

BUDGET2017

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Budget 2017: Laying The Groundwork for Holistic Education



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The Union Budget for the financial year 2017-18 laid stress on raising the quality of education, outcome based learning, leveraging IT and skill development. The measures announced in the budget will provide the much needed impetus to the education and skill development sector in the country.



introduce flexibility in curriculum and an innovation fund for quality improvement in secondary education including the transformation of ICT enabled learning are steps taken in the right direction. These proposals have the capacity to transform the entire education eco-system and overhaul the education delivery mechanisms to productively leverage the latest in information and communication technologies to deliver relevant and practical content to the country's youths.

The announcement of the SWAYAM platform, leveraging information technology to enable students to virtually attend courses taught by the best faculty, access high quality reading resources, participate in discussion forums, take tests and earn academic grades will require the active participation of private players at all levels, be it the development of quality content or supporting equipments to enable easy access and collaboration.

Skill development is another focus of this year's budget. With key announcements like establishing 100 India International Skill Centres and the allocation of Rs 4,000 crore to launch Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion programme (SANKALP) to provide market relevant training to the youths to make them market ready and even help those looking for job opportunities outside of the country.

The Government also proposed to launch the next phase of skill strengthening for industrial value enhancement (STRIVE) during the financial year 2017-18 with an outlay of 2,200 crores. While the government focuses on improving the quality and market relevance of vocational training provided in ITIs and strengthen the apprenticeship programmes through industry cluster approach, private sector educational content developers and service providers can also play a major role in furthering the government's skill development agenda.

India has a huge demographic advantage. To be able to derive maximum benefit from this, the youths of the country must have easy access to good quality education



and the need arises for skill enhancement, there must be sufficient avenues for upskilling and skill enhancement trainings. While the government continues to be the main provider of education and skill training, private players have over the years scaled up their involvement in content creation and delivery mechanisms.

A major chunk of private investments in education goes towards leveraging technology to improve the quality of education. From A/V educational contents to smart classrooms and now virtual reality based learning, private sector players have made significant contributions towards improving the quality of educational contents and mode of delivery make it more easily accessible. Virtual Reality technology has the potential to totally re-define how education and training are delivered in the near future. The government must take proactive measures to support the development of this technology so as to be an early adopter and derive maximum benefit from it.

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