will bring 28.5 lakh hectares under irrigation. These schemes will bring lots of employment to rural area and will boost the agricultural production to a new height.

New scheme **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan** is proposed with allocation of Rs 655 crore. Under this scheme, every district and every village will locally produce clothes for children, provide textile machinery training in every village and promote indigenously manufactured clothes. Villagers can also sell these garments in the cities. By this scheme typically age old agrarian village economy will be converted into small scale industrial economy. It will provide job opportunity to rural youth as well as enhance their purchasing power.

Another hallmark of this rural-focused budget is focus on **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**. Once there is connectivity, hitherto isolated hamlets become part of larger clusters. PMGSY will make it possible for producers of perishable produce such as milk, fish and vegetables to sell these to a wider base of consumers. Equally, it will also enable companies to distribute their products through rural retail stores. This scheme will enhance the employment opportunity of rural youth. There is no gainsaying the fact that there exists a close link between rural connectivity and growth, be it in the area of trade, employment, education or healthcare. In fact a lack of proper roads is a reflection of its poor socio-economic indices.

For Job creation in rural areas, **Deen Dayal Anyodaya Mission** has been announced. Every block under drought and rural distress will be taken up as an intensive block. Intensive labor work will be taken up. It will not only provide job opportunity to rural youth but also create assets to boost the rural economy.

Shyama Prasad Mukharjee Rurban Mission (SPMRM) will develop 300 rurban (Rural-Urban) clusters with an outlay of Rs. 5142.08 crores over the next 3 years, across the country. In an ambitious bid to transform rural areas into an economically, socially and physically sustainable spaces, these clusters will incubate growth centers by providing infrastructure amenities and market access for the farmers.

SPMRM aims at development of rural growth clusters which have latent potential for growth. Rurban Mission will develop a cluster of Smart Villages and these clusters would be developed by provisioning of economic activities, developing skills & local entrepreneurship and providing infrastructure amenities. The scheme, aiming at catalyzing overall regional growth, would thus simultaneously benefit the rural as well as urban areas, by achieving twin objectives of strengthening rural areas and de burdening the urban space, hence leading to balanced regional development and growth of the country.

National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Hub will be set up in partnership with industry associations for job creation to provide support to SC/ST entrepreneurs. Rs.500 crore has been

provided to benefit 2.5 lakh SC/ST and women entrepreneurs. It will also set up a national hub in the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) to provide professional support to SC/ST entrepreneurs. Budget also proposed the schemes for welfare and skill development for Minorities such as Multi-Sectoral Development Programme and USTAAD to be implemented effectively.

100 per cent village electrification to be completed by 01 May 2018. Electricity is essential not only to ease the life style by lighting and household purposes, but it is also needed for mechanization of many farming operations, such as threshing, milking and hoisting grain for storage. In areas facing labor shortages, this allows for greater productivity at reduced cost. This will boost the setting up of small scale industry in rural area in turn creating the job opportunity and boosting economy.

National Land Record Modernization Programme is another mission which will transform the face of rural India. It will develop a modern, comprehensive and transparent land record management system in the country. It is really distressing to know that land records and land titling system is in most haywire state affecting economic development at large. Budget envisages implementing this scheme effectively.

Welfare programmes for animal husbandry have been announced in budget 2016. This will benefit the animal owners and attract the youth to dairy sector. Thus employment opportunities would open up not only for rural youth but also for veterinary doctors and insurance staff. **Pashudhan Sanjivani**, an animal wellness programme and provision of Animal Health Cards (**Nakul Swasthya Patra**) are innovative steps which would bring a paradigm shift in the dairy sector. It would help stabilise the farmers' income, who often face vagaries of mother nature in the form of floods or draughts.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is another flagship programme given utmost importance in budget. With budget allocation of Rs 5,500 crore, it is aimed at providing crop insurance cover to at least half of the country's 1.4 crore farmers by 2019. It will provide insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers in the event of failure of any

of the notified crop as a result of natural calamities, pests & diseases. It will also encourage farmers to adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices to increase the agricultural production

Apart from many other initiatives budget proposes to encourage **cold storage facilities** in the farm sector. Budget exempted service tax on all facilities provided by the state-run National Centre for Cold Chain Development effectively from April 01, 2016. India, the world's largest producer of milk and the second-largest producer of fruits and vegetables, is also one of the biggest food wasters in the world. Establishing cold storage chain will reduce the considerable wastage and generate employment opportunities in constructing and maintaining this chain.

Budget has pumped huge amount of money in rural economy. Allocation of Rs 35,984 crore for agriculture and farmers' welfare, Rs 87,765 for rural sector, 2.87 lakh crore as Grant in Aid to Gram Panchayats and municipalities . Rs 2.31 lakh crore for infrastructure sector, Rs 1,51,581 crore for social sector including education and health care are some initiatives which will act as growth engine to rural economy. A cess of 0.5 per cent, named **Krishi Kalyan Cess**, has been levied on all taxable services, w.e.f. 01 June 2016. Proceeds of the cess would be exclusively used for financing initiatives relating to improvement of agriculture and welfare of farmers. This would certainly give a boost to rural job generation and check migration to cities.

India's growth story is entirely contrary to the pattern adopted by other developing countries. Japan has focused on its small scale products and entered in the club of developed country. Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, south Korea followed the suits and become giant economic powers. Of late, China also started focusing on its small scale industries and presence of Chinese goods like- toys, electrical and electronic items and home appliances has made solid dents in every market of the world. China almost outsmarts everyone in this field by solid policies of promotion of its small scale industries. Thus Make in India programme is an effort to keep pace with other economies, making every one an entrepreneur.

Over the period of 68 years after the independence, India has progressed a lot. We are

manufacturing from needles to spacecraft. Our satellites are in space and our own indigenous rockets are soaring high in the sky with state of art technologies. But this industrial progress increases unemployment due to elimination of labour centric works, causing anger, angst and frustration amongst the youths. **Journey from job seeker to job creator has to be travelled.** Skill India program has to train millions of youths in various vocational and technical courses. India is perceived to be the largest market for foreign investors. Over 1.3 billion population is devoured to digest all the consumer goods and products. Rising living standards and improvement in infrastructure need tremendous machinery, products, services and skill. This is the time to change the perception from being mere a market for other economies to be a manufacturing hub.

From consumer products to food processing, we can create jobs. Cheap labour, coupled with investment and technology can do wonders. It will not only fulfill our domestic requirements but can explore the foreign markets in African and Asian subcontinent also.

Announcing education, skill development and job creation as fourth pillar of the budget, government rightly laid highest emphasis on rural economy. As 70 per cent India lives in rural areas, real development of nation has to start with the development of agriculture and rural sector. Budget 2016-17 has provided enough for this sector, now monitoring & implementation of all these schemes at grass root level is important. Budget has also proposed to appoint a committee at district level under the chairmanship of senior most Member of Parliament from each district.

India aspires to enter the club of developed countries sooner than later and pull the millions out of poverty. Country is in the mode of startup mania. Government, industries and youth of this great nation should gear up in unison to make India a manufacturing giant. We are already late and we cannot afford to miss this opportunity now. Budget 2016 has provided this much needed boost.

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