

Demographic Dividend

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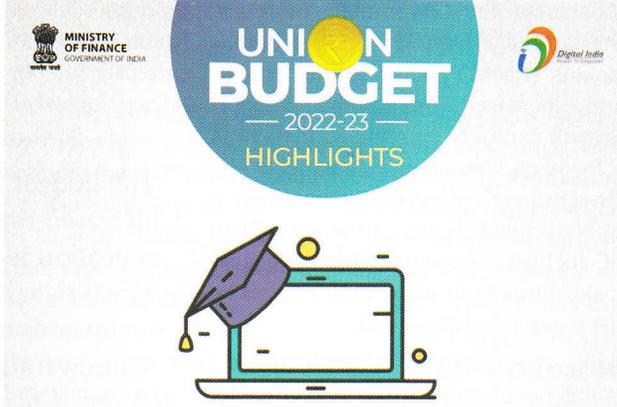
Youth has a potential and power to change the world for the better. Harnessing the potential of youth for burgeoning economic opportunities is the role of key stakeholders. At the same time, instilling values of integrity and humility is significant in this journey. Youth is often associated with innovative spirit, entrepreneurship, technological prowess, and sports that bring laurels to the nation. Unleashing their latent potential and innovativeness can bring the desired change and prosperity for all. Indian youth is known for resilience and innovation. India has the largest youth population in the world; it becomes a dire need to focus on their development in this 75th year of India's independence. It is imperative to create an ecosystem to make them partners in growth and development of nation.

India's 1.38 billion people with a median age of 28 are one of the youngest populations in the world. China and the US that are much more developed and economically stable, are growing older faster than India. Currently, our country is home to a fifth of the world's youth population advantage. We are in the midst of a demographic dividend. United Nations Population Fund defines this phase as economic growth that results from a shift in population's age structure—the phase when the working age population is more than the number of dependents. Our young population is a valuable asset to economic growth; they will play a critical role in achieving the ambitious target to become a global powerhouse and achieve the target of USD 5 trillion economy by 2024-25. India does not have a lot of time. We have only 20 years left for reaping the advantage of demographic dividend.

Enabling Entrepreneurial Potential

The national income of any country increases if the workforce is educated and has employable skills. Access to the internet and social media has created a digitally savvy population. Our youth are digital natives with high literacy rate. Our nation has opportunities for job creation with a novel entrepreneurial culture. Disruptive technologies have developed startup ecosystem that is providing services in areas like healthcare, education, e-commerce, agribusiness and many more. Fuelled by aspirations and quality of life, our youth is at the forefront

of new age technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science and Industry 4.0. Our youth is a rising consumer class; companies are making products and services with pricing models targeted towards them. Digital payments, e-wallets, low interest loans and credit facilities further fuel the entrepreneurial aspirations of young population. As their spending power



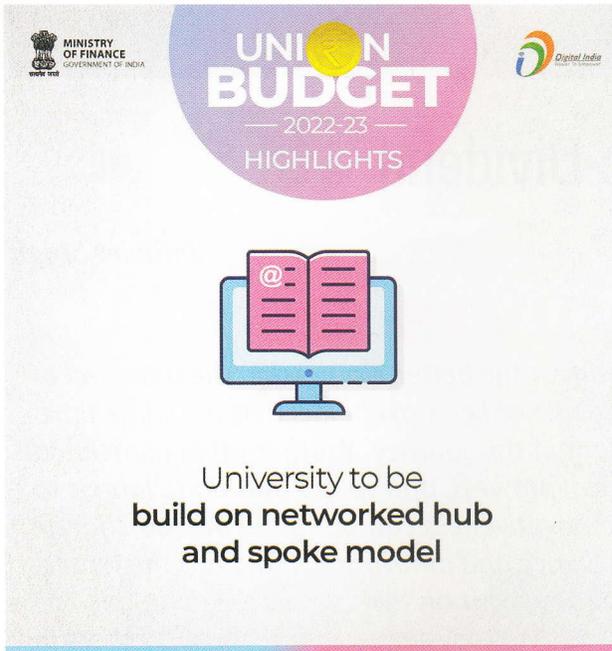
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

UNION BUDGET
— 2022-23 —
HIGHLIGHTS

Digital India

A Digital University to be set up to provide world class quality universal education to students with personalised learning experience at their doorsteps

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is increasing, the market is set to grow, resulting in higher economic activity. Our young population is also an attractive proposition for investments, locally as well as globally. India has become an investment hub for its entrepreneurial young population.

Many private and public sector interventions are imparting skills to the country's youth. National Skill Development Mission is a game changer that is empowering youth with employable skill sets across multiple sectors and also improving productivity and efficiency. The Government of India initiatives such as Startup India, Digital India and Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) have further enabled entrepreneurship and increased employment opportunities. Inclusive growth can only be realised if there is a focus on women empowerment. The Government's stress on the importance of Nari Shakti is one of the key pillars of inclusive growth. This will also make inroads to grow and strengthen the women-led enterprises.

Budgetary Outlay

The Budget 2022-23 provides impetus for growth as it lays a blueprint for the Amrit Kaal, which is futuristic and inclusive, and it holds a promising future ahead for education, up-skilling and employment. The Budget has profoundly increased the outlay for the education sector by 11.86%, which signals the intentions towards uplifting and empowering the youth. The

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budgetary outlay will have positive cascading effect on our youth, women and farmers.

The GatiShakti is a progressive model for economic growth and sustainable development; this will result in productivity enhancement and investments. This model is driven by seven engines, viz. roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways and logistics infrastructure. This will spur economic growth by furthering the efforts of the public and private sector, leading to enormous job and entrepreneurial opportunities for the youth. This is a big push for public investment for infrastructure, readying India for a 100% educated population.

In the post-Covid era, education has taken a new track, which is technology-based blended learning. The budget opens vistas to make educational tools available and accessible, thus aiming at inclusive education opportunities. There is a proposal of developing high quality e-content in all spoken languages which will be delivered via internet, mobile phone, TV and radio through digital teachers. This will democratise access to education and empower youth in rural areas with access to education, facilitating continuous learning. The motive is to make education more accessible and affordable, furthering entrepreneurship and skill development of burgeoning youth population. Another significant highlight of the budget is permitting foreign universities and institutions under GIFT IFSC (International Financial Services Centre) to offer courses on Fintech and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). This move is projected to bring foreign institutions to India, who are exploring to have synergies with Indian Institutions, but were not able to do so in the past due to regulatory challenges. This step will have a huge multiplier effect on the country's economic growth. PM's Development Initiative for North East (PM-DevINE) with allocation of Rs 1,500 crore for development initiatives in the North Eastern Region (NER) will enable livelihood activities of youth in NER.

Startups

The Budget 2022-23 has provided significant stimulus to the startup and digital ecosystem that is driving innovation. There is an increased thrust on artificial intelligence, geospatial systems, drones, semiconductor ecosystem, genomics, green energy, clean mobility systems and pharmaceuticals. This will be the engine of economic and social growth for the youth-led New India. Apart from creating employment opportunities for youth, this will also make

industry efficient and competitive. For unleashing the power of youth, the Government's commitment to technology and innovation is laudable. Futuristic technology such as the introduction of digital currency, rollout of 5G, e-passports using embedded chips are steps to make our nation futuristic and modern.

The launch of Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood— DESH-Stack e-portal will motivate young population to learn and sharpen their skillsets apart from creating entrepreneurial opportunities. This will enable them to skill, re-skill and up-skill through online training. With the quest to promote critical thinking skills and instil creative thinking, 750 virtual labs in science and mathematics along with 750 skilling e-labs for simulated learning will also be set up. The extension of PM eVIDYA programme from 12 to 200 TV channels will improve learning outcomes of young students.

The major challenge of our youth is the lack of employability skills, this needs to be in sync with the changing industrial demands. The launch of digital university will increase the reach of quality education even in remote areas with the public universities and institutions working in hub and spoke format.

The Budget also recommended the creation of an AVGC (Animation, Visual effects, Gaming and Comics) task force that will suggest ways to realise potential of

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this sector and build domestic capacity serving national as well as global demands. This will act as a stimulus to our tech savvy young population for gaining skills in this field.

Youth Entrepreneurship

India has a strong startup ecosystem. As on 7 February 2022, there were 63,103 startups registered by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Indian youth are the torchbearers for creating world class startups. The unicorns waved in 2021-22 despite Covid-19, showing the strength of our youth. More than 50 unicorns were

formed during the pandemic. With proactive policies for startups as announced in the Budget, India has the potential to drive innovation and entrepreneurial temper to create numerous employment opportunities. The Budget lays down decent initiatives on the tax front, with extension of tax benefits for one more year and promoting Ease of Doing Business. Meeting working capital requirements during initial years of operations is tough for startups. Thus, tax exemption extended by one more year is a strategic move to support young entrepreneurs. This will also be additional support to the startups to reboot from the hardships faced during the pandemic. Ease of Doing Business 2.0 will boost entrepreneurs and foster entrepreneurship significantly. The productivity-linked incentive scheme in 14 sectors with the potential to create 60 lakh new jobs will be a fountainhead for Indian youth which is a much-needed requirement for the growth of these sectors.

The Budget outcomes will support young entrepreneurs who are brimming with innovative and creative ideas. The surge in the young working population presents unique possibilities for India's future with respect to socio-economic growth. If given right opportunity at right time, our nation will be able to harness the potential of youth. Undoubtedly, the Government is rolling out best possible policies and schemes for holistic development of the youth, but more can be done in the upcoming years. Innovative and radical systems need to be developed in the field of education and skill development so that the youth grows academically and cognitively to gain competency for running our nation as future leaders.

Swami Vivekananda said, "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is achieved." This is a wake-up call for all the stakeholders to create an enabling ecosystem paving way for ample of opportunities for our youth to innovate, create and transcend the shores of their power for economic and social well-being of our country. □

