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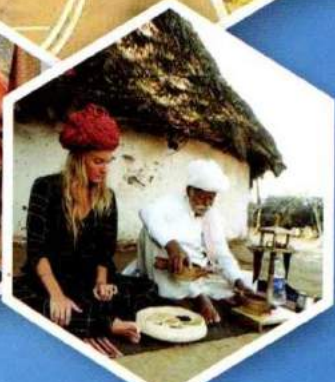
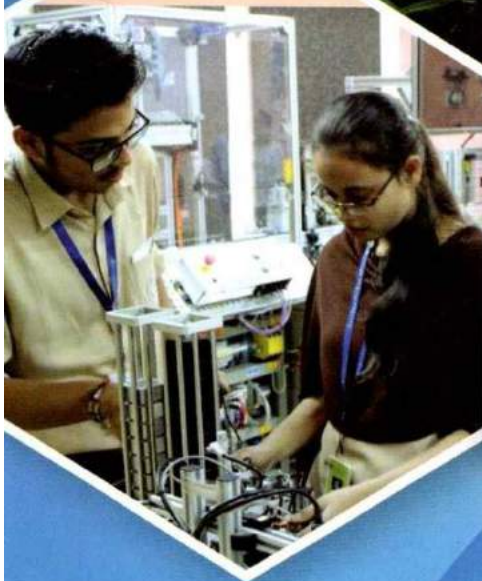
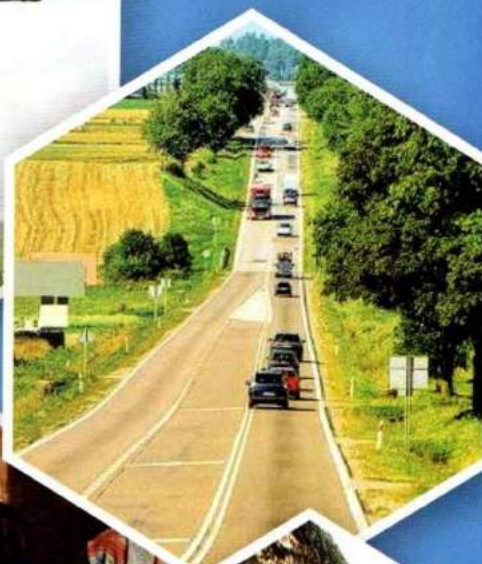
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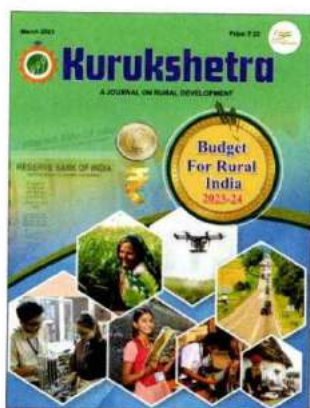
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The budget 2023-24 announced by the government is aimed at ensuring growth and development of the country. The budget will give boost to exports and help accelerate growth of manufacturing in the country. The measures announced in the budget will help grow agriculture further. To cover announcements of the budget, we have kept Kurukshetra March theme on Budget so that the readers can get an insight of the budgetary announcements.

The lead article of the issue *Visionary Budget for Making India a Developed Nation* states that the budget for the financial year 2023-24 is historical, visionary, and a budget to strengthen the country's foundation. This budget of Amrit Kaal is to transform India into a developed nation. It aims for the overall development of farmers and all sections of society, from the poor and middle class to women and youth.

Our another article *Development Directions in the Budget* says that the 7-point priority agenda of the Budget was the need of the hour to ensure a self-reliant, prosperous and US \$5 trillion economy. The Budget 23-24, while predicting active youth participation and encouraging rural employment and income growth, made sincere and timely attempts to make agriculture smart, modern, future ready and inclusive.

The article titled *Efficient and Inclusive Healthcare Ecosystem* says that Union Budget for 2023-24 reflects the government's vision and a renewed commitment for strengthening and improving the country's healthcare system which has been its priority for the last few years. We have seen a steady increase in budgetary allocations for this sector through the previous budgets.

The author of the *Boosting Agriculture and Rural Development* writes that Rural development has always been on the top priority of policy makers in a country like India where nearly two-third of total population and more than 70 per cent of workforce reside in rural areas. The Government's initiatives towards more inclusive growth, social protection and gender responsive development will certainly pave the way for journey of the country to become the third largest economy in the world by 2027.

The current year budget, 2023-24 has made many significant provisions to put MSME sector on a sustained higher growth trajectory. The article *MSME Sector on Growth Trajectory* says that the budget has also taken due care to address not only the structural constraints that MSME sector continues to grapple with but also the emerging and newer challenges thrown by pandemic- led prolonged and intense lockdown.

We hope that the readers will get all desired information about the budget in this issue. Happy reading.



Visionary Budget for Making India a Developed Nation

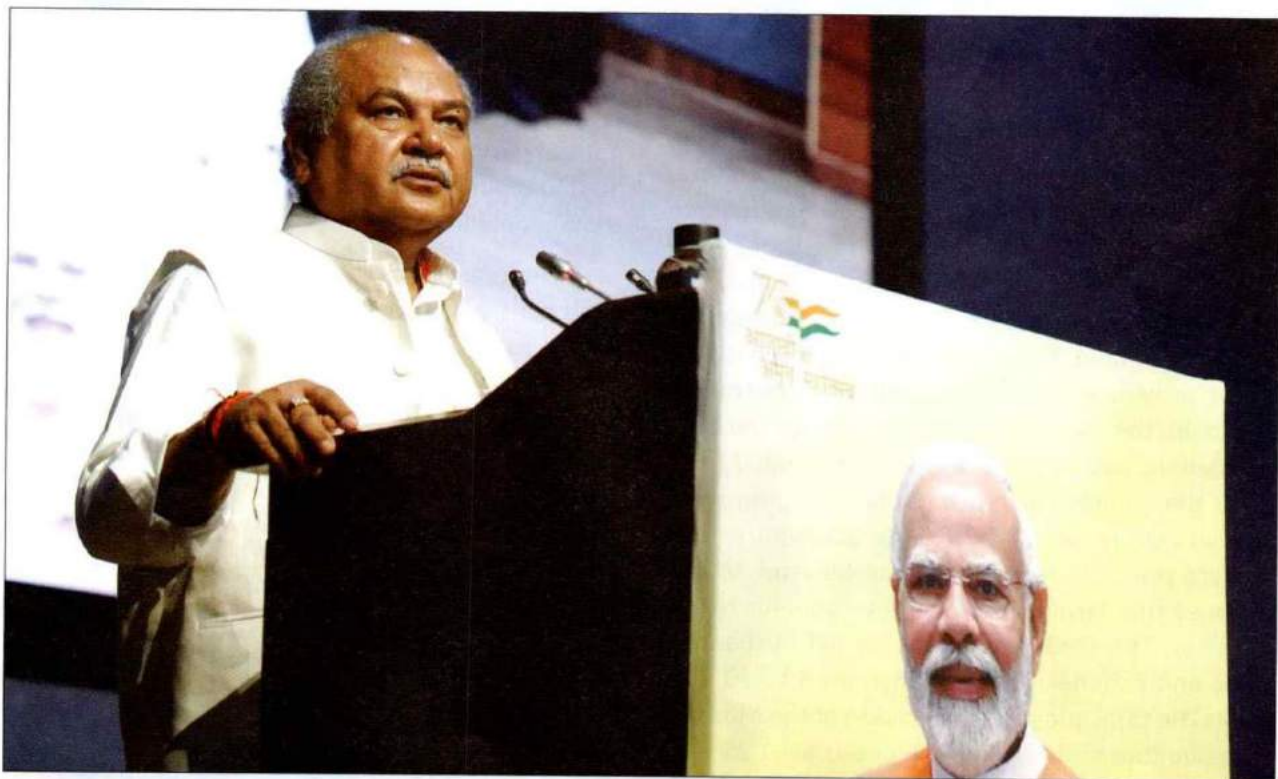
Narendra Singh Tomar

Key provisions in the budget for agriculture and allied sectors will reinforce the foundation of rural India. The budget aims for the overall development of farmers and all sections of society, from the poor and middle class to women and youth.

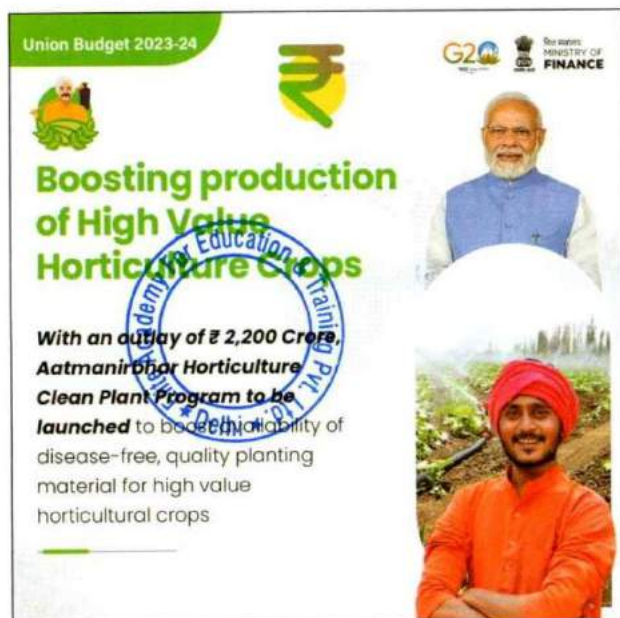
The budget for the financial year 2023-24 is historical, visionary, and a budget to strengthen the country's foundation. This first budget of Amrit Kaal is the budget to transform India into a developed nation. The budget aims for the overall development of farmers and all sections of society, from the poor and middle class to women and youth. Several important provisions for agriculture and allied sectors in this budget will further strengthen the foundation of rural India, for which our visionary Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's leadership is laudable.

People have not forgotten how the COVID-19

pandemic has devastated the world, due to which, even today, many countries are facing various crises. In contrast, the able leadership of Prime Minister Shri Modi has managed the crisis facing our vast country with great insight, as a result of which the country has more or less recovered from the adverse effects of the pandemic. Despite the adverse circumstances borne out of the pandemic, Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman has presented a budget of Rs. 45 lakh crore, which is a testimony of the real progress of our country. Amidst the current economic scenario of the world, the presentation of such a huge budget by



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the Government of India is a big indication for the economies around the world that India is marching rapidly on the path of development. As a result of the important reforms undertaken by the Modi government in the last about eight and a half years, our country has become the 5th largest economy in the world. Time is not far when India becomes the third largest economy in the world, and this budget will certainly contribute significantly in this direction.

All sectors, including Defence, Home, Railways, Road, Healthcare, Education, Agriculture, Industry, and Cooperatives have received adequate attention in this budget. Sufficient provisions have been made in the budget to expand infrastructure in the country, augment basic facilities, strengthen the poor, women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, provide employment to the youth and march ahead in the field of technology. Small farmers will benefit substantially from the budget. At the same time, emphasis has been laid on promoting the agriculture sector by linking agriculture with modern practices following Prime Minister Modi's vision so that farmers get extensive benefits in the long run. The credit target for animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries has been increased to 20 lakh crore. The total budgetary allocation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is Rs. 1.25 lakh crore this time, which will undoubtedly prove to be a milestone with infrastructure growth in rural India. It is noteworthy that the combined budget

of the Ministry of Agriculture (including DARE) and the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying in 2013-14 was only Rs. 30223.88 crore.

The government is using technology to take development initiatives in every sector. A Digital Agriculture Mission has thereby been initiated. To promote this mission, the fund allocated in this budget is Rs. 450 crores, a substantial increase from last year's allocation of Rs. 70 crore. Digital infrastructure for agriculture will be created to promote the agri-tech industry and startups and develop farmer-centric solutions. To initiate the computerisation of 63 thousand Primary Agricultural Credit Societies with an investment of Rs. 2,516 crores is no ordinary feat. Our cooperative institutions are spread across the villages. The cooperative sector supplements Agriculture and both strengthen each other mutually.

The method of natural farming is cow (bovine) - based. If natural farming increases, there will be optimum utilisation of bovines. Animal husbandry is an essential source of additional income for farmers which will be strengthened through natural farming. Natural farming is being transformed as a mass movement in the country by the Prime Minister, and to promote it, Rs. 459 crores has been allocated in this budget. The government will encourage and help one crore farmers to adopt natural farming in the next three years, and for this, 10,000 Bio-Input Resource Centers will be set up at the national level.

There are about 86 per cent small farmers in our country who have immensely benefited from Kisan Credit Card (KCC). In this budget, Rs. 23,000 crores has been allocated to enable our farmer brothers and sisters to continue availing benefits like this through KCC. In agriculture-allied sectors, the new sub-scheme of Prime Minister Matsya Sampada Yojana will be initiated with a targeted investment of Rs. 6 thousand crores, so that fish farmers, fish sellers, and related micro and small-scale industries become more efficient. This will improve value chain efficiency leading to enhanced market access.

The government has set a target of providing all facilities related to agriculture to small and medium farmers by aggregating them through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs). For this, 10,000

new FPOs are being formed across the country. The constitution of FPO is a revolutionary step in raising the quality of living of small and medium farmers whose benefits have started percolating to them. To continue this momentum in the future, a budget provision of Rs. 955 crore has been kept for the formation of new FPOs this year. Farming in an organised manner through FPO with good inputs at less cost will result in better yield and fetch the farmers a better price for their produce.

Food and nutritional security is one of the priorities of the government for which the budget provision has been increased to Rs. 1623 crore, while under the government's ambitious scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) budget provision of Rs. 60 thousand crores has been made. To give priority to startups related to agriculture, the Agriculture Accelerator Fund will be set up to encourage agri-startups by young

There are about 86 per cent small farmers in our country who have immensely benefited from Kisan Credit Card (KCC). In this budget, Rs. 23,000 crores has been allocated to enable our farmer brothers and sisters to continue availing benefits like this through KCC.

entrepreneurs. For this, a provision of Rs. 500 crore is allocated over the next five years. Currently, agri startups are also being given financial assistance by the Centre.

Indian Millets Research Institute, Hyderabad will be promoted as a Center of Excellence to make the country a global hub for 'Shri Anna.' According to the budget announcement, millets will now be known as Shri Anna. India is at the forefront of the programmes launched worldwide to popularise Shri Anna. This year, the International Year of Millets is being celebrated under the leadership of India. The budget provision for horticulture is increased from Rs. 1100 crore to 1800 crore. An Aatma Nirbhar Clean Plant Programme will be launched to boost the availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high-value horticultural crops at an outlay of Rs. 2,200 crores.

Under the GOBARdhan (Galvanising Organic



Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme, 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants will be established to promote a circular economy at a total investment of Rs. 10,000 crore. A five per cent compressed biogas mandate is to be introduced for all organisations marketing natural and biogas which is very important for rural India. The budget provision of Rs. 5,300 crores has been made for Bhadra Project to provide sustainable micro irrigation and fill up surface drinking water tanks. Basic facilities are being provided in villages through an extremely beneficial Agriculture Infra Fund of Rs. 1,00,000 crore, and ever-increasing coverage of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is comforting for the farmers.

With the motto of 'Sahakar Se Samridhi,' the government wants to promote a cooperative-based economic development model which will significantly increase the farmers' income. All this will positively impact our economy and help in the comprehensive development of agriculture and allied sectors.

Overall, with the all-round measures being taken to make Indian agriculture more advanced and farmers prosperous and the mantra of Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan-Jai Vigyan-Jai Anusandhan, golden chapters will certainly be written from the Amrit Mahotsav to Amrit Kaal of the country's independence. ■



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Development Directions in Budget

Dr. K. K. Tripathy

The Budget 2023-24 outlines seven priority areas and underscores the Union Government's policy intentions to achieve goals linked to these prioritised domains. The higher allocation of resources for rural employment initiatives, crop husbandry, including farming and the raising of livestock, poultry and other activities, food storage and warehousing and rural housing indicate India's resolve to transform rural areas into growth engines.

The Economic Survey 2022-23 was presented to the nation a day prior to the announcements of the Union Budget 2023-24. While predicting a nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 11 per cent in the FY 2023-24, the Survey highlighted India's underlying economic resilience in the post-COVID regime and its capability to recoup, renew and re-energise the drivers of growth. It underscored the importance of agriculture and rural development in achieving the objective of inclusive growth. The Indian agriculture sector has been growing at an average annual growth rate of 4.6 per cent during the last six years. It grew by 3.0 per cent in 2021-22 compared to 3.3 per cent in 2020-21. In this backdrop, this article attempts to explain the in-built policy direction and socio-economic intent of Government of India (GoI) by discussing a few agriculture and rural livelihood and employment related focus areas as prioritised in the Budget 2023-24.

Re-focusing Priority Areas

The Budget speech emphasised seven priority areas and underscored the Union Government's intentions to achieve goals linked to these prioritised domain. Ensuring complementarity, the Budget has outlined its resolve to achieve (i) inclusive development; (ii) connecting targeted clients and reaching the last mile; (iii) boosting infrastructure and investment; (iv) bringing in innovation, technology for unleashing the

latent productive potential; (v) meeting climate change effects by developing and focusing green growth-led strategic action; (vi) identifying and consolidating the power of youth and enhancing their participation in the economic growth; and (vii) strengthening financial sector for effective financial inclusion. The Budget announcements has emphasised on making agriculture future ready and inclusive while envisioning youth participation and encouraging rural employment and income growth.

A Review of Budget Allocations

A review of the Revised Estimates (RE) and Budget Expenditure (BE) of 2022-23 indicates (Table 1) that rural employment initiatives, crop husbandry, including farming and the raising of livestock, poultry and other activities, food storage and warehousing and housing got higher allocations. This shows the absorption capacity of the implementing authorities for these activities. While Rural Employment got a hike of 22.46 per cent hike in RE over BE of 2022-23, the variation was recorded at 15.15 per cent, 34.17 per cent and 73.87 per cent for crop husbandry, food storage and warehousing and housing, respectively. Such increased resource allocations aimed at stimulating economic growth alongwith job creation, income and wealth generation and enhancement of overall consumption demand in rural India.

The author is Officer on Special Duty in the Office of Hon'ble Home and Cooperation Minister, Government of India. Views expressed are personal. Email: tripathy123@rediffmail.com

Table 1: Variation of Expenditure between BE 2022-23 and RE 2022-23 (Rs. Cr.)

S. No.	Subject	BE	RE	Variation - RE over BE (in %)
1	2	3	4	5
1	Rural Employment	73,000	89,400	22.46
2	Crop Husbandry	1,22,137	1,40,651	15.15
3	Food Storage and Warehousing	2,15,643	2,89,329	34.17
4	Housing	12,072	20,990	73.87

Source: Compiled from Expenditure Profile (Statement No. 3), Union Budget 23-24, Ministry of Finance, GoI

A review of RE and BE for the years 22-23 and 23-24 indicates that in terms of increase in allocation (columns 9 and 11 of Table 2), priority has been accorded to Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (SDE), followed by Rural Development (RD); Agriculture Research and Education (ARE); Animal Husbandry and Dairying (AHD); Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME); Women and Child Development (WCD) and Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (AFW), in that order (Table 2). While the allocation for AFW

recorded 6.83 per cent drop from BE of 22-23, this was actually 0.93 per cent and 4.79 per cent higher than AE of 21-22 and RE of 22-23.

Incremental, planned, participatory and schematic investments in rural areas, improved buyers demand and equitable job creation in rural areas can be the growth engines of rural economy. Considering the importance of rural and agriculture sector, the Budget has prioritised agriculture, skill creation, dairy and fishery development and MSMEs. SDE witnessed a quantum jump of 84.96 per cent hike in its BE over RE of 22-23, whereas MSME, AHD, ARE, AFW and WCD recorded 41.65 per cent, 39.38 per cent, 9.76 per cent, 4.79 per cent and 6.42 per cent rise in their respective budget allocations in 2023-24 (Table 2). The RD schemes, however, witnessed a reduction of 13.02 per cent resource allocation in 23-24 over 22-23 (RE). This indicates the presence of excess resource absorption capacity of Department of RD and the related scope and flexibility to apportion resources for other emerging areas of farm and non-farm sectors in rural areas.

Table 2: Actual Expenditure & Allocation in Selected Union Ministries/Departments during 2016-17 & 2023-24

S. No.	Name of the Ministry/ Department	Actual Expenditure/Allocation (Rs. Cr.)									Increase of Allocation (%) in 2023-24		
		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23		23-24	Over		
		Actuals						BE	RE	BE	Actuals	RE	BE
											21-22	22-23	22-23
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	AFW	40,626	37,396	46,076	94,252	1,08,273	1,14,468	1,24,000	1,10,255	1,15,532	0.93	4.79	-6.83
2	ARE	5,995	6,942	7,544	7,523	7,554	8,368	8,514	8,659	9,504	13.58	9.76	11.63
3	AHD	2,376	2,022	3,171	2,712	2,464	2,584	3,919	3,105	4,328	67.46	39.38	10.44
4	MSME	3650	6,202	6,509	6,698	5,455	14,980	21,422	15,629	22,138	47.78	41.65	3.34
5	RD	1,56,287	1,08,559	1,11,842	1,22,098	1,96,417	1,60,433	1,35,944	1,81,122	1,57,545	-1.80	-13.02	15.89
6	SDE	1,553	2,198	2,619	2,405	2,625	2,121	2,999	1,902	3,517	65.82	84.96	17.28
7	WCD	17,097	20,396	23,026	23,165	19,231	21,655	25,172	23,913	25,449	17.52	6.42	1.10

Source: Compiled from Expenditure Profile (Statement No. 3), Union Budgets 2018-19 to 23-24, Ministry of Finance, GoI

An analysis of the expenditure and budget allocation pattern of select development schemes (Table 3) indicates that provision of rural housing (PMAY) to the economically downtrodden, fishery activities (Blue Revolution), Water and Sanitation (Jal Jeevan Mission) have caught the attention of the policy makers and planners and have got

incremental budgetary allocations in 23-24 against that of 22-23. A new sub-scheme of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana with targeted investment of Rs. 6,000 cr. will enable various productive activities of fishermen, fish vendors, cold-chain and other logistics for fish product transportation and related micro and small enterprises. This would

not only improve value chain efficiencies in the fishery sector but also expand the market for fish and fish products inside and outside the country. A new Scheme, National Mission on Natural Farming, with Rs. 459 crore budget allocation has

been launched to popularise adoption of natural farming and organic farming practices and to reduce dependency gradually from chemical-based fertilisers reliant agriculture to the nature-driven healthy agriculture.

Table 3: Expenditure and Budget Allocation for Select Schemes

Schemes	Actual Expenditure	BE	RE	BE	BE 23-24 over BE of 22-23
	21-22	22-23	22-23	23-24	(in %)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	98,468	73,000	89,400	60,000	-17.8
2. National Social Assistance Programme	8,152	9,652	9,652	9,636	-0.2
3. Blue revolution	1,179	1,891	1,422	2,025	7.1
4. Jal Jeevan Mission	63,126	60,000	55,000	70,000	16.7
5. National Health Mission	32,958	37,160	33,708	36,785	-1.0
6. National Livelihood Mission (NLM) – Aajeevika	10,177	14,236	13,886	14,129	-0.8
7. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)	90,020	48,000	77,130	79,590	65.8
8. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)	13,992	19,000	19,000	19,000	0.0
9. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY)	11,278	12,954	8,085	10,787	0.0
10. Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)	3,099	7,192	5,000	7,192	117.4
11. Computerisation of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies	-	350	350	968	176.6
12. National Mission on Natural Farming	-	-	-	459	-

Source: Compiled from Expenditure Profile (Statement No. 4 A), Union Budget 23-24, Ministry of Finance, GoI

Rural Employment Programmes

Wage and self employment generation programmes are always perceived to be effective in a rural set-up which is otherwise riddled with high incidence of poverty, low work participation and increased casualisation of labour. The Budget, considered the absorption capacity of implementing States/UTs and allocated Rs. 60,000 crore to MGNREGA and Rs. 14,129 crore to National Rural Livelihood Mission, the two existing wage and self-employment programmes towards building quality and productive community assets and enterprises. MGNREGA and NLM, however, witnessed 17.8 per cent and 0.8 per cent reduction, respectively, in their allocation against the BE of 22-23 (Table 3).

The resource allocation of Rs. 60,000 cr. to MGNREGA needs to be synergised with the expected outcome of the schematic interventions. The scheme has large financial absorption capability. The need of the hour, however, is to review and revive the planning process at the Village Panchayat level and make the implementation effective in generating sustainable community assets, income and wealth. There is an urgent need

to raise a professional cadre of quality experts at the community level who would ensure and guide from time to time the outcome-based public works planning and monitoring under MGNREGA. This step would also ensure the objectives of (a) ensuring livelihood security through creation of permanent and durable community assets; (b) bringing in appropriate convergence benefits in consultation with partner departments like agriculture, rural development, Panchayati Raj, forestry, fishery, dairy, etc.; and (c) expansion of irrigation potential through MGNREGA works. The focus on utilising MGNREGA funds for fodder production through implementation of the notified activities would largely help the livestock sector and would ensure appropriate backward and forward linkages to enhance farm income.

NLM has two important self-employment schematic interventions viz. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY) and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM). The Budget also announced revamping of credit guarantee scheme of Micro, Small, Medium enterprises through additional

While ensuring incremental, planned, participatory and schematic public investments in prioritised activities along with improved buyers' demand and equitable and sustainable job creation, the budget expected active youth participation in economic activities. Sincere and timely attempts have been made to make agriculture smart, modern, future ready and inclusive. The reposed faith in the model of community-led cooperative development and the proposed budget initiatives and announcements in various key areas viz. rural employment, agri-technology reforms/revival/linkages, focused nutri-cereal development, smart and modern farm practices display the directions of the budget towards re-energisation of the rural economy.

equity infusion of Rs. 9,000 crores to enable disbursements of collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs. 2 lakh cr. The village entrepreneurship development approach of DAY-NRLM is aimed at creating a catalytic local entrepreneurial ecosystem and encouraging the rural unemployed youth to take up local enterprises on their own. Focus on mobilisation of more (Self-help Groups) SHGs, taking their support services for creation and operation of rural warehouses and other agri-logistics would help improve rural livelihoods and income by converging rural development efforts with agri-infrastructure. The new and innovative rural enterprises scheduled to be established and facilitated under NLM during 23-24 will (a) ensure financial inclusion of SHGs & farmers; (b) increase household income; (c) assure training, placements to the millions of rural youths; and (d) facilitate farm logistics at community level.

Livelihoods and Employment through Agri-development

A number of measures have been suggested in the budget to increase production, productivity, farm and non-farm profits and farmers' income. In order to achieve the expected goals of the government, we need to ensure active participatory actions towards (a) reducing water stress by comprehensive water planning; (b) promoting natural and organic farming practices (c) ensuring balanced use of fertilisers; (d) strengthening operation green initiatives through promotion and nurturing of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), cooperatives and other rural collectives in agriculture, dairy and fisheries; (e) establishing and enhancing agri-logistic facilities like agri-warehousing, cold storage, reefer vans; (f) mapping and geo-tagging existing agri-logistics and ensuring viability funding for setting up such infrastructure at taluka level through public-private partnerships; (g) enhancing holding capacity and

reducing logistic costs of farmers through construction and operation of community-led village storages; (h) connecting unconnected areas, building and sustaining a national cold supply chain; (i) integrating e-negotiable warehousing receipts with e-NAM; (j) developing fodder farms through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA); (k) developing, promoting and making profitable fisheries sector through collectivised effort; (l) doubling milk processing capacity by ensuring creation of primary dairy cooperatives in each panchayat/village; and (m) successfully utilising enhanced farm credit target of Rs. 20 lakh cr.

Digital Infrastructure Push

Over the years, the physical and digital infrastructure push in successive public interventions were targeted towards ensuring ease of doing business and enhancing the quality of life of millions of citizens. Budget 23-24 has announced a specialised approach and a renewed and precision focus for the setting up and utilisation of digital infrastructure for small enterprises as well as small and marginal farmers and weaker sections aiming at sustained productivity growth.

The Budget has crafted a much-required development path by facilitating building up of digital public infrastructure for agriculture as an open source, open standard and inter-operable public good. This initiative conforms to the priority of inclusive development. It has tremendous potential to enable relevant, timely and adequate information services for crop planning and crop health, improved and enhanced access to farm input services viz. credit, insurance flow to client stakeholders, support for crop estimation, quick and effective damage assessment, market intelligence flow and promotion of agri-tech industry and start-ups in rural areas.

This attempt of ensuring digital infrastructure for agriculture will not only bring in smart agriculture practices and modern data analyses-based crop-planning and agri-development, but also would ensure incremental farm employment wherein educated and unemployed local youth would be attracted to render the required agri-services. This infrastructure push will incentivize banks and financial institutions in rolling out end-to-end digital solutions using relevant activity-specific data analytic models in rural areas. The Budget also envisages to set up an agriculture accelerator fund to encourage agri start-ups. The fund creation is the right step as it will give rise to innovation and provision of affordable and location specific issue-based solutions to the problems faced by country's farmers. The fund provisions would attract more contemporary techniques and technologies with a view to ensure adoption of modern, sustainable and cost-effective agricultural practices. The application of modern technology would help increase in productivity and profitability in farm activities.

A cluster-based and value-chain approach through Public Private Partnership (PPP) has been planned to ensure collaborative efforts between farmers, State and industry for supply of input and extension services and effective market linkages with a view to enhance the productivity of cotton crops and increase the income of cotton growers. In addition, through Aatma Nirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant Program with a BE of Rs. 2,200 cr., attempts would be made to boost availability of disease free, quality planting material for high value horticulture crops.

Encouraging Nutri-Cereals

Budget 2023-24 has appropriately emphasised encouragement of growth of millets production and consumption. Millets – which was becoming forgotten foods, has the prosperity to become the foods for the future generation. The UN has announced 2023 as the International Year of Millets to drive this as a superfood and the food that further nutrition, food security and also the welfare of farmers. The Budget acknowledges the potential of millets – jawar, ragi, bajra, kuttu, ramdana, kangni, cheena, etc. having health and nutritional benefits and vows to make India a global hub for millets. Support services for sharing of best practices, research and technologies at the international level through the country's

agri-institutes is a way forward for promotion of consumption and production of millets and integration between biodiversity, agro-ecology, nutrition and health.

The promotion of millet production and consumption will largely benefit India's small and marginal farmers and would encourage them to re-engineer their farming systems and practices, knowledges and food production, consumption and distribution eco-system. To ensure the vision of health for all and nutritional food for all, there is a need to take immediate actions on (a) identification, preservation, sharing and multiplication of quality seeds of millets by the help of community seed cooperatives; (b) creation of incremental and specialised seed cooperatives or seed collectives right at the village level; (c) setting up of small scale seed processing, manufacturing, packaging units (d) strengthening and expanding seed distribution network, etc.

Reposing Faith in Cooperatives

The Budget vowed to ensure creation of grain storage capacity in each panchayat through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS). India lacks in terms of the good and scientific Agricultural Infrastructure facilities at the Village/community Level. This decision of the Union Government will provide necessary avenues for the PACS and other primary societies to establish state-of-the-art infrastructure for providing various storage and warehouse services to the farmer members of cooperatives. This will help farmers to arrest distress sales, store their produce locally at affordable cost and realise remunerative prices through sale at a later period. The Budget also desired to facilitate setting up of multi-purpose cooperative societies, primary fisheries and dairy cooperatives in uncovered panchayats/villages in next five years. This indicates the Government of India's resolve in promoting village level community-led economic growth with collectivised efforts.

The recent initiatives of the Ministry of Cooperation for growth of cooperative businesses include computerisation of 63,000 with an investment of Rs. 2,516 cr.; creating national cooperative database; popularising the model bye-laws of PACS amongst States to transform them into multi-purpose Cooperatives with multi-dimensional business activities, etc. Further, the registration of

three new Multi-State Cooperatives in the areas of Quality Seed Production, organic Farming and Exports will go a long way in addressing issues of availability of quality seeds at the hands of farmers, promotion of natural and organic farm practices amongst stakeholders and profitable disposal of marketable surplus and, thereby, in reviving the extant cooperative model of economic growth. The need of the hour is to take along all stakeholders in the cooperatives – be it Government of India, State and UT Government Departments, National Cooperative Union of India, State Cooperative Unions and National/State/District/Local level cooperative institutions/federations in promoting and nurturing new Cooperatives in the areas of Dairying, Fisheries, Multi-Purpose PACS and Multi-State Cooperative Societies in the cooperatively under-developed areas. Special concessions and exemptions to the Cooperatives like lowering tax rate @15 per cent for new manufacturing Cooperatives, provisioning settlement of old tax claims of cooperative sugar mills, increasing threshold limit for primary cooperative credit societies for cash withdrawal, enhancing applicable limits for Tax Deduction at Source on annual cash withdrawal etc. will encourage more business growth through cooperatives.

Concluding Remarks

The 7-point priority agenda of the Budget was the need of the hour to ensure a self-reliant, prosperous and US \$5 trillion economy. The Budget 23-24, while predicting active youth participation and encouraging rural employment and income growth, made sincere and timely attempts to make agriculture smart, modern, future ready and inclusive. It reposed its faith in the model of community-led cooperative development.

The emphasis on rural employment programmes – wage employment (MGNREGA) and Self-Employment (DAY-NRLM), indicates the Government's resolve not only in increasing employment and income in rural areas but also in bringing in much-awaited convergence of schematic activities by ensuring appropriate backward and forward linkages. The Budget, through its multi-disciplinarian and multi-dimensional approaches, is expected to strengthen the village entrepreneurship development approach aimed at creating a catalytic local entrepreneurial ecosystem and encouraging



the rural unemployed youth to take up local enterprises on their own. Focus on cooperative development, collectivisation of efforts and mobilisation and utilisation of collective strength of SHGs, facilitating support services for creation and operation of rural warehouses and other agri-logistics would help improve rural livelihoods and income by converging rural development efforts with agri-infrastructure.

The proposed initiatives and announcements in various key areas viz. rural employment, rural and agri-technology reforms/revival/linkages, better price realisation of farm products, rural connectivity, focused nutri-cereal development, smart and modern farm practices have the required potential to re-orient the rural economy. It also calls for ensuring innovative and participatory investment opportunities through public, private and community participation; creating rural and agricultural infrastructure; integrating and converging scheme interventions of Ministries/ Departments of RD, Land Resources, AHD, Fisheries and AFW, etc. The real challenge, however, is how the development efforts are converged and the creation of an enabling ecosystem for rural/farm enterprises and start-ups to ensure sustainable livelihoods and gainful employment avenues in rural areas. ■

Efficient and Inclusive Healthcare Ecosystem

Balendu Sharma Dadhich

The year-over-year growth in the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shows that the government is committed to building an efficient, affordable, accessible, inclusive, and modern healthcare ecosystem in the country. This bodes well for the healthcare sector which is going through a process of modernisation and expansion and has been a focus area for the central and state governments during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Union Budget for 2023-24 reflects the government's vision and a renewed commitment for strengthening and improving the country's healthcare system which has been its priority for the last few years. We have seen a steady increase in budgetary allocations for this sector through the previous budgets. This year's budget is no exception and the government's desire for a major overhaul of the healthcare system is obvious from the significant increase of 3.4 per cent compared to the previous year's allocation. The Budget has provisioned a total of Rs. 89,155 crores for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. This shows a strong post-COVID trend of increased funding for the sector which had registered a 16.5 per cent growth in funding allocation during the last year. If we compare the latest budgetary provisions with that of 2021-22, we see a huge increment of about 20 per cent. The budgetary allocation for 2021-22 was Rs. 73,931.77 crores.

The year-over-year growth in the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shows that the government is committed to building an efficient, affordable, accessible, inclusive, and modern healthcare ecosystem in the country. This bodes well for the healthcare sector which is going through a process of modernisation and expansion and has been a focus area for the central and state governments during and after the COVID pandemic. There is a great scope for a significant growth and expansion of this sector which bears the responsibility to meet the rising expectations and meet the

challenge of the growing pressure on the healthcare system as a result of various governments' social security schemes and to fulfil our ambitions to make India a global centre for healthcare.

A few months back, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had outlined the government's views in this regard. She said that after becoming the pharmacy of the world, India has emerged as a medical tourism hub on the global healthcare map. India's medical tourism industry is estimated at \$9 billion, which makes India the 10th biggest global medical tourism hub.

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The 2023 budget documents the focus on key aspects of improving healthcare in the country: investing in research and development, modernising the healthcare infrastructure, efficient use of digital technology for better healthcare services and increasing the number of trained medical professionals in the country. All this is expected to result in development of a more efficient healthcare system and continued growth of the Indian healthcare sector. Let us explore some important provisions of the budget for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Focus on Skilled Professionals

The budget underlines the government's priority for building a vast pool of skilled medical and healthcare professionals to meet the rising demand which requires sizable investments in the education sector, mainly for medical, pharma and nursing education. The budget includes a provision for creation of 157 new nursing schools located alongside existing medical colleges. The expansion of nursing schools will help close the gap in the number of nurses needed per bed as India aims to become a top healthcare destination. As the healthcare ecosystem expands in depth and breadth, healthcare service providers are also focusing on providing services in smaller cities.

Education and skilling go hand in hand. The government is going for the creation of a Skill India Digital platform aimed at bringing together public and private sector institutions, academic institutions, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, state governments, the National Skill Development Corporation, and the private sector to offer healthcare training courses, content and certifications. Launching specialised courses to produce skilled workers for future medical technologies is a positive step as the healthcare sector has huge scope for professionals with varying degrees of skills. There is also need for us to have a strategy and plan for upgrading the current workforce and expanding the healthcare workforce.

Innovation and Research

Of the total allocation of Rs. 89,155 crore, an amount of 86,175 crore rupees have been assigned to the Department of Health and Family Welfare, and 2,980 crore rupees have been allotted to the Department of Health Research. The budgetary allocation for the Indian Council of Medical Research under the Department of Health Research has gone up by 7.4 per cent to Rs. 2,360 crore out of

the total allocation of Rs. 2,980 crore. Additionally, the initiative to make select ICMR labs available for research is expected to promote collaborative research and innovation.

The increased funding will also allow the Indian Council of Medical Research to upgrade its facilities, enabling medical professionals from public and private colleges to conduct research within the facilities and have access to private sector research and development teams. This will encourage collaboration and innovation in healthcare demonstrating the budget's focus on medical research, collaboration, and R&D, which are essential for improving healthcare delivery.

The budget has emphasised pharmaceutical innovation recognising the recent advancements in technology in the healthcare industry. The Finance Minister announced a new program to support pharmaceutical research and innovation and encouraged industry players to invest in R&D in the priority areas.

Highlights of the Budget Related to Health Sector

- 157 new nursing colleges will be established in key locations.
- A mission to eradicate sickle cell anaemia by 2047 will be initiated with a focus on raising awareness and conducting universal screening of 7 million people between the ages of 0 to 40.
- Select labs under the ICMR will be open for research by public and private medical schools.
- The government will support the implementation of specialised multidisciplinary courses in medical devices in educational institutions to ensure a skilled workforce for advanced medical technology and high-end manufacturing and research.
- Three centres of excellence for artificial intelligence will be established to promote the "Make AI for India" and "Make AI work for India" initiatives, enhancing the country's digital capabilities. This will have a direct connection with healthcare services and medical research.
- A national data governance policy will be introduced to facilitate access to anonymous data.



Citizen Access to Healthcare

During the past decade, patient and citizen access to the healthcare industry has increased significantly across the country. This is thanks to the launch of a series of digital health initiatives and mental health programs, providing opportunities for human resources, hospitals, and investors.

This year, the budget allocation for the National Health Mission has gone up with an allocation of Rs. 29,085 crores compared to the previous year's allocation of Rs. 28,974 crores. The National Digital Health Mission has received a boost in funding from the previous year's Rs. 140 crores to the current Rs. 341 crores. The funds allocated for autonomous bodies have risen from Rs. 10,348 crores to Rs. 17,322 crores.

Accordingly, the allocation for the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has increased by 12 per cent to Rs. 7,200 crore, highlighting the government's focus on expanding health coverage to over 400 million people who are currently not covered by any insurance scheme. A clear implementation plan for programs such as Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and National Tele Mental Health Programme, with a focus on monitoring their impact and results in India, is crucial for improving the quality of care in both the public and private sectors of the country. Additional funding and a national focus on these development programs may be needed during the next few years.

Mission to Eliminate Sick Cell Disease

The Finance Minister gave special attention to the launch of a mission to eradicate sickle cell anaemia by 2047. She stated that this will involve raising awareness, conducting universal screening of 7 million people in the age range of 0 to 40 years in areas with high tribal populations, and offering counselling through collaborative efforts.

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is a genetic disorder that is prevalent among tribal populations in India and other vulnerable groups. According to the Health and Welfare Ministry, the Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is a chronic single gene disorder causing a debilitating systemic syndrome characterised by chronic anaemia, acute painful episodes, organ infarction and chronic organ damage and by a significant reduction in life expectancy.

The new budgetary impetus on eradication of this disease will give a big boost to the ongoing efforts in this context. Under the National Health

Mission, the Government of India supports the states for prevention and management of sickle cell disease as per their annual proposals. The Ministry has also released technical operational guidelines for prevention and control of hemoglobinopathies in 2016 which includes sickle cell anaemia.

According to the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, tribals under the age of 40 will receive cards indicating their sickle cell anaemia status. He said they would receive pre-marital counselling about the risk of having a child with the disease if they marry someone who also has it. Following the budget presentation, Shri Mandaviya announced that the government will tackle the elimination of sickle cell anaemia in a mission mode. He also mentioned that there will be widespread screening in affected tribal areas to detect cases early on.

Other Focus Areas

The provisions for the creation of 157 new nursing schools located alongside existing medical colleges will give a huge push to infrastructure development. Similarly, the government's launch of the Aspirational Blocks Programme, which covers 500 blocks, demonstrates its commitment to infrastructure development.

The budget allocation for the AYUSH Ministry has seen a 28 per cent increase, resulting in an allocation of Rs. 3,647 crores compared to the previous year's Rs. 2,845 crores. The Department of Health and Family has received an allocation of Rs. 86,175 crores to support its healthcare initiatives. The ministry has also set aside Rs. 6,835 crores for the establishment of 22 new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences.

The budget allocations for the healthcare sector take into account critical areas such as research and development, skill building, promotion, infrastructure and preventive healthcare. The emphasis on Research and Development through partnerships between the public and private sectors and the benefits provided to the industry align with its expectations and will aid the country in establishing itself as an innovation centre. The explicit focus on research and production of medical devices reflects an important need of the hour as it will drive sector growth, boost manufacturing, and ensure the availability of affordable medical devices in the future. In conclusion, the budget announcements are comprehensive and forward-looking, giving the sector its well-deserved attention. ■

Boosting Agriculture and Rural Development

Dr. H.L. Sharma

Sustainable rural development with focus on agriculture and allied sectors has always been at the top of development agenda in India. Over the last few years, efforts in this direction have been accelerated by the Government to meet the vision of "sabka saath, sabka vikas and sabka vishwas".

Rural development has always been on the top priority of policy makers in a country like India where nearly two-third of total population and more than 70 per cent of workforce reside in rural areas. The focus of economic policies enunciated in India during the planned era of development has been on the achievement of balanced regional development with special emphasis on inclusive growth. The thrust has been on improving the quality of life of rural masses through proactive socio-economic inclusion and empowerment leading to more access to safe drinking water, sanitation, health care, social

security and better employment opportunities. In the journey of the country to become \$5 trillion economy by the year 2025 and the third largest economy in the world by 2027, it is extremely essential to focus on the development of rural economy.

The Ministry of Rural Development has been assigned the responsibility to promote welfare activities in rural India. It takes steps to increase livelihood opportunities, providing social safety nets and improving infrastructure in rural areas for their rapid growth. The Ministry has two departments: (i) rural development and (ii) land resources.

In the union budget 2023-24, liberal funds have been provided for generating income and employment in rural areas through substantial investment and increased public expenditure on the schemes formulated for this purpose. The main focus is on strengthening the rural economy by infusing productivity, efficiency and profitability in agriculture and allied sectors. It is earnestly hoped that the large number of policies and programmes in place for sustainable rural development will pave the way for journey of the country to become \$5 trillion economy by the year 2025 and the third largest economy in the world by 2027.



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The Department of Rural Development (DoRD) plays a pivotal role in the implementation of Government schemes targeted at employment generation, poverty alleviation, infrastructure development and provision of basic services in rural area. On the other hand, The Department of Land Resources (DoLR) implements two key schemes: (i) Integrated Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana and (ii) the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP)

Allocation to Ministry of Rural Development in Union Budget 2023-24

The Ministry of Rural Development has been provided the seventh highest allocation across all Ministries in the Union Budget for financial year 2023-24. Its allocation upsurged from Rs. 61,864 crore in 2013-14 to Rs. 1,59,964 crore in 2023-24, reflecting a linear growth rate 10.32 per cent per annum during the period under reference (Table 1). The Department of Rural Development which accounts for more than 98 per cent funds of the Ministry, witnessed a growth rate of 10.52 per cent per annum in its allocation during the period from 2013-14 to 2023-24. (Fig. 1). On the other hand, the budgeted expenditure of the Department of Land resources came down by 3.98 per cent during the last decade despite witnessing a sharp rise of 92 per cent in 2023-24 over the previous year.

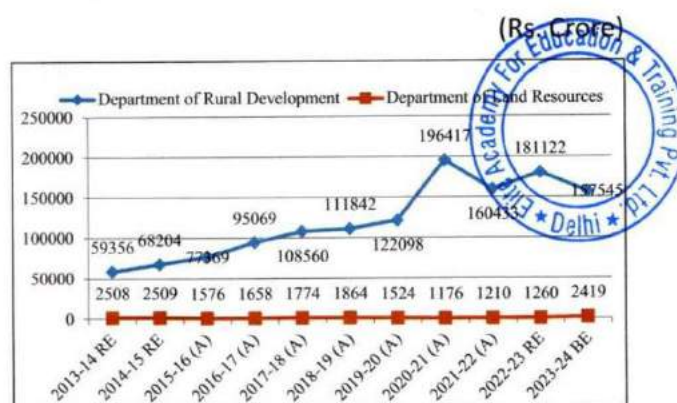
Table 1: Budget Allocation to the Ministry of Rural Development

(Rs. Crore)

Year	Department of Rural Development	Department of Land Resources	Total
2013-14 (RE)	59356	2508	61864
2014-15 (RE)	68204	2509	70713
2015-16 (A)	77369	1576	78945
2016-17 (A)	95069	1658	96728
2017-18 (A)	108560	1774	110333
2018-19 (A)	111842	1864	113706
2019-20 (A)	122098	1524	123622
2020-21 (A)	196417	1176	197593
2021-22 (A)	160433	1210	161643
2022-23 (RE)	181122	1260	182382
2023-24 (BE)	157545	2419	159964
LGR (%)	10.52	-3.98	10.32

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Demands for Grants, 2013-14 to 2023-24.

Figure1: Budget Allocation to the Ministry of Rural Development



Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Demands for Grants, 2013-14 to 2023-24.

Major Schemes under the Department of Rural Development

The budget allocation to all centrally sponsored schemes for rural development went up from Rs. 1,08,175 crore to Rs. 1,57,545 crore witnessing a growth rate of 7.84 per cent per annum during the last seven years (Fig. 2). But it came down by 13.02 per cent in 2023-24 as compared to the previous year. It declined due to unusually high expenditure on Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Table 2: Budget Allocation to Centrally Sponsored Schemes for Rural Development

(Rs. Crore)

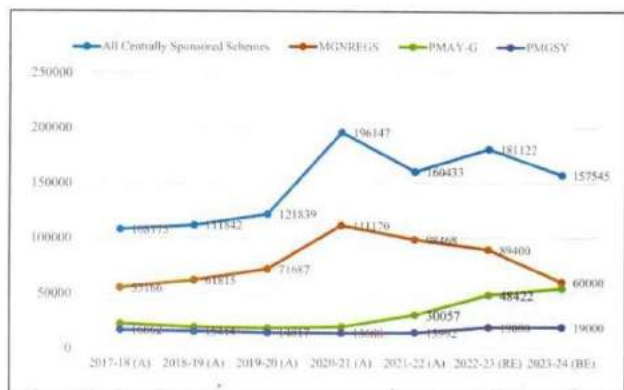
Scheme	2017-18 (A)	2018-19 (A)	2019-20 (A)	2020-21 (A)	2021-22 (A)	2022-23 (RE)	2023-24 (BE)	LGR
MGNREGS	55166	61815	71687	111170	98468	89400	60000	4.40
PMAY-G	22572	19308	18116	19269	30057	48422	54487	19.54
PMGSY	16862	15414	14017	13688	13992	19000	19000	3.03
NRLM	4327	5783	9022	9208	9383	13336	14129	17.21
NSAP	8694	8418	8692	42443	8152	9652	-	7.52
SPMRM	553	433	304	369	150	989	-	8.55
All Centrally Sponsored Schemes	108175	111842	121839	196147	160433	181122	157545	7.84

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Demands for Grants, 2019-20 to 2023-24.

Note: MGNREGS= Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, PMAY-G= Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Gramin, PMGSY=Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, NRLM=National

Rural Livelihoods Mission, NSAP=National Social Assistance Programme, SPMRM=Shyama Prasad Mukherji Urban Mission

Figure 2: Budget Allocation to Major Schemes for Rural Development (Rs. Crore)



Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Demands for Grants, 2020-21 to 2022-23.

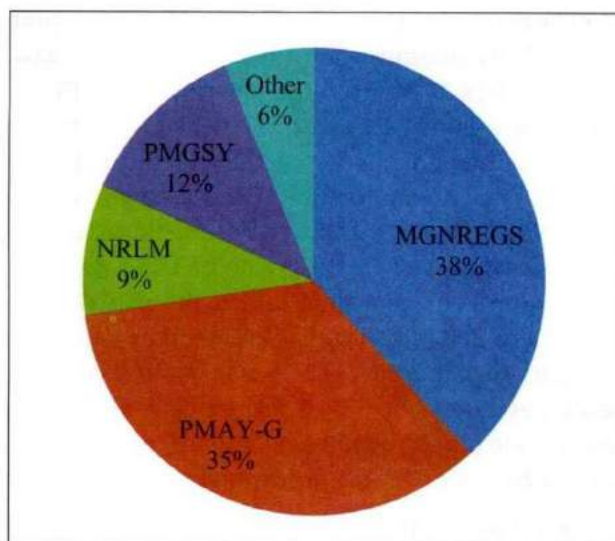
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is the most important among all the schemes of rural development. It seeks to strengthen the livelihood resource base of the poor by providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment per year to every rural house hold whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The scheme was introduced in the year 2005 through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Presently, it covers all the rural districts (716) of the country. During the recent past, the scheme has emerged as the essential safety net for many rural workers who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this scheme during the year 2022-23, assets worth Rs. 7.10 crore were created through the generation of 253.11 crore person days benefiting 5.82 crore households up to February 10, 2023. In the union budget 2023-24, the allocation for the MGNREGS has been slashed nearly by 33 per cent accounting for Rs. 60,000 crore as compared to Rs. 89,400 crore of revised expenditure of 2022-23 (Table 2). The fall in allocation could be attributed to lower demand of works under MGNREGA due to the strong agricultural growth and a swift recovery from COVID-19 induced slowdown, resulting in better employment opportunities in rural areas. If

the expenditure on the scheme for the last seven years is taken into account, it went up at the annual growth rate of 4.40 per cent. In 2023-24, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme accounted for nearly 38 per cent of total expenditure on all centrally sponsored schemes of rural development. It is followed in descending order by Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Gramin (35 per cent), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (12 per cent) and National Rural Livelihood Mission (9 per cent) (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Budget Allocation to Rural Development Schemes as Percentage of

Total Allocation to Centrally Sponsored Schemes (2023-24 BE)



Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Demands for Grants, 2023-24

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Gramin

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G) has been provided the second highest allocation in the union budget 2023-24. This scheme, aims at providing financial assistance to the rural poor for construction of pucca houses of 25 sq. mt. with all basic amenities (piped drinking water, electricity connection, LPG gas connection etc.). Originally launched in 1985 as Indira Awas Yojana, PMAY-G was revamped in November 2016 with the objective to provide around 3 crore houses to all the eligible rural households by the year 2024. The funds allocated to the scheme (Rs. 54,487 crore) comprise nearly 35 per cent of the budgeted expenditure on all the centrally sponsored schemes (Fig. 3). In the last seven years, the government has dedicated significant efforts towards improving

the housing situation in rural areas with the vision of ensuring Housing for All. Total expenditure on PMAY-G was Rs. 22,572 crore in 2017-18 which increased sharply to Rs. 54,487 crore in 2023-24, witnessing an annual growth of 19.54 per cent, which is the highest among all centrally sponsored schemes. A total of 2.83 crore houses have been sanctioned and 2.14 crore have been completed by February 10, 2023 under the Scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is the third most momentous centrally sponsored scheme of rural development. It was launched on 25th December 2000 by the then Prime Minister Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the fully funded central Government scheme. The primary objective of the scheme is to promote economic activities in rural India by providing all-weather road connectivity to the eligible un-connected rural habitations. The scheme has been allocated Rs. 19,000 crore in 2023-24, accounting for nearly 12 per cent of the total budget of Department of Rural Development. In the past seven years, the expenditure on the scheme has gone up at an annual growth rate of 3.30 per cent. Since, the inception of the scheme, total 1,74,029 works with road length of 7,25,774 kilometers were constructed till 10th February, 2023. The scheme has had immensely positive impact on agriculture, health, education, employment generation and thus providing access to basic services and lifting the income of rural masses.

National Rural Livelihoods Mission

National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was launched by the Government of India in June 2011. It was renamed as Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) on March 29, 2016. It aims at creating diversified and gainful self-employment to the rural poor through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. The scheme seeks to promote and strengthen the SHGs which in turn are expected to mediate the livelihoods of the rural poor. The programme envisages covering of all the rural poor households to be organised in 70-75 lakh SHGs at the village and cluster level by 2024-25. Presently, the scheme covers 737 districts spread over 2,68,675 Gram Panchayats and 7,40,845 village of the country. Among various centrally sponsored schemes, DAY-NRLM witnessed

the second high growth rate (17.21 per cent) during last seven years. The budget allocation to the Mission increased from Rs. 4,327 crore in 2017-18 to Rs. 14,129 crore in 2023-24.

National Social Assistance Programme

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a welfare programme which comprises of many sub-schemes aimed at providing public assistance to citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and any form of disability. The scheme has been in existence since 1995. The major schemes under this programme include Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme and Annapurna Scheme. In 2022-23, the Programme was allocated Rs. 9,652 crore, which is nearly 18.40 per cent increase over the expenditure of previous year (Table 2).

Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission

Launched on 21st February 2016, SPMRM is a unique programme, designed to deliver catalytic interventions to rural areas, on the threshold of growth. It aims at developing cluster of villages that preserve and nurture the essence of rural community life with focus on equity and inclusiveness without compromising the facilities perceived to be essentially urban in nature. The main objective is to bridge the rural-urban divide viz; economic, technological and those related to modern facilities for stimulating local economic development with emphasis on employment generation in rural areas. The mission has the target to create 300 Rurban Clusters with the matic economic growth points across the country.

Allocation to the Department of Land Resources

Government of India has accorded high priority to increase productivity of degraded soil and improve real-time information on land. In this context, The Department of Land Resources (DoLR) created under the Ministry of Rural Development implements two key schemes: (i) Integrated Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY) and (ii) Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP). In 2023-24, the Department was allocated Rs. 2,419 crore, which is which is

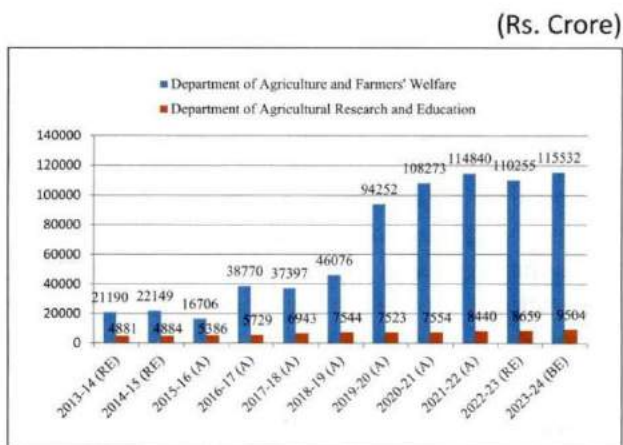


92 per cent higher over the revised expenditure estimates (Rs. 1,260) of previous year. (Table 1).

Allocation to The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

The policies of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare have direct bearing on the rural communities. The Ministry has two Departments: (i) The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare, which implements policies and programmes related to agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry and (ii) The Department of Agricultural Research and Education, which coordinates and promotes agricultural research and education. The major central sector schemes/projects under the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare are; Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan), Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS), Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme (MIS-PSS), Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Yojna (PM-AASHA), Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY).

Figure 4: Budget Allocation to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare



Source: GOI, Ministry Wise Summary of Budget Provisions, 2013-14 to 2023-24.

The budget allocation to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare went up from Rs. 26,071 in 2013-14 to Rs. 1,25,036 crore in 2023-24, reflecting a whopping growth rate 17.20 per cent per annum during the last decade (Fig.4). The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has received 92.40 per cent of the allocation to the Ministry in 2023-24. The budgetary allocation to the Department went up from Rs. 21,190 crore to

Rs. 1,15,532 crore witnessing a substantial growth rate of 18.12 per cent per annum during the period from 2013-14 to 2023-24. On the other hand, budget allocation to the Department of Agricultural Research and Education went up comparatively at a lower rate of 6.70 per cent per annum during the period under reference.

Income support to Farmers

With a view to provide income support to the farmer families across the country, in February 2019, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) yojana was launched to augment the income of farmers with land holding up to 2 hectares, subject to certain exclusions. The scheme aims at supplementing the financial needs of the of families of small and marginal farmers to enable them to take care of expenses related to their occupation as well as domestic needs. Under the scheme government provides Rs. 6,000 to each beneficiary in three equal installments to the eligible farmers. In the union budget 2023-24, an amount of Rs. 60,000 crore was allocated to the PM-KISAN, which is 11.76 per cent lower as compared to budgetary estimates (BE) of Rs. 68,000 crore made for the financial year 2022-23. The reduction in the PM-Kisan budget is due to a fall in the number of eligible beneficiaries.

The Finance Minister during the presentation of the Union budget 2023-24, has announced that an Agriculture Accelerator Fund will be set-up to encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas, which will aim at bringing modern technologies to transform agricultural practices and hence increase productivity and profitability. Some other announcements for agriculture in the Budget are: (a) to build digital public infrastructure for providing information services to farmers, (b) increase in agricredit to Rs. 20 trillion, with focus on animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries, (c) global hub for millets (Shree Anna), and (d) cooperatives-based development for agriculture. The objective of all these programmes is to bring about overall improvement in the quality of life of rural people through employment generation, poverty eradication and ensuring national standard of life, health and other basic amenities.

Initiatives and Way Forward

As India is primarily a rural economy with economic inequalities and resource constraints,

it is essential to promote economic activities through various incentives in rural areas. To attract unemployed educated youth to agriculture, agribusiness and agri-preneurship, impetus on creating scientific temper and fostering innovative spirit is the need of the hour. Public expenditure on social infrastructure is also needed to be prioritized to promote sustainable and inclusive growth. In order to reap the advantages of demographic dividend, it is imperative to improve educational standards, skilling the rural youth, empowering women, providing affordable health care to all and enhance job opportunities in a big way. Above all, uplifting of socially and economically backward sections of the society is of paramount significance for bridging the widening gap between the haves and have-nots. It is earnestly hoped that the large number of policies and programmes in place for income and employment generation in rural India will pave the way for attaining the goal of growth with justice. Last but not least, a joint effort on the part of the Government, private sector and self-help-groups supported by the public at large will play a vital role in boosting economic activities

and ultimately improving the quality of life of rural people.

Conclusion

To conclude, balanced regional development with focus on rural areas has always been at the top of development agenda in India. Over the last few years, efforts in this direction have been accelerated by the Government to meet the vision of "*sabka saath, sabka vikas and sabka vishwas*". In the union budget 2023-24, liberal funds have been provided for generating income and employment in rural areas through increased public expenditure on the schemes and programmes formulated for this purpose. In fact, the country is entering the Amrit Kal with improved quality of rural life, affordable access to basic amenities such as clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity, healthcare and better employment opportunities. The Government's initiatives towards more inclusive growth, social protection and gender responsive development will certainly pave the way for journey of the country to become the third largest economy in the world by 2027. ■

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MSME Sector on Growth Trajectory

Partha Pratim Sahu

The current year budget, 2023-24 has made many significant provisions to put MSME sector on a sustained higher growth trajectory. It has also taken due care to address not only the structural constraints that MSME sector continues to grapple with but also the emerging and newer challenges thrown by pandemic-led prolonged and intense lockdown.

India's manufacturing sector is largely dominated by micro and small enterprises which plays a critical role in achieving the objectives of faster and more inclusive growth in India due to its vast employment potential and its contribution to total industrial output and exports. The recent Economic Survey 2022-23 presented a detailed picture on the performance and contribution of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector to the national economy during last 2-3 years. The contribution of the MSME sector to overall Gross Value Added (GVA) increased from 29.3 per cent in 2018-19 to 30.5 per cent in 2019-20. But, due to the economic impact of the pandemic caused the sector's share to fall to 26.8 per cent in 2020-21. As per latest available statistics, the MSME sector accounts for over 90 per cent of industrial units, 40 per cent of the total manufacturing output and nearly 35 per cent of India's exports. However, the MSME sector continues to grapple with various infirmities such as low level of technology-in-use, limited access to inputs and credits, unfavourable market environment and falling outside the ambit formal business and labour regulations. Moreover, a significantly large proportion of MSME sector operate in rural areas and after agriculture, this sector is the biggest employment provider in rural areas and hence crucial for socio-economic wellbeing of rural populace. But, the rural located enterprises witness many locational disadvantages as compared to their urban counterpart.

MSME during Pandemic Era and Beyond

The MSME sector – with a total of just over 63 million enterprises, contributing to over 110 million jobs and almost a third of India's GDP and about half of India's manufacturing output and exports – has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 and pandemic led lockdown. These units witnessed varying degrees of disruptions in supply chain, decrease in product demand, decrease in labour supply, loss of revenue, inadequate access to credit and in worst case scenario, closure of unit. Laying off the workers on temporary or permanent basis, delayed or irregular wage payments and lack of access to any social safety nets are another set of challenges faced by MSME sector. Few of the highly labour-intensive sectors like gems and jewellery sector, leather sector, man-made yarn and fibres sector along with lodging, tourism, airlines, retail sector, steel, apparel, automotive sectors have borne the maximum impact of COVID-19, resulting in significant job losses (Chattopadhyay and Sahu, 2022). A series of schemes and programmes were also announced during the pandemic times both by state and central Governments focussing on MSME.

Through the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat package, the government has taken multiple steps to moderate the economic impacts of the pandemic on MSMEs. Some of the measures undertaken include the modification of the definition of MSMEs; the provision of ₹ 20,000 crore subordinate debt for stressed MSMEs, ₹ 50,000 crore equity infusion

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through Self Reliant India fund; the waiving of the global tender requirement for procurement of up to ₹ 200 crore; launching of the Udyam portal for MSME registration, a paperless, zero-cost registration portal that is based on self-declaration and only requires Aadhaar. Registrations on the Udyam portal crossed the one crore mark in August 2022, surpassing the total registration done in the past 14 years under the old regime in just 2.5 years. As of 7th January 2022, the portal has a total registration count of 1.32 crore, of which 1.27 crore have been classified as micro-enterprises. Enterprises registered on the portal employ 9.6 crore people, of which 2.3 crore are women. There are 1.5 lakh exporting units, which have contributed a cumulative Rs. 9.7 lakh crore worth of exports (See Economic Survey, 2022-23 for more details).

A series of efforts were initiated by the Central Government, to help micro, small and medium enterprises to transcend to formal institutional network and gain from the services, schemes and programmes more smoothly and systematically. The creation of digital identities such as Aadhaar, registration of unorganised workers on the e-shram portal, street vendors on SVANidhi, taxpaying firms on GSTN, and MSMEs on the Udayam portal, has played a significant role in the inclusion of these groups under the formal economic net. For instance, we can now track that out of the 1.27 crore enterprises registered on the Udyam Portal, more than 93,000 micro-enterprises have grown to become small enterprises, and 10,000 small enterprises have become medium enterprises over the last two years. Creating an identity has also simplified and enabled access to formal credit for many of these groups. More than 32.7 lakh street vendors have availed of a first loan of Rs. 10,000 under the PM SVANidhi Scheme, and of these, more than 6.9 lakh have availed a second loan of Rs. 20,000.

In order to digitally empower MSME sector, many IT-enabled portals and dashboards were created. To list a few, such as MSME 'Sampark', MSME 'Sambandh', MSME 'Samadhaan', MSME Idea Portal, Udyamimitra etc. provide multiple services including registration, easy access of financial and non-financial service needs, provisioning skilled workers, grievances related to delayed payments and so on. The MSMEs have also benefitted from

access to digital platforms for their marketing needs and easy payments. With the Open Network for Digital Commerce creating opportunities for MSMEs to access e-commerce technology and

A series of efforts were initiated by the Central Government, to help micro, small and medium enterprises to transcend to formal institutional network and gain from the services, schemes and programmes more smoothly and systematically.

diversify their target markets, this trend will likely strengthen further. Moreover, on boarding GSTN as a financial information provider Reforms to reduce the compliance burden on MSMEs, enhance their access to finance and working capital and equip them with skills, knowledge and attitude to grow their businesses responsibly. GeM has taken a host of steps to onboard products of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), tribal communities, artisans, weavers, and MSMEs. 57 per cent of the total business on GeM has come through the MSME units, and female entrepreneurs have contributed over 6 per cent (See Economic Survey, 2022-23 for more details). These initiatives will not only lead to better governance and accountability but also reduce the compliance burden on MSME.

Various initiatives have also been taken to provide an opportunity to small retailers, manufacturers, and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for greater outreach. One District–One Product (ODOP) initiative has been facilitating the onboarding of sellers of identified products on e-Commerce platforms to provide greater visibility for small businesses from the rural sector. E-marketplace www.tribesindia.com portal through Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) has been onboarding tribal artisans with their products for online sales, ensuring tribal products find a larger audience in the international market as well. The Economic Survey reported varying degrees of revival and recovery of MSME sector as reflected by their payments towards Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Emergency Credit Linked Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) easing their debt servicing concerns during pandemic era and beyond.

Although, the pandemic-led lockdown has thrown many challenges for the MSME sector, it has also reiterated the importance of local economy and entrepreneurs. The micro entrepreneurs including the SHGs learnt to design and adopt a variety of coping strategies in response to pandemic. Household based and women led enterprises have provided the much-needed safety net to the families directly or indirectly related to the MSME sector. A variety of coping strategies including temporary (or permanent) lay-off, flexible working hours, selling at reduced margins, operating at below capacity utilisation, enhanced focus on marketing and online sales, diversified products and services, exploring new and alternative supply chains, readjusting working hours, rescheduling of bank loans, mortgage and so on may have been adopted by the individual entrepreneurs (Chattopadhyay and Sahu, 2022).

Key Provisions Under the Current Year Budget 2023-24:

Since pandemic, successive budgets have taken due care not only to address the structural constraints of MSME sector but also the emerging challenges due to various national and global changes, including COVID-19 pandemic, global slowdown, Russia-Ukraine war, rising petrol price and so on.

One of the key highlights of this budget is the revamping of MSME credit guarantee scheme. The budget made a provision of infusing Rs. 9,000 crore in the corpus of the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), effective April 1, 2023, which will enable additional collateral-free credit of Rs. 2 lakh crore to MSMEs with a reduction of the cost of credit by 1 per cent. Second, a National Financial Information Registry will be set up to serve as the central repository of financial and ancillary information and enable an efficient flow of credit. Third, the limit for presumptive taxation increased for micro enterprises with a turnover of up to Rs. 2 crore to Rs. 3 crore and for certain professionals with a turnover of up to Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 75 lakh. Fourth, the government and government undertakings will return 95 per cent of the forfeited amount related to bid or performance security in cases of failure of MSMEs to execute contract during the COVID-19 period in order to provide relief to MSMEs. All these measures will lead to a much-improved financial health of well-capitalised public sector banks to

ensure increased credit flow to MSME sector.

India being the third largest ecosystem for start-ups globally, and ranks second in innovation quality among middle-income countries, the current budget also announced several measures to promote start-ups. It was proposed to extend the date of incorporation for income tax benefits to start-ups from March 31, 2023 to March 31, 2024 and also to provide the benefit of carry forward of losses on change of shareholding of start-ups from seven years of incorporation to ten years.

The National Logistic Policy (NLP) aiming to bring down the logistic costs from 13-14 per cent to 8 per cent of GDP will encourage more MSMEs to use tech-powered logistics services. The five-year rollout of the Rs. 6,000 crore World Bank-assisted Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme was announced in the budget to help the MSME sector become more resilient, competitive and efficient. About 6.35 lakh MSMEs are likely to benefit from better access to market, finance and credit under the scheme. 25 states and one union territory have been onboarded to be part of the scheme.

To ease the access to government data on registration of MSMEs, unorganised workers, availability of skilled workforce, etc. four portals viz., Udyam, e-Shram (creating national database of unorganised workers), National Career Service (NCS – catering to employment-related services like job search, job matching, career counselling, etc), and Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee-Employer Mapping (ASEEM – matching supply of skilled workforce with the market demand) will be interlinked. Such organic databases will not only provide G2C, B2C and B2B services (on credit facilitation, skilling, and recruitment) but also formalise the economy and enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for all.

A special package for traditional artisans and craftsmen under the PM Vishwa Karma Kaushal Samman was announced to integrate them with the MSME value chain and enable them to improve quality, scale and reach of their products. The setting up of Entity DigiLocker for MSMEs will allow storing and sharing documents online securely, whenever needed, with various authorities, regulators, banks, and business entities. The DigiLocker storage and sharing services for MSMEs and other business

entities, including startups, will leverage more innovation in fintech services.

The GOBARDhan (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme will help— a) villages manage their cattle waste, agriculture waste, and, in the long run, all organic waste safely, b) communities turn their cattle and organic waste into wealth by utilising decentralised systems, c) convert organic waste, particularly cattle waste, into biogas and fertiliser for rural use and d) encourage rural entrepreneurship, employment, and income generation. SHGs based enterprises and farmers group will significantly be benefited from these interventions.

This budget duly recognised and endorsed the heterogeneity of the MSME sector. It has not only focussed on the typical MSME units but also made several budgetary provisions towards SHGs and cooperative institutions. For long run rural transformation, the Economic Survey has lauded the crucial role played by SHGs. A new scheme called 'Mahila Samman Saving Certificate' was announced in the current budget. Under this scheme, one-time new small saving with deposit facility for the women and girls will be for a period of two years, with rate of interest 7.5 per cent. The deposit can be made in the name of a woman or a girl child. The scheme will have a partial withdrawal facility as well. In this scheme, the maximum deposit amount is kept at Rs. 2 lakh.

Cooperative institutions, though had played a crucial role in the past for inclusive and sustainable rural development did not get due attention from policy makers. Subsequent to the establishment of a new ministry, several new measures were taken to create a strong cadre of cooperatives. The current budget has provided the much needed support to this sector, including setting up of massive decentralised storage capacity so that farmers can store their products and realise remunerative prices by selling at an appropriate time. In addition, to promote the growth of new cooperative manufacturing societies, the budget has announced a concessional income tax rate of 15 per cent for cooperatives that begin manufacturing before March 31, 2024. The budget has also increased to Rs. 2 Lakh per member the limit of cash deposits to and loans in cash by primary agricultural cooperative societies (PACs) and primary cooperative agricultural and rural development

banks. Cooperative societies have been given a higher limit of Rs. 3 Crore for tax deducted at source on cash withdrawal. Cooperative societies help micro and small entrepreneurs procure raw materials at discount rates and reduce production cost. These institutions provide a platform to sell their products directly to consumers by removing intermediaries and ensuring higher sales and profits for the producers. Attempts are also being made for cooperatives to register in GeM portal, enabling them to make purchases from more than 40 lakh sellers.

Way Forward

The larger question is what do MSMEs need and whether the hopes, aspirations and concerns of the huge and heterogeneous MSME sector get reflected in various budgets. Attempts should be made that the budgetary provisions are duly executed. But sadly, due to inadequate and poor extension machineries, especially in the rural areas, a preponderant majority micro, small and SHG-based entrepreneurs are not aware of various announcements and provisions made in the budget. A robust mechanism should be designed to aggressively sensitise these entrepreneurs across size class, about budgetary provisions which are meant for them and how they can access these provisions. The existing institutions such as MSE Facilitation Council (MSEFC), District Industries Centres (DICs), State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLMs), RSETIs, Industry Associations and local institutions such as panchayat must work together in this direction. Special Gram Sabha, say Udyog Gram Sabha may be conducted at panchayat level to sensitise both existing and aspiring entrepreneurs about budgetary provisions and announcements. Needless to say that a strong and robust MSME sector is required for India to move to a 5 trillion USD economy and join the developed nations club! ■

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Remembering Netaji,

Today it is the endeavour of India that energy of Netaji should guide the country. Netaji's statue on Kartavya Path will become its medium. This statue will become a source of inspiration for Subhas Babu's imprint in the policies and decisions of the country.

*-Prime Minister Narendra Modi
at Kartavya Path*

To take forward PM Modi's vision of honouring India's rich culture and heritage, the Modi government has prioritised honouring the life of India's freedom fighters. As a part of this, several initiatives have been taken to remember and honour Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's contribution to the Indian freedom struggle and the birth of a new India. The Modi government's efforts highlight Netaji's role as a great freedom fighter and visionary leader and the measures taken in this direction include, amongst other things, celebrating his birthday,

23 January, as Parakram Divas
annually starting 2021.

**Netaji Bose unfurled the
Tricolour**

in December 1943 at Port Blair
in the Andaman Islands.

To pay tribute to his dream of unfurling the Tricolour at Red Fort, New Delhi, the Modi government dedicated a museum at the Red Fort to Netaji and the Azad Hind Fauj. In another step to emphasise Netaji's pre-independence connection to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, on 16th October 2021, the Modi government dedicated the Azad Hind Fauj Setu in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the nation.

**Netaji's Vision for an
Independent India**

Netaji, through his work and vision, represented the aspirations of young and old leaders alike for a progressive and successful Bharat. PM Modi is carrying forward Netaji's legacy through his mission for

**"Ek Bharat
Shreshtha Bharat"**

focusing on the all-round development of the country and its people. In February 1938, the 51st Indian National Congress session in Haripura unanimously elected Netaji as the INC President. Netaji laid emphasis on the independence and reconstruction of the country and the formation of a Planning Committee for future India. His letter to presidents of provincial Congress committees inspired the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution. Emphasising India's motto of unity in diversity, in 1941, Netaji strengthened the Azad Hind Fauj for liberation by enlisting men from every caste, religion, and region. In 1943, when women's emancipation was a heated debate all over the world,

**Netaji established the
"Rani Jhansi Regiment"**

to include women in the Indian National Army (INA). The Modi government's decision to grant women a permanent commission in the military is a display of Netaji's vision for a greater role of women in the growth and development of the country.



**Parakram Divas & Netaji's
125th Birth Anniversary**

To instill a sense of pride in Indians for the sacrifice of freedom fighters and martyrs, the Modi government has commissioned new memorials and institutions named after freedom fighters. PM Modi made a similar effort to honour Netaji's contribution to India by

Inaugurating a statue of Netaji

at the Canopy near India Gate on 8th September 2022. The 28-foot-tall statue is handcrafted out of a single rock and is one of India's largest and most lifelike sculptures. The government decided to commemorate Netaji's 125th birth anniversary at the national and international level as celebrations began on 23rd January 2021. The Modi government took the decision to commemorate Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation and now, Republic Day celebrations begin with Parakram Divas. It is an act to inspire people of the country, particularly the youth, to act with fortitude in the face of adversity as Netaji did, and to inculcate in them a spirit of patriotic fervour. PM Modi presided over Parakram Divas celebrations at Kolkata's Victoria Memorial in 2021. A cultural programme based on Netaji's theme, Amra Nuton Jouboneri Doot, was also held and included a permanent exhibition, Nirbhik Subhas, a 3D projection mapping show on Netaji, the unveiling of the book titled, "Letters of Netaji," the release of a commemorative coin, and the release of a stamp in memory of Netaji.

In January 2021, honouring Netaji's legacy to the country, the Union Ministry of Railways, under PM Modi's leadership, renamed the Howrah-Kalka Mail as "Netaji Express". It is worth noting that the Howrah-Kalka Mail is one of Indian Railways' most popular and oldest trains. It runs from Howrah (Eastern Railway) to Kalka (Northern Railway) via Delhi and is an important connector between the eastern and northern regions of India.

Honouring His Legacy

Major Initiatives by the Modi Government to Honour Netaji

Date	Event	Place
14 th October, 2015	Declassification of Records & Files on Netaji	New Delhi
21 st October, 2018	PM Modi hoisted the Tiranga atop the Red Fort to mark 75 years of the Netaji-led Azad Hind Government	New Delhi
30 th December, 2018	Ross Island in A&N Islands renamed as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep	Cellular Jail in Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
23 rd January, 2019	Inauguration of the Subhas Chandra Bose Museum	Red Fort, New Delhi
25 th February, 2019	Inauguration of National War Memorial	India Gate, New Delhi
20 th January, 2021	Howrah- Kalka express renamed Netaji Express	Howrah to Kalka
22 nd January, 2021	Discussion on, "Teachings of Netaji & its Ever Growing Relevance for Youth in Nation Building"	Virtual conferencing
22 nd January, 2021	Ministry of Tourism's Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series on, "Relevance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 21 st Century"	Virtual conferencing
23 rd January, 2021	Nirbhik Subhas: 125 th Birth Anniversary Year of Netaji	Kolkata, West Bengal
16 th October, 2021	Inauguration of Azad Hind Fauj Setu over Humphrey Strait Creek	Andaman and Nicobar Islands
23 rd March, 2022	Inauguration of Biplobi Bharat Gallery	Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, West Bengal
8 th September, 2022	Inauguration of the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose statue	India Gate, New Delhi

PM Modi's Tribute to Netaji

In order to showcase Netaji's many contributions to the idea of a united, independent and prosperous India, **PM Modi inaugurated the Biplobi Bharat Gallery at Victoria Memorial Hall in West Bengal in March 2022.** The gallery depicts the revolutionaries' role in the freedom struggle and their armed resistance to British rule. The gallery also highlights the revolutionary movement, the formation of significant associations by revolutionary leaders, the revival of the Indian National Army (INA) under Netaji's leadership, and the Naval uprising against erstwhile colonial government and its contribution. As part of the Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, events were held in India and South East Asia in the run-up to 21st October 2021, to commemorate the anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's formation of the Azad Hind Government 78 years ago in 1943. Participants in the programmes included INA veterans, school students, local communities, and others, creating a true embodiment of the concept of **Jan Bhagidari**. Events were held in a number of states, including Odisha, Manipur, and Nagaland as the Ministry of Culture, under PM Modi's guidance spearheaded the organisation of an integrated programme calendar across regions and geographies, **with participation from various Ministries, States and Union Territories of India, and Singapore.**

In October 2021, the **Azad Hind Fauj Bridge** was dedicated in his honour so that future generations would always remember his sacrifices and heroic actions. The bridge is 1.45 km long and runs over Humphrey Strait Creek in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It connects North, Middle, and South Andaman and is a marker of Netaji's legacy to the island when he liberated Andaman and unfurled the Tricolour there in 1943. On January 23, 2023 to commemorate Netaji's 126th birth anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a model of the proposed Netaji Memorial at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Netaji's connection to Andaman & Declassifying papers related to Netaji

PM Modi inaugurated the Subhas Chandra Bose Museum at the Red Fort on 23rd January, 2019. The museum not only provides a detailed account of Netaji's life and the history of the INA but also displays numerous valuable artefacts related to both.

To pay further tribute to Netaji, two institutions were named after him in 2018 – Netaji Subhas University of Technology in New Delhi and Netaji Subhas University in Pokhari, Jamshedpur.

In 2018 PM Modi renamed Ross Island in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar as "Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep"



In 2018, **PM Modi renamed Ross Island in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar as "Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep"** to honour the 75th anniversary of Netaji hoisting the Tricolour on Indian soil in Andaman. The same year, the National Disaster Management Authority established the **"Subhas Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar"** to recognise outstanding work done by individuals and institutions in India in the field of disaster management. Addressing the long pending demand to declassify documents on Netaji, on 14 October 2015 PM Modi, during a meeting with members of Netaji's family at his residence in New Delhi, **announced that the government would declassify and make public the files relating to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's life and works.**

By May 2016 all records pertaining to Netaji and the Azad Hind Fauj were declassified and placed in the National Archives of India.

Major Events in Netaji's Life

— Date — Event — Place

1938
Elected President of Indian National Congress Haripur, Bank of River Tagli
1939
Formed Forward Bloc Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh
1941
Met with the then Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano Italy
1942
Formation of the Indian National Army or Azad Hind Fauj
1943
Formed Rani Jhansi Regiment of the INA
1943
Liberated Andaman & Unfurled the Tricolour Port Blair, Andaman Islands
1943
Delivered the Famous "Dilli Chalo" Address Purana, Singapore
1943
Formed Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) Cathay Building, Singapore
1943
FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF UNDIVIDED INDIA
1944
Established Azad Hind Bank Rangoon, Myanmar

Netaji's Footprint on Future India

The inauguration of Netaji's statue under the canopy at India Gate and the renaming of Rajpath to Kartavya Path go hand-in-hand with PM Modi's vision of his *panch prans*. The inclusion of Netaji's birthday is consistent with PM Modi's emphasis on commemorating significant aspects of Indian history and culture.

The Modi government's numerous initiatives to acclaim the efforts of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose by installing Netaji's statue in New Delhi, replacing centuries-old colonial legacy and dedicating a museum in his name in 2019 will act as trailblazers to lead the country into the future while keeping a strong-hold on the past ideals of visionary Indian behemoths like Netaji.

Inclusive Development in Education

Rashi Sharma
Purabi Pattanayak

The education sector is going through significant changes with the implementation of National Education Policy 2020. This budget has provided significant allocation for education and aims to promote an equitable and inclusive education system across India.

The new reality of the twenty-first century has altered the objectives and standards of education everywhere. Information technologies, including digital skills and literacy, have become fundamental to daily life. The teacher of the twenty-first century must be adaptable and constructive, continually raising his or her bar, looking for answers, and resolving issues. For academic and personal realisation, deep understanding and accumulation of everlasting knowledge are important but not sufficient prerequisites. Critical thinking, collaboration, and resource management are necessary for effective socialisation. Young people should not only be capable, but also thoughtful, creative and innovative who can overcome obstacles and contribute to the advancement of society.

Along with improving the employability of people in the working age group, education also breaks the cycles of poverty and social exclusion and promotes equality. Goal 4 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, "Quality Education," intends to "ensure inclusive and

equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone" by the year 2030. Due to the transformative implications it can have on most other SDGs, including "no poverty," "zero hunger," "gender equality," etc., this goal is of utmost importance. In fact, a quality education for every child is essential to sustainable development

Union Budget 2023-24







National Digital Library for Children and Adolescents

A National Digital Library for children and adolescents will be set up for facilitating availability of quality books

States will be encouraged to set up physical libraries at panchayat and ward levels and provide infrastructure for accessing the National Digital Library resources

To build a culture of reading, the National Book Trust, Children's Book Trust **will be encouraged to provide and replenish non-curricular titles in regional languages and English** to these physical libraries

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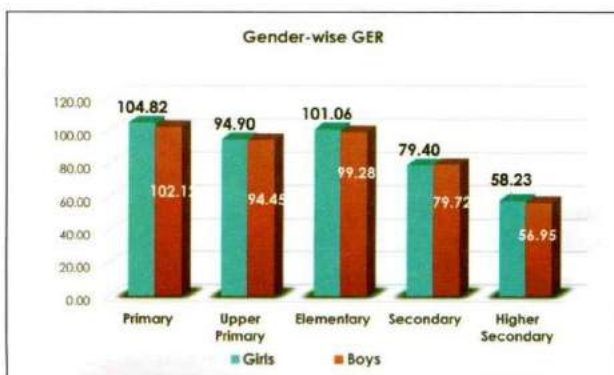
because it gives them the skills they required to reach their full potential and contribute to their country's and their own socio-economic advancement as productive citizens. NEP 2020, was formulated with the intention of addressing the nation's numerous and pressing developmental needs. The NEP 2020 promotes youth skill acquisition and all-around development in a welcoming, open, and multilingual environment.

School Educational Scenario

Despite last few years affected by COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged period of school closures, there have been some positive trends seen in education sector which gives hope and assurance that systemic and continuous intervention will certainly be able to bridge the learning gaps caused by the pandemic.

Access to school is now recognised as a non-negotiable part of a child's right to education. It is enshrined in law and is widely accepted in practice. This is a remarkable achievement in a country as vast and diverse as India. Consequently, in 2021-22 the Gross Access ratio (GAR) of schooling facility at primary level is 97.49 per cent habitations, 97.01 per cent at upper primary level, and 95.48 per cent at secondary level.

Increase in Enrolment and Basic Facilities: As per Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE +) and economic survey, a total of 26.5 crore children were enrolled in schools. GER of girls is higher or equal in all stages of school education, which is a step further in ensuring equitable access to education:

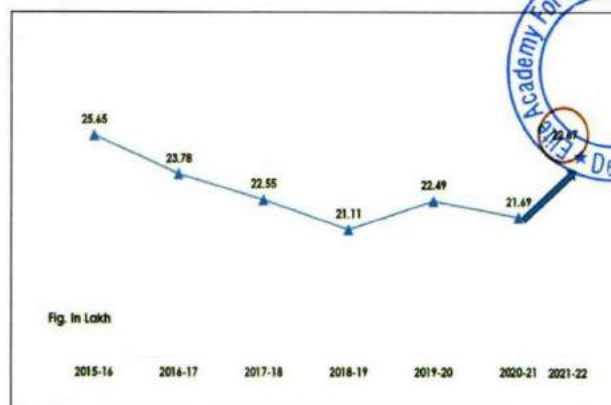


Source:- UDISE+2021-22

Total enrolment of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) in the year 2021-22, stands at 22.67

lakh as compared to 21.9 lakh in FY21, which is an increase of 3.3 per cent.

Children with Special needs (CWSN) Enrolment



Source:- UDISE+2021-22

Further, the number of students dropping out of school has steadily decreased in recent years across all grade levels. A significant part of increasing student enrollment and retention in schools is played by programmes like Samagra Shiksha, the RTE Act, improvements to school infrastructure and facilities, residential hostel buildings, teacher availability, regular teacher training, free textbooks, uniforms for children, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, and the PM POSHAN Scheme.

Most Government schools now have basic facilities, i.e. toilets (for boys or girls), drinking water, and hand-washing stations. The Samagra Shiksha Scheme and the Swachh Bharat Mission have played a crucial role in providing the necessary resources and developing these assets in schools by giving drinking water and sanitation a high priority. The government provides funding for the construction of smart classrooms and ICT labs in schools as part of the Samagra Shiksha Scheme, as well as support for hardware, instructional software, and e-content for use in the classroom.

Initiatives Taken in Previous Year

1. **PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI):** This is a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) that the government introduced on September 7, 2022. PM SHRI schools will have state-of-the-art facilities, demonstrate how the NEP is being implemented, and eventually become models for other institutions of learning in the area. The plan calls for improving the

existing schools now run by municipal, state, and federal governments as well as central government to create more than 14,500 PM SHRI Schools between FY23 and FY27. These schools will include inclusive and accessible modern infrastructure, such as labs, smart classrooms, libraries, sports equipment, and art rooms etc.



2. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Foundational Stage:

This is in accordance of the new 5+3+3+4 curricular structure propagated by NEP 2020 that incorporates early childhood care and education for all kids between the ages of 3 and 8. The NCF places "play," at the centre of the conceptual, practical, and transactional approaches to curriculum organisation, pedagogy, and content organisation, and the whole experience of the child, at the centre of these practices. It discusses how communities, parents, and teachers can support and enhance the developmental outcomes that are desired at this stage.

3. **PRASHAST:** A mobile app for disability screening called PRASHAST has been released; it covers 21 impairments, including the benchmark impairments listed in the 2016 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. The PRASHAST app will assist in identifying disability issues at the school level and will provide a school-wise report that can be shared with the appropriate parties to start the certification process in accordance with Samagra Shiksha requirements.
4. **The National Credit Framework (NCrF):** NCrF incorporates the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), and National School Education Qualification Framework, is an umbrella framework for skilling, re-skilling, up-skilling, accreditation,

and evaluation. It takes the NEP's vision for credit-earning into account (NSEQF). This would be a game-changer since it would create a lot of opportunities for students to advance and integrate formal education with experiential learning and vocational education, mainstreaming these two fields of study. The framework was made available for public feedback on October 19, 2022.

In addition to above, other initiatives like toy based pedagogy guidelines, starting Balvatikas in Kendriya Vidyalayas, Vidyanjali- an initiative for improving the quality of school education through community and various intervention under Samagra Shiksha were undertaken to improve the quality of school education sector.

Budget 2023-24: An Analysis

This year's budget for FY 2023-24 is critical to build on the foundation laid in the previous budgets. This budget is expected to give a boost to education, skill development, entrepreneurship, Research and Development, digital infrastructure, green growth and job creation which draws a meticulous blueprint for India @100 and lays a solid foundation for transforming India into a technology-driven knowledge-based economy.

The budget of 2023-24 envision a prosperous and inclusive India in which the fruits of development reach all. Therefore, the budget

tries to address a variety of issues that touch upon the fundamental principles of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly, addressing the development pyramid of equity, efficiency, and sustainability. The budget gave an excellent impetus to skill development, education, and technology.

The education sector is going through significant changes with the implementation of National Education Policy 2020. This budget has provided significant allocation for education and aims to promote an equitable and inclusive education system across India. For the first time, the allocation for education had crossed Rs. 1 lakh crore in last year's Budget. The Centre has allocated Rs. 112899.47 crore for education sector in the Union Budget 2023-24. The budgetary allocation witnessed the jump of 13 per cent (over revised estimates) which is 13,018.34 cr from FY 2022-23. The Department of School Education has been allocated Rs. 68,804.85 crore and Department of Higher Education gets Rs. 44,094.62 crore.

Thrust Areas of the Budget Announcements

India is having about 52.3 Corer population in the age group of 3-23 out of which around 25.15 crore population is in the age group of age 15-25, which caters to the aspirations of India of 21st century. India is also positioned favourably mainly due to its demographic advantage. This young population will lead India towards 'Amrit Kaal' by transforming India into a technology-driven knowledge-based society. The areas which have been announced in the budget clearly put the thrust on inclusive growth and development taking education to all sections of the society. The major announcements of the budget 2023-24 for education sector are as below:

School Education

The closure of schools due to pandemic-related lockdowns over the last few years has severely impacted India's school-going children. Many students, particularly in government schools and in rural India, have lost substantial years of education. After nearly three years of massive disruption caused by the pandemic, the country's education sector is now focusing on learning

recovery and Budget has provided priority areas to be emphasised upon.

(i) Re-envisioning Teachers' Training

According to National Education Policy 2020, training teachers is essential to producing a pool of educators who will influence the next generation. The best mentors are needed for the activity of teacher preparation, which calls for diversified perspectives. In order to improve primary education and facilitate the devolution of education to the district level, District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) were envisioned. In accordance with the NEP 2020, DIETs play a crucial role in ensuring that student trainees and in-service teachers get high-quality pre-service and in-service teacher preparation. Subsequently, DIETs will become the centers of excellence for research and dissemination of best practices in teacher education across the country. Teacher training has received more attention in the budget. According to the statement in budget, new pedagogy, curricular change, ongoing professional development, dipstick surveys, and the use of ICT would reimagine "Teachers' Training. For this objective, the District Institutes of Education and Training will grow into thriving centres of excellence.

(ii) National Digital Library for children and Adolescents

National Education Policy 2020 places a lot of emphasis on 'Reading' and availability of multilingual and diverse books for students at all stages. Books that are entertaining and inspirational for pupils of all grade levels inspire curiosity and learning. A national digital library for schools will be developed with works by reputable Indian and international authors to enable all school students to read and learn with books even when they do not have physical access to libraries and to have a wider range and larger selection of books in regional languages. It will include best Braille and Braille form translation tools, multiple user access to standardised books, talking books, and accessibility technology.

States will be urged to establish physical libraries at the ward and panchayat levels as well as to provide the necessary infrastructure to access



Major Highlights of School Education are as follows:

- ▶ An overall increase of Rs. 5355.48 cr (8.44 per cent) in the Budget Allocation in the FY 2023-24 (Rs. 68804.85 cr) from FY 2022-23 (Rs. 63449.37 cr).
- ▶ An overall increase in Budget Allocation of Rs. 9752.07 cr (16.51 per cent) in the in the FY 2023-24 (Rs. 68804.85 cr) BE from FY 2022-23 (Rs. 59052.78 cr) (RE). Out of which Scheme allocation is Rs. 54374.48 cr and Non-Scheme allocation is Rs. 14430.37 cr.
- ▶ Samagra Shiksha – an increase of Rs. 70.11 cr (0.18 per cent) from Rs. 37383.36 cr in BE 2022-23 to Rs. 37453.47 cr in BE 2023-24.
- ▶ PM Poshan – an increase of Rs. 1366.25 cr (13.35 per cent) from Rs. 10233.75 cr in BE 2022-23 to Rs. 11600.00 cr in BE 2023-24.
- ▶ PM SHRI – an increase of Rs. 2200.00 cr (122.22 per cent) from Rs. 1800.00 cr in BE 2022-23 to Rs. 4000.00 cr in BE 2023-24.
- ▶ World Bank aided Scheme of STARS - an increase of Rs. 250.00 cr (45.45 per cent) from Rs. 550.00 cr in BE 2022-23 to Rs. 800.00 cr in BE 2023-24.
- ▶ New India Literacy Programme (NILP) - an increase of Rs. 30.00 cr (23.62 per cent) from Rs. 127.00 cr in BE 2022-23 to Rs. 157.00 cr in BE 2023-24.
- ▶ Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) – an increased by Rs. 713.98 cr (9.33 per cent) (from Rs.7650.00 cr in BE 2022-23 to Rs. 8363.98 cr in BE 2023-24)
- ▶ Navodaya Vidyalaya Sangathan (NVS) – an increase by Rs. 1371.50 cr (33.32 per cent) (from Rs. 4115.00cr in BE 2022-23 to Rs. 5486.50 cr in BE 2023-24).

Major Highlights of Higher Education are as follows:

- ▶ Allocation for higher education increased to Rs. 44,094 crore in 2023-24 by 7.9 per cent from Rs. 40,828 crore in 2022-23 (BE). (Increase of Rs. 3266.27 Cr)
- ▶ IITs: 12 per cent increase- Rs. 9661 Cr in 2023-24 from 8495 Cr. in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 1066 Cr)
- ▶ PM Research fellowship: 100 per cent increase- Rs. 400 Cr. in 2023-24 from Rs. 200 Cr. in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 200 Cr)
- ▶ NITs and IIST: 10 per cent increase- Rs. 4820.6 Cr in 2023-24 from Rs. 4364 Cr in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 456.6 Cr.)
- ▶ IISERs- 6 per cent increase: Rs. 1462 Cr. in 2023-24 from Rs. 1379.53 Cr in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 82.47 Cr)
- ▶ IISc Bangalore: 12 per cent increase- Rs. 815.4 Cr in 2023-24 from Rs. 727.5 Cr in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 88.15 Cr)
- ▶ IIITs- 3 per cent increase: Rs. 560 Cr in 2023-24 from Rs. 542.52 Cr in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 17.48 Cr)
- ▶ Councils/Institutes for Excellence in Humanities and Social Sciences: 28 per cent increase of Rs. 400 Cr in 2023-24 from Rs. 311.68 Cr in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 88.32 Cr)
- ▶ Institutes for Promotion of Indian Languages: 20 per cent increase of Rs. 300.7 Cr in 2023-24 from Rs. 250 Cr in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 50.7 Cr)
- ▶ Schools of Planning and Architecture (SPAs): 13 per cent increase of Rs. 175 Cr in 2023-24 from Rs. 154.9 Cr in 2022-23 (increase of Rs. 20.1 Cr)

the National Digital Library's resources. Additionally, the National Book Trust, Children's Book Trust, and other sources will be urged to donate and replenish non-curricular titles in regional languages

and English to these physical libraries in order to foster a culture of reading and make up for learning loss during the pandemic. This programme will also involve cooperation with non-governmental

organisations that promote literacy. Financial sector regulators and organisations will be urged to supply these libraries with age-appropriate reading material in order to promote financial literacy.

The budget has prioritised the aspirational blocks and the pupils from tribal groups in addition to the aforementioned announcements with a specific focus. The government recently launched the Aspirational Blocks Programme, which covers 500 blocks, in order to provide essential public services in a variety of areas, including health, nutrition, education, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure. This programme builds on the success of the Aspirational Districts Program.

Over the next three years, the government will appoint 38,800 teachers and support personnel for the 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools, which serve 3.5 lakh tribal students, to improve access to education for the last mile.

Higher Education

This budget clearly reflects the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, and Jai Anusandhan." The government has laid emphasis on new age technologies.

- (i) **Centres of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence:** Three Artificial Intelligence Centres of Excellence (CoE) will be built in prestigious educational institutions to make the vision of "Make AI in India" and "Make AI work for India" a reality. Leading business players will work together to perform multidisciplinary research, create state-of-the-art applications, and address scalable issues in sustainable cities, agriculture, and health. As a result, an efficient AI ecosystem will be stimulated, and skilled workers will be nurtured.
- (ii) **Lab Grown Diamonds (LGDs):** A research and development grant for indigenous production is given in recognition of the IITs' pioneering role in the nation's research excellence. One of the IITs will get equipment and seeds from Lab Grown Diamonds (LGD) for a period of five years.
- (iii) **5G Services:** To actualise a new variety of options, business models, and employment

potential, 100 laboratories for developing apps using 5G services will be set up in IITs. Apps like Smart Classrooms, Precision Farming, Intelligent Transport Systems, and Healthcare are just a few of the topics covered in the labs. This government has been attempting to revolutionise engineering education by offering courses in developing industries and making the approach multidisciplinary in engineering schools across the nation, not just in IITs, NITs, and IISERs, etc. 100 labs in engineering schools focusing on 5G technology-related applications will boost employment, start-ups, and enterprises as well as encourage young engineers' innovation and entrepreneurship.

- (iv) **National Data Governance Policy:** To unleash innovation and research by start-ups and academia, a National Data Governance Policy will be brought out. This will enable access to anonymised data.

In addition to above announcements, Multidisciplinary courses in medical devices and programmes to promote research in pharmaceuticals, with both industry and government funding will further strengthen the 'Jai Anusandhan' motto.

Conclusion

India has made significant strides in achieving universal access to elementary education and is working diligently to meet the SDG target of achieving equitable, inclusive and quality secondary education for all by 2030. Consistent policies, programmes, and laws implemented or passed by the government over the course of the recent years have supported these efforts and accomplishments. Union Budget 2023–24 is a step to augment and further the efforts to achieve the objectives of NEP 2020 and SDG 4 and the announcements would also enable and strengthen the ongoing educational advancement. This budget pledges to transform K–12 and higher education in a positive and revolutionary way. It will enable significant infrastructure improvements and educational technology developments. This would raise the standard of instruction and learning and provide new opportunities for teachers, students, and researchers. ■

As India enters an era of holistic development and growth, the role that Northeast India plays in its growth story is indisputable. PM Modi has continuously reiterated the importance of the region in the country's long-term progress and in building its relationship with neighbouring countries. Often referring to the eight sister states of the Northeast as **Ashta Lakshmi**, the Modi government foregrounds the eight foundation pillars for its development, which include Peace, Power, Tourism, Internet Connectivity, Culture, Natural Farming, Sports, and Potential.

The Northeast has long been a focal point for PM Modi, reflected in more than 50 trips he has made to the region in the nine years since 2014. Over the course of the last few years, PM Modi has stressed the need for inclusion of the eight states beyond the 'Look East' and 'Act East' policies, and to shift focus towards 'Act Fast for Northeast' and 'Act First for Northeast'.

Acting Fast for Northeast, Acting First for Northeast

More than ₹3.64 lakh crores spent on the development of the Northeast India since 2014 to complement policy efforts with financial support.

Gross Budgetary Support for Northeast increased by nearly three-fold between 2014-15 and 2023-24

In 2017, the Modi government launched the North Eastern Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS). Up till March 2022, the scheme has sanctioned 145 projects costing nearly ₹3,400 crores for tourism-related infrastructure development of the region. To address the development gaps in the Northeast, the Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region or PM-DevINE was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23.

PM-DevINE is fully funded by the centre with a Rs 6,600 crore outlay for four years starting from 2022-23

Roadway Development in Top Gear

Total: **237 projects**
2,750 kms

- Projects Completed in Last 5 Years
- Approx. Length in Km

83 1,240	23 530	18 280	64 280	36 250	6 110	7 60
Assam	Arunachal Pradesh	Manipur	Nagaland	Mizoram	Sikkim	Tripura

Mainstreaming the Northeast with Infrastructure

Since 2014, under the able guidance of PM Modi, connectivity in the region has improved manifold by way of increased number of airports, length of highways, expansion of railways and better telecommunication infrastructure.

51 road and bridge projects, 23 water supply projects, 36 health projects, 6 power projects, & 29 education projects will be commissioned under NESIDS

3x Increase in Number of Projects Sanctioned For Northeast

Total Projects Sanctioned: **1,350**

- Number of Projects

15 air connectivity projects worth more than ₹2,200 crores in the pipeline to further improve Northeast India's air connectivity with rest of the country.

7 New airports

were built in the last 8 years with nearly **1,000 new flights introduced**

To improve railway connectivity, more than ₹51,000 crores have been spent since 2014.

The first greenfield airport in Arunachal Pradesh, the Donyi Polo Airport, was inaugurated by PM Modi in November 2022.

19 New railway projects

worth more than **₹77,900 crores** allocated to the region.

High-quality infrastructure like roads and bridges have improved connectivity to the remote corners of the Northeast. Nearly 29 projects have been completed so far under the North East Road Sector Development Scheme (NERSDS), launched in 2015-16 at approximately ₹1,980 crores with 27 more projects already in the pipeline.

Bogibeel Bridge, the longest rail-cum-road bridge, sanctioned in 1997-98 was finally completed in December 2018 at an estimated cost of ₹5,920 crore

20 Waterways declared

as National Waterways in the Northeast since 2014

Additionally, around ₹500 crores have been sanctioned for the development of National Waterway 2 covering 891-km of Brahmaputra river between the Bangladesh Border and Sadiya and National Waterway 16 forming a 121-km stretch of Barak River between Lakhimpur and Bhangma.

Realising the need to improve health infrastructure for citizen welfare, the Ayushman Bharat initiative, launched in 2018, has made a deep impact in the Northeast.

More than 10.7 lakh hospital admissions in the Northeast between 2018-19 & 2021-22 under Ayushman Bharat

7,552 Health & Wellness Centres functional under Ayushman Bharat till January 2023



Vision for the Northeast

Backbone of Youth Upliftment: Support for Education & Sports

The Modi government has placed special emphasis to ensure quality education reaches each household in the Northeast. To bring higher education closer to the region and reduce the need for the youth to travel to far-off cities,

22 new universities have been set up in the region since 2014



Since 2014, the government has spent approximately ₹14,000 crores to promote higher education in the Northeast. Around 191 new institutes of higher education have been set up in the region in the past few years.

40% Increase in central institutions of higher education set up since 2014-15

As a result of the above measures, student enrollment in higher education has increased by 29% across states in the Northeast.

The region has given India some of the most coveted sports persons like Bhaichung Bhutia from Sikkim, MC Mary Kom from Manipur and Hima Das from Assam. Aiming to nurture the spirit of the youth in the region and promote sports, a National Sports University is being set up in Manipur at a cost of ₹643 crores.

Under PM Modi's guidance, more than 150 Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) to be built throughout Northeast starting February 2023



More than 200 Khelo India Centres recognised in the Northeast



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacting with the public in Tuensang, Nagaland.

The Modi government also launched the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) in 2014 to aid athletes financially and otherwise in their pursuit of medals in the Olympics and other international sporting events.

In 2020, TOPS Development was initiated with the aim of churning out Olympic champions as young as 10 to 12 years old for the 2028 games. Giving a push to STEM education in the Northeast, Tripura Institute of Technology (Phase-II), West Tripura is being commissioned at a cost of nearly ₹75 crores.

39% Increase in the number of universities setup since 2014

Ushering a New Dawn of Peace, Progress and Prosperity

The Modi government has undertaken several initiatives to resolve the long-standing ethnic disputes between the states and the communities in the Northeast.

Naga Peace Accord, 2015 signed between Indian Government and National Socialist Council of Nagaland to reduce insurgency in Nagaland

Between 2006 & 2014, 8,700 incidents of violence and extremism were reported in the Northeast. Under PM Modi's leadership, violent incidents have been cut down by almost 40%.

The Modi government has always put the interests of local communities and groups in the forefront of the development of the Northeast. To promote tribal customs, languages, and history, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs commissioned ten museums honouring tribal freedom fighters across India, two of which will be in Manipur and Mizoram.

Foundation stone for a museum dedicated to the tribal freedom fighter Rani Gaidinliu laid in November 2021 in Makhal Village, Manipur

To create awareness and educate the younger generation about the sacrifices of local tribes and communities of the Northeast, the education curriculum was recently updated to include the contributions of tribal freedom fighters. In November 2022, on the occasion of Lachit Borphukan's 400th birth anniversary, PM Modi praised Assam for producing valiant sons like Veer Lachit. He added that the immortal sons of Maa Bharati, such as Lachit Borphukan, were the impetus for implementing the vision of the Amrit Kaal.

“ Now be it culture or agriculture, commerce or connectivity – Northeast gets top priority, not the last. Be it trade or tourism, telecom or textiles – the Northeast gets the top priority. From drone technology to Krishi UDAN, from airports to ports connectivity – the Northeast is now the priority of the country.”
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Nine Years of Development in the Ashta Lakshmi

Since the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government came to power in 2014, the Northeast has witnessed a wide range of reforms in policy, governance, and development. Ashta Lakshmi, with the assistance of the eight foundation pillars, has gone through several stages of growth that have helped generate education and employment possibilities for the youth, thereby realising the Centre's objective of bringing the Northeast to the mainstream. Additionally, the Modi administration has brought stability and security to the Northeast, a region formerly troubled by violence and insurgency. The Modi government has always aimed for a balance between achieving modernisation by giving a boost to entrepreneurship and industrialisation, while also encouraging the preservation of the rich history, culture and traditions of the region. The government has also recognised the freedom fighters of the Northeast with the same vigour that it displays while promoting tribal gatherers and MSMEs. This has been made possible by the long-term vision that the government of India has kept in mind for the holistic development and growth of the Northeast.



Budget for Youth of Amrit Kaal

*Dr. Neeraj Sinha
Naman Agrawal
Vishnu Priya Bijapur*

As the largest democracy with the highest working-age population, India has a unique opportunity to strengthen its contribution to the global economy as countries adapt to a post-pandemic setting riddled with challenges. The Finance Minister outlined seven priorities for Union Budget 2023: inclusive development, unleashing potential, green growth, youth power, last mile reaching, financial sector and infrastructure investment. The latest budget places a significant emphasis on empowering India's demographic dividend, the youth, on leading the country towards its vision for the Amrit Kaal.

After celebrating its glorious 75 years of Independence as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, India is now all set to prepare for the Amrit Kaal, India @ 100. The IMF released its January update on World Economic Outlook and it said that India will grow at 6.1 per cent in 2023 before picking up to 6.8 per cent in 2024 fuelled by resilient domestic demand, India is well positioned to meet the vision of the Amrit Kaal through a robust budget for the FY23-24 which was unveiled by the Government earlier this month.

Over the past few decades, India has seen incredible progression in various technology-driven sectors. As India targets and projects itself towards becoming a 'knowledge economy', it focuses on advancing skills relevant to the emerging economic environment. The Government's mission has dual objectives of economic growth and inclusive development. This article delves into provisions laid out in the budget from the lens of youth empowerment.

Opportunity

India has been the first mover on an open, inclusive, and interoperable web. The India Stack provides a unified software platform to usher its entire population into the digital age. These digital public goods include solutions like the Aadhar, UPI etc. Much of these innovations have been through the disposition of the country's domestic talent. At the same time, India is also a source of talent for the

world. An overwhelming number of organisations and institutes have engaged many Indian-origin people, signifying that Indian talent is in demand for their technical skills and labour in the global market. Further, 25 per cent of the incremental global workforce over the next two decades will come from India. India also has the largest pool of English-speaking STEM graduates with an annual addition of 2.14 million (47 per cent women) and 6.2 million healthcare professionals which includes doctors and nursing staff. This large young and working population will not only reinforce India's competitive advantage in the services sector but also drive manufacturing and unleash a massive boom in domestic consumption patterns.

Youth is India's most significant wealth and will remain so for many decades. Globally, between 2021 and 2052, India will account for the most significant proportion of the working-age population. The average age of the Indian population is less than 29 years. In 2020, about 67 per cent of India's population was in the working age range of 15-64 - this part is known as the 'demographic dividend'. India entered the demographic dividend phase around 2010, when the proportion of the working-age population was around 51 per cent and will continue to enjoy the benefits until 2056 at an estimated rate of 54 per cent. The growing working-age population presents

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a massive opportunity for the country as it strives to grow into a \$5 trillion economy. To capitalise on this demographic dividend, the Government is focusing on skilling, upskilling and re-skilling and enabling job generation.

As the Indian talent migrates from the rural and predominantly agricultural sector to other urban sectors, India realises that it needs a well-thought-out and executed strategy to provide a new set of skills through vocational training to absorb this additional workforce and sustain economic growth effectually. However, it is necessary to also build a robust infrastructure of institutes and academicians for the same.

Furthermore, the state governments and other key stakeholders such as industry associations, international organisations, and industry players are also contributing through various financial aid, schemes and programmes to achieve the skill development objectives of the country. It is accepted that skilling is the shared responsibility of the country's private and public sectors, and each should leverage their expertise to work together and create a holistic skill environment for the nation's youth.

Empowering the Youth through Education and Skilling

The Union Budget 2023 has significantly boosted youth empowerment in the country. The Government has formulated the new National Education Policy (NEP 2020), focused on upskilling, adopted economic policies that accelerate job creation at scale, and supported business opportunities to empower the country's youth and support the 'Amrit Peedhi' to realise their dreams.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 4.0 aimed at skilling lakhs of youth within the next three years. This initiative is a positive move to skill the Indian youth in new age courses for industry 4.0, such as robotics, coding, drones and other soft skills. The budget focuses on improving education quality, strengthening teacher competencies, developing robust infrastructure, promoting skill development, and increasing access to affordable internet services. Prior initiatives like Career Skills and Samagra Shiksha's online teacher training, focus on research and innovation, e-learning and student financial aid are expected to enhance India's education system and bridge the gap

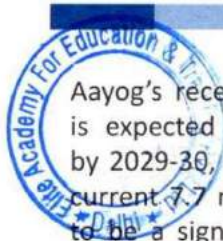
between education and industry, producing a globally competent workforce.

Education moves forward with industry partnerships, data governance policies, and a technology-focused approach with a particular emphasis on AI applications. Over the last few years, Government has made dedicated efforts to enable this. For instance, the Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) initiative by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, provides makerspace access to 21st-century technological equipment like 3D Printers, Microcontrollers, Electronics, Drones, etc., has been in effect since 2016. With over 10,000 ATLs established across the country, the flagship program is transforming school students into neoteric innovators and creating the leaders of tomorrow. As an umbrella structure for overseeing innovation and entrepreneurship in the country, AIM intervenes at all levels of the innovation lifecycle. Through its 69 Atal Incubation Centres (AIC) established in the country, it supports startup incubation across diverse sectors and with its 14 Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACIC), it supports grassroots innovation supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Annual Telecommunications and 5G unleashed a wave of demand, and new usecases, including cloud computing, robots, and the Internet of Things (IoT). The new skilling initiatives will be beneficial to close the country's growing demand-supply gap in the technical talent workforce. Further, 30 Skill India International Centres will be set up across different states to prepare youth for international opportunities. A focus on youth power is one of the critical priorities, and the intention to set up International Skill India centres is a welcome initiative.

The 30 Skill India international centres focused on emerging technologies, with a strong focus on on-the-job training, will contribute to the country's expanding knowledge capital, positioning India as a strong digital contender. The Finance Minister added that the digital ecosystem for skilling would be further expanded with the launch of a unified Skill India Digital platform for enabling demand-based formal skilling, linking with employers, and facilitating access to entrepreneurship schemes. The platform will help the country to successfully progress towards becoming a digitally savvy nation.

The skilling centres will also bolster the growing Gig economy in the country. According to NITI



Aayog's recent report, the Indian gig workforce is expected to expand to 23.5 million workers by 2029-30, nearly a 200 per cent jump from the current 7.7 million. The gig economy is predicted to be a significant building block in bridging the income and unemployment gap. The Indian gig economy has the potential to serve up to 90 million jobs in the non-farm sectors of India (about 30 per cent) with the potential to add up to 1.25 per cent to India's GDP through efficiency and productivity gains alone, according to a study conducted by Boston Consultancy Group (BCG).

The Finance Minister also announced Direct Benefit Transfer under a pan-India National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme would be rolled out to provide stipend support to 47 lakh youth in three years. In the days ahead, the emphasis should be to facilitate the seamless launch of the skill centres and effective integration of outcome-based learning for new-age courses on coding, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IoT, 3D printing etc. Overall, the budget includes significant measures that will help in the advancement of the youth of the country, help them become more competitive and secure positions on the world map.

Enabling the Backbone of the Economy

MSMEs contribute around 45 per cent of India's industrial output and 40 per cent of its exports. With a presence in urban and rural areas, MSMEs are widespread across the country and serve as an essential source of livelihood, employing around 110 million. MSMEs are a diverse sector from traditional industries such as handicrafts and textiles to modern industries such as information technology and biotechnology.

Startups are new and innovative businesses aiming to solve problems and change their respective industries. India has emerged as a leading hub for startups operating across various sectors, including technology, healthcare, e-commerce, and finance. India has the third largest startup ecosystem in the world, with over 75,000+ startups which have led to the creation of 7.46 lakh jobs in the country. Indian startups are making an impact globally, with several startups, such as Flipkart, Paytm, and Ola, among the most valued startups in the world. The Indian startup ecosystem has also attracted significant foreign investment, with several global venture capital firms investing in Indian startups.

MSMEs and startups have excellent growth

potential and have the potential to drive the country's economic growth and development. Traditionally, the sector has faced challenges such as access to capital, regulatory environment, availability of skilled talent, infrastructure constraints, and access to markets and technology. The Government of India has implemented several policies and initiatives to help the growth of MSMEs and startups, including tax benefits, financing support and market access. The Minister of Finance announced four significant steps to support MSMEs during this fiscal year.

Credit Guarantee for MSMEs: The Finance Minister said that last year, the budget proposed revamping the credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs and announced happily that the revamped scheme will take effect from 1st April 2023 through the infusion of Rs 9,000 crore in the corpus. This will enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs 2 lakh crore. Further, the cost of the credit will be reduced by about 1 per cent.

Tax Benefits - The presumptive tax scheme was earlier available for small businesses with a turnover of Rs 2 crore and professionals with a turnover of Rs. 50,000. The Union Budget 2023 raised the limits for taxpayers of less than 5 per cent cash receipts to Rs. 3 crore and Rs. 75 lakh, respectively. FM also proposed to allow the deduction of expenses incurred on payments only when the payment is made to the MSMEs. According to the federation budget 2023-2024, MSME suppliers unable to execute contracts during the COVID-19 pandemic will receive 95 per cent of the amounts forfeited from the Government. This relief measure was announced under the 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme. This scheme is a voluntary initiative of the Government to resolve outstanding tax disputes amicably with the taxpayers. Due to the challenges related to COVID, those who do not have access to institutional financing and whose capital has been withheld in the form of a bid fee or performance guarantee will benefit from this initiative.

Digital Infrastructure - Entity DigiLocker will be installed for MSMEs apart from major commercial and philanthropic organisations to securely store, and share documents online, whenever required, with various regulators, banks, authorities and other business entities. The new concept Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PM-Vikas) scheme will enable artisans to improve the

Budget for the Amrit Kaal – A Snapshot

With a vision to enable a solid and stable macro environment, facilitate growth and job creation and generate opportunities for the citizens with a focus on the youth, the budget was centred around seven priorities or 'Saptarishis'. Below is a snapshot of the priorities -

Inclusive Development

- Building Digital Public infrastructure by creating accessible, inclusive and informative solutions for farmers. 20 Lakh crore rupees agricultural credit targeted at Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries sector
- One hundred fifty-seven new nursing colleges are to be established. A new program to promote research in pharmaceuticals is to be launched
- Revamped teachers' training via DIET (District Institute of Education and Training)
- National Digital Library to be setup for children and adolescents
- States to be encouraged to set up libraries at panchayat and ward levels

Reaching the Last Mile

- Pradhanmantri (particularly vulnerable tribal groups) PVTG Development mission for developing vulnerable tribal groups in the next three years.
- Increasing the number of teachers in the 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools
- Launch of Bharat(SHRI) for the digitisation of ancient inscriptions.

Infrastructure and Investment

- Extension of a 50-year interest-free loan to the State Government for an incentivised infrastructure investment
- Launch of around 100 transport infrastructure projects to increase connectivity
- Create an Urban Infrastructure Development Fund to build modern infrastructure in Tier 2 and 3 cities.

Unleashing the Potential

- Establishment of three artificial intelligence centres in educational institutes.
- Formation of a national data governance policy
- Relaxation in rules and policy for a more effortless and lesser strict contract execution for MSMEs.
- Launch of the third phase of e-courts
- Formation of more than 100 labs for 5 services-based application development
- Enhancement of research in the field of Lab Grown diamonds

Green Growth

- Launch of PM Pranam to encourage the use of alternative fertilisers.
- Set up more than 500 new 'Waste to Wealth' plants under the GOBARdhan scheme.
- Launch of MISHTI program to carry out mangrove plantation along the coastline.

Youth Power

- Launch of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 4.0. The new program will fund courses like 3D printing, coding, AI, robotics, etc.
- Selection of 50 locations for their development as prime tourist spots of the country.
- Every state will set up unity Mallsto promote and sell One District, One Product(ODOP), GI-tagged articles, and handicraft products.

Financial Sector

- The Government announced to set up of a National Financial Information registry to promote financial inclusion.
- Establishment of a Central Data Processing Centre to speed up administrative work under the Companies Act.
- Launch of Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs

quality and accessibility of their products while integrating them into the value chain of micro, small and medium enterprises. The minister highlighted some essential components of the new plan, such

as access to advanced skills training, financial assistance, brand promotion, knowledge of modern and effective green technologies, links with local and global markets, digital payments, and social security.

The Agriculture Acceleration Fund will be set up to encourage agricultural startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas. The fund aims to provide innovative and cost-effective solutions to the challenges faced by farmers. It will also bring modern technologies to transform farming practices and enhance productivity and profitability.




Implementation Strategy


For India to emerge as the world's talent hub for digital skills, the following strategies are to be adopted:

- Identifying Areas of National importance: Identify areas of national significance for building world-class talent in India. Based on the emerging areas, collaborations with top overseas higher education institutions that have developed expertise in teaching-learning and research could be considered in a customised format. Emerging technologies encompass technology areas of Cybernetics, Mechatronics, Design and Embedded systems, Internet of Things, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and many more, catalysed by methods which are intelligent, autonomous, and efficient and are expected to drive innovation in sectors as diverse as agriculture, water, energy, transportation, infrastructure, security, health, and manufacturing. Thus, it is heralded as the next paradigm shift in technology that can exponentially spur growth and development in the following domain areas:

1. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
2. Technologies for Internet of Things and Everything (IoT & IOE), Sensors, Activators and Control
3. Databanks & Data Services, Data Analytics
4. Advanced Communication Systems
5. Robotics & Autonomous Systems
6. Cyber Security and Cyber Security for Physical Infrastructure

- Implementing the National Education Policy on priority: It is essential to have a long-term focus, and we must teach the right attitudes. Continuous learning, skill credits, world-class academic institutes, experiential learning, and faculty training must focus on excellence and outcomes.
- Building Alternate Talent Pools: Engineers have been at the core of our talent strategy, but all tech skills don't require a four-year degree. India needs to build digital capabilities in smaller towns, get more women to join the work stream with hybrid work norms, and revamp vocational education from industrial training institutes and polytechnics. We can leverage corporate-social-responsibility funding from the industry for these programmes.
- Incentivising Skilling: In the early days of the tech sector, tax incentives played a crucial role in building a global footprint of multinational corporations in India. We must now create schemes that incentivise skilling for corporates, not just for their own needs but across the ecosystem.
- Exploring Innovative Learning Models: Use apprenticeship programmes at scale, not just for a certificate, but coupled with assessments. Invest in building world-class free content that

Union Budget 2023- 24









What's In It For Me? Youth

Skill India Digital Platform—Enabling demand-based formal skilling, linking with employers and facilitating access to entrepreneurship schemes

Three centres of excellence for Artificial Intelligence to be set up for realising the vision of 'Make AI in India and Make AI Work in India'

National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme—To provide stipend support to **47 lakh youth** in three years through Direct Benefit Transfer

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0—On-job training, industry partnership, and alignment of courses **with needs of industry**

anyone can leverage and align with a credible certification system.

- **Democratising Training:** We must remove all hurdles for people to get skilled. Unnecessary entry qualifications and eligibility criteria should be dropped. Let's have no barrier to entry but a quality-controlled exit process.

Future Roadmap

With leading-edge knowledge, competency and facilities, India need to attract potential and harness expertise available nationwide, thus fostering research innovation, world-class technology and product development. India must also coordinate and build linkages with research institutes and labs in India and abroad. The Government should work in close collaboration with industry to deliver commercial technology and products and build a vibrant innovation ecosystem by providing a reliable platform for technology-based firms and entrepreneurs to achieve the following objectives:

- **Knowledge Generation**
- **Human Resource and Skill Development**
- **International Collaboration**
- **Bringing back Indian talent**
- **Building a National Database of Skills**
- **Investment in Research & Development**
- **Incentives and Recognition**

Conclusion

Over the past five years, India has taken a holistic approach to support startups on multiple fronts, enabling policies, building institutional mechanisms at the central and state levels, and sandboxing implementation sandboxes. However, the ecosystem is still developing, with multinational corporations, industry experts and financial institutions, among others, about to form a consortium. In addition to policy-level reforms, the main goal is to spread a sense of unity among the G20 countries to promote startups and make a concerted effort to create impactful technology solutions and grow sustainably.

India must look at strategies to increase home-grown talent and attract the best global talent to catalyse the next decade of growth and innovation. This requires constant investments in re-skilling and embracing a culture that promotes skill development. Improving incentives, ease of doing science and educational systems will be vital in improving the attraction and retention of Indian Science and Technology talent. These will be the foundation for the success of any programs or policies for retaining and attracting talent. Creating a robust digital talent ecosystem would further enable us to be future-ready and leverage the opportunities of a digital future.

The investments are an excellent opportunity for small businesses to participate in the expected economic activity. Sectors such as infrastructure, energy transition, agriculture, and health provide opportunities for growth and innovation. Youth-led organisations can also greatly benefit from policies to be announced in emerging areas such as electric mobility, battery, artificial intelligence, climate change, semiconductors, space economy, genomics, etc.

With the theme of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', the G20 presidency presents India with an opportunity to reinforce its contribution to the world economic order. The budget sets the direction to enable sustainable economic development for India's journey towards the 'Amrit Kaal'.

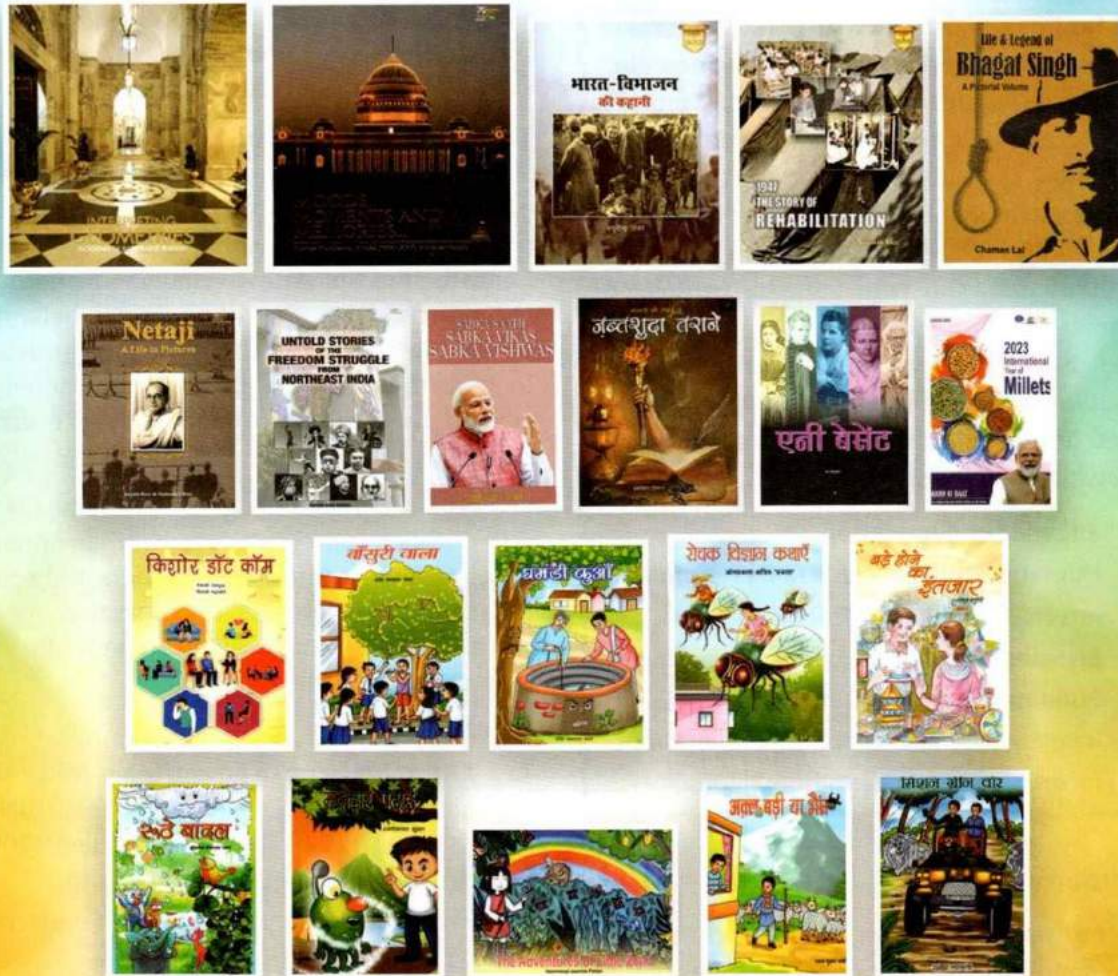
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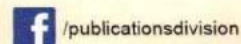
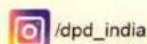
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Trade and Industry

Aman Sharma

Budget 2023-24 is an important step towards not only boosting the domestic manufacturing and services sector through elevated public spending, especially capital spending, but also to incentivize domestic manufacturing and steering the country on the path of green growth, thereby emphasising the country's commitment to net zero emission by 2070.

Budget 2023 assumes greater importance in the wake of the global economic forecast that a world-wide recession is round the corner- accentuated by the Russia-Ukraine war as well as widespread economic displacement in China owing to a long COVID-19 lockdown.

Before discussing the impact of Budget 2023-24 on the country's trade and industry, it is important to understand the manner in which the Government decisions in the Annual Budget impact the various sectors:

1. Government spending: The total size of Government spending in 2023-24 is proposed to be around Rs. 45 lakh Cr. The size of India's GDP in 2022-23 is Rs. 273 lakh Cr, meaning thereby that the quantum of Government spending is going to be around 16.48 per cent of the GDP. Despite such high Government spending, the fiscal deficit for 2023-24 has been targeted at just 5.9 per cent of the GDP, which is lower than the projected 6.4 per cent in 2022-23. This means that not only are Government revenues projected to be higher in 2023-24 in comparison to 2022-23, but the Government would also be borrowing less in the next Financial Year. This would in turn result in more money in the market being available for the industry and businesses at a lower interest rate, thereby helping keep inflation under check. Further, the manner in which the Government proposes to spend this huge amount of money, has a direct bearing

on the various sectors of the economy, viz if Government is proposing to build roads then it would directly benefit the steel and cement sector; if the money is to be spent on schemes such as Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, then it would provide an impetus to the domestic manufacturing industry, so on and so forth.

In Budget 203-24, capital investment outlay has been increased steeply for the third year in a row by 33 per cent to 10 lakh crore, which would be 3.3 per cent of GDP; this will be almost three times the outlay in 2019-20. The direct capital investment by the Centre is complemented by the provision made for creation of capital assets through Grants-in-Aid to States. The 'Effective Capital Expenditure' of the Centre is budgeted at 13.7 lakh crore, which will be 4.5 per cent of GDP, and would help propel the domestic manufacturing as well as employment generation. 50-year interest free loan to state governments is proposed to be continued for one more year to spur investment in infrastructure and to incentivise them for complementary policy actions, with a significantly enhanced outlay of 1.3 lakh crore.

2. Direct Taxation: Corporate tax rate along with exemptions/tax breaks etc are used to make the domestic industry more competitive (by leaving more money with them for investing in the businesses as well as reducing the price of their products/services). On the

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other hand, personal tax slabs are used for 2 purposes- increasing domestic savings rate among individual tax payers or leaving more money in their hands so that consumption can be increased thereby benefitting the domestic manufacturing/services sector. In Budget 2023-24, the Government has chosen to not only give tax incentives to MSMEs and Cooperative societies but has also lowered the personal tax rate. Both these measures would go a long way in fueling the domestic growth rate, which has been projected at 6.5 per cent for FY 2023-24, which though slightly less than 7 per cent in 2022-23 is still very high, considering the looming fears of global recession.

3. **Indirect Taxation:** Reducing or increasing Customs duty is an effective tool to promote domestic manufacturing. By lowering Import duty on raw materials/components, the Government attempts to reduce the cost of manufacturing for specific sector thereby making them more competitive not only in the domestic market (vis a vis imported products) but also in the export markets. Similarly, enhancing import duty on finished products or export duty on raw materials also has the same impact on domestic manufacturing. In Budget 2023-24, the Government has proposed to lower import duty on several raw materials which would benefit domestic manufacturers of Electric Vehicles, Seeds for Lab Grown Diamonds etc. Similarly, import duty on items such as Kitchen Chimneys and toys would make such imported items more expensive and give a fillip to their domestic manufacturing.

Now let us discuss the impact of important Budget announcements on the specific segments of trade and industry in India:

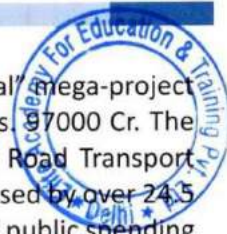
1. One of the major highlights of Budget 2023-24 is the thrust on Green Growth. India is moving

forward firmly for the 'Panchamrit' and net-zero carbon emission by 2070 to usher in green industrial and economic transition. Many programmes for green fuel, green energy, green farming, green mobility, green buildings, and green equipment, and policies for efficient use of energy across various economic sectors are being implemented. These green growth efforts would help in reducing carbon intensity of the economy and provides for largescale green job opportunities. This would benefit not only green equipment manufacturers, but also the domestic IT sector, as several of the green solutions use tech- both hardware and software.

The recently launched National Green Hydrogen Mission, with an outlay of Rs. 19,700 crores, will facilitate transition of the economy to low carbon intensity, reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports, and make the country assume technology and market leadership in this sunrise sector. The target is to reach an annual green Hydrogen production of 5 MMT by 2030. This would not only encourage entrepreneurs to set up green hydrogen manufacturing but also benefit big coal consumers such as Steel where Hydrogen can help replace dependence on imported coking coal as well as help avoid the Carbon Border Adjustment Tax planned to be levied by EU, thereby making our steel exports to EU more competitive.

To avoid cascading of taxes on blended compressed natural gas, it has been proposed to exempt excise duty on GST-paid compressed bio gas contained in it, thereby making it more affordable.

Additionally, the Budget provides Rs. 35,000 crore for priority capital investments towards energy transition and net zero objectives, and energy security by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Also, Battery Energy Storage



Systems with capacity of 4,000 MWH have been proposed to be supported with 18 Viability Gap Funding. Together, this would help the Indian innovators and entrepreneurs to take the lead in green technologies which are going to find a big market across the world as countries start moving towards meeting their commitments in COP 27.

2. The agriculture credit target is sought to be enhanced to Rs. 20 lakh crore with focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries. This would benefit the equipment manufacturers catering to the dairy industry, as well as manufacturers of animal and fish feed, veterinary drug manufacturers as well as food processing industry.
3. The new sub-scheme of PM Matsya Sampada Yojana with targeted investment of 6,000 crore is proposed to be launched to further enable activities of fishermen, fish vendors, and micro & small enterprises, improve value chain efficiencies, and expand the market.
4. There is a plan to set up massive decentralised storage capacity that will help farmers store their produce and realise remunerative prices through sale at appropriate times. This would not only give a fillip to the domestic steel industry but also fabricators of such storage silos.
5. A new programme to promote research and innovation in pharmaceuticals is proposed to be taken up through centers of excellence that will encourage industry to invest in research and development in specific priority areas.
6. The outlay for PM Awas Yojana is being enhanced by 66 per cent to over 79,000 crores. This would have a direct bearing on the domestic cement and steel industry as well as brick/concrete block manufacturers
7. Capital spending by Ministries/Departments has a direct bearing on the domestic industry especially after the Government's thrust on domestic procurement and enhancement of domestic procurement ceiling to Rs. 200 Cr. A capital outlay of 2.40 lakh crore has been provided for the Railways. This highest ever outlay is about 9 times the outlay made in 2013- 14. Similarly, Jal Shakti Ministry which is spearheading the "Har Ghar Jal" mega-project is being allotted more than Rs. 97000 Cr. The capital outlay for Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has been increased by over 24.5 per cent. This massive dose of public spending in these key sectors would not only give a boost to Steel, Cement, steel and petro-chemicals sector but also PVC and steel pipe, capital goods and yellow goods manufacturers.
8. One hundred critical transport infrastructure projects, for last and first mile connectivity for ports, coal, steel, fertiliser, and food grains sectors have been identified. They will be taken up on priority with investment of 75,000 crore, including 15,000 crore from private sources. Once completed these projects would help reduce the domestic logistics cost and bring them par with that of developed countries viz less than 8 per cent of GDP.
9. Like the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), an Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF) is proposed to be established through use of priority sector lending shortfall. This will be managed by the National Housing Bank, and will be used by public agencies to create urban infrastructure in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. It is expected to make available 10,000 crore per annum for this purpose. This spending would again benefit the core industries like cement, steel, manufacturers of sewage treatment plants, street lights, electrical cables, Optic fibre etc. In addition, the plan to have 100 per cent mechanical desludging of septic tanks and sewers in cities and towns would go a long way in boosting manufacturer of mechanical desludging machines as well as commercial vehicles.
10. For enhancing ease of doing business, more than 39,000 compliances have been reduced and more than 3,400 legal provisions have been decriminalised. For furthering the trust based governance, the Jan Vishwas Bill to amend 42 Central Acts has been introduced. These measures would help reduce the regulatory compliance burden on the domestic industry and trade, thereby making them more competitive vis a vis their global counterparts.
11. PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PM VIKAS)

is aimed at providing the artisans a package of assistance for enabling them to improve the quality, scale and reach of their products and integrating them with the MSME value chain. This would promote domestic manufacturing by the micro, medium and small enterprises, by not only enhancing the quality of their products but also making them more competitive, besides generating employment at the grass root level.

12. In cases of failure by MSMEs to execute contracts during the Covid period, 95 per cent of the forfeited amount relating to bid or performance security, will be returned to them by government and government undertakings. This will provide relief to MSMEs. Additionally, for the benefit of MSME sector, the corpus for revamped Credit Guarantee scheme has been infused with Rs. 9,000 crore for providing collateral-free guaranteed credit of 2 lakh crore; also the cost of the credit will be reduced by about 1 per cent.
13. The Inter-state transmission system for evacuation and grid integration of 13 GW renewable energy from Ladakh has been proposed to be constructed with investment of 20,700 crore including central support of 8,300 crore. This would not only boost the manufacturing of solar panels, but also the steel and transmission cable manufacturing, besides befitting the revenues of the Union Territory and promoting green energy.
14. 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants under GOBARdhan (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme to be set up at total investment of 10,000 crore would benefit the manufacturing of biowaste plants/equipments.
15. Auto sector is sought to be boosted not only through the thrust on scrapping of old Government vehicles as well as reduction to 0 per cent the Customs duty on Specified capital goods/machinery for manufacture of lithium-ion cell for use in battery of electrically operated vehicle (EVs). Simultaneously, Customs duty for SKD, CKD and CBU automobiles, especially electrical vehicles is also being increased to discourage import of such vehicles. Further, customs duty exemption is being extended to import of capital goods and machinery required for manufacture of lithium-ion cells for batteries used in electric vehicles. These initiatives would help India strengthen its position as a manufacturer of automobiles, by effecting a smooth transition from Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) automobiles to electric automobiles. India has already taken a lead in manufacture and use of electric cars and two-wheelers and within a short span of 2-3 years, 50 lakh electric vehicles have already hit the Indian roads. With focus on creating charging infrastructure and domestic manufacturing, the expected decline in IEC automobile manufacturing would be more than off-set by rise in electric vehicle manufacturing.
16. As a result of various initiatives of the Government, including the Phased Manufacturing programme, mobile phone production in India has increased from 5.8 crore units valued at about 18,900 crore in 2014-15 to 31 crore units valued at over 2,75,000 crore in the last financial year. To further deepen domestic value addition in manufacture of mobile phones, it has been proposed to provide relief in customs duty on import of certain parts and inputs like camera lens and continue the concessional duty on lithium-ion cells for batteries for another year. Similarly, to promote value addition in manufacture of televisions, it has been proposed to reduce the basic customs duty on parts of open cells of TV panels to 2.5 per cent. This is in addition to the already operational PLI scheme for boosting manufacture of mobile phones.
17. Basic customs duty is also being reduced on acid grade fluorspar from 5 per cent to 2.5 per cent to make the domestic fluorochemicals industry competitive. Further, the basic customs duty on crude glycerin for use in manufacture of epichlorhydrin is proposed to be reduced from 7.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent.
18. To facilitate availability of raw materials for the steel sector, exemption from Basic Customs Duty on raw materials for manufacture of CRGO Steel, ferrous scrap and nickel cathode is being continued. This would help boost

the manufacture of CRGO steel which is used to make transformer cores and is majorly imported into the country. Zero duty import of ferrous scrap would benefit the smaller steel mills which use Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) route for steel making

19. Similarly, the concessional basic Customs Duty (BCD) of 2.5 per cent on copper scrap is also being continued to ensure the availability of raw materials for secondary copper producers who are mainly in the MSME sector.

To sum-up, Budget 2023-24 is an important step towards not only boosting the domestic manufacturing and services sector through elevated public spending, especially capital spending, but also to incentivize domestic manufacturing and steering the country on the path of green growth, thereby emphasising the country's commitment to net zero emission by 2070. Together these steps would strongly push the country towards achieving the USD 5 trillion economy goal very shortly. ■

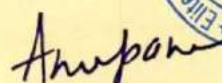
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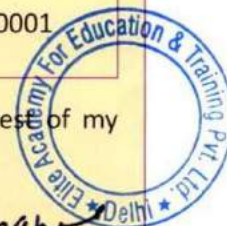
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Development of Tourism Sector

Dr. Suyash Yadav

In the Union Budget 2023-24, allocation for tourism sector was ₹ 2,400 crore. ₹ 1412 crore have been allocated for Swadesh Darshan Scheme. The budget speech mentioned 'Tourism' as one of the four opportunities that can create credible transformations in India in the coming decades.

According to United Nations World Tourism Organisation, tourists are persons travelling for leisure and other purposes, from their usual home environment to a destination, for at least one night and not more than a year, and return back to the place of origin. During this journey there should not be an involvement in any remunerative activity by the tourist. Tourist Generating Region (TGR) is the region where the tourist journey starts and ends (Leiper 1979). It is basically the region where the tourists originate from. TGR's have traditionally been high income regions whose population has some discretionary income which enables them to engage in travelling and leisure activities. Disposable income is the amount of money that is available for spending after deducting taxes. A household's discretionary income is calculated by subtracting the cost of fixed expenses (Eg. rent, food, electricity bills etc.) from overall disposable income. This amount is spent on what is desired rather than what is essential (Eg. travel and tourism etc.).

January 2023 World Economic Outlook of International Monetary Fund (IMF) considers India a 'bright spot', it says that, "Growth in India is set to decline from 6.8 per cent in 2022 to 6.1 per cent in 2023 before picking up to 6.8 per cent in 2024, with resilient domestic demand despite external headwinds". The readers are requested to focus upon two key themes, 'resilient domestic demand' and 'external headwinds'. In last October, IMF had cut its outlook for global economic growth in 2023, reflecting the continuing drag from the war in Ukraine as well as inflation pressures and the high interest rates engineered by central banks

like the U.S. Federal Reserve. IMF further said that simultaneously United States, China and European Unions' economy will witness economic slowdown. The table mentioned below, sourced from India Tourism Statistics 2022, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India (GoI), mentions top 10 source countries (TGRs) for foreign tourist arrivals in India in the year 2021. A majority of them are

Focus of development of tourism would be on domestic as well as foreign tourists. Budget emphasised on the opportunity India has, to present itself as a preferred tourist destination, in being the host to G20 presidency. The proposed development of 50 new destinations will make India more attractive to international tourists. 'Infrastructure and Investment' is one of the seven priorities (Saptarishi) adopted by the budget, which will indirectly benefit the tourism sector. 50 additional airports, heliports, water aerodromes and advance landing grounds will be revived for improving regional air connectivity. Amrit Darohar scheme and MISHTI will aid eco-tourism and sustainability in tourism. Establishment of Unity Malls will facilitate the souvenir industry and MSME sector. Vibrant Villages Programme will catalyse rural tourism by facilitating infrastructure and amenities in border villages. Announcements of coastal shipping will help the cruise tourism sector.

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located in the regions which will experience an economic slowdown in 2023, as per IMF. Therefore, prospects of Inbound Tourism in India do not look that promising as economic slowdown may impact discretionary income in TGRs.

Top 10 source Countries for Foreign tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India in 2021

S. No.	Source Country	FTAs	Percentage (%) Share
1	United States	429860	28.15
2	Bangladesh	240554	15.75
3.	United Kingdom	164143	10.75
4	CaNADA	80437	5.27
5	NEPAL	52544	3.44
6	AFGHANISTAN	36451	2.39
7	AUSTRALIA	33864	2.22
8	Germany	33772	2.21
9	Portugal	32064	2.10
10	France	30374	1.99
	Total Top 10 Countreis	1134063	74.26
	Others	393051	25.74
	Grand Total	1527114	100.0

Source:- Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India

In the year 2020 and 2021, due to pandemic induced lockdowns, tourism sector in general and the civil aviation sector in specific, across the world, including India, suffered one of the most severe economic blows in their history because international civil aviation came to a halt as most of the countries closed their borders for flight movements. The year 2022 saw a gradual opening up of international passenger flight movement, which is a prerequisite for international tourism. On the front of Outbound Tourism from India, according to the inputs of travel intermediaries (Eg. tour operators and travel agents), which play a significant role in tourism distribution, currently, compared to pre- pandemic era, many popular 'Western' outbound destinations (Eg. USA, European Countries etc.) are showcasing airfare rise by approximately 65-70 per cent (to compensate the loss of pandemic era) coupled with visa processing delays. On the other hand, an airfare rise of approximately 20-40 per cent can be seen for 'Eastern' outbound destinations (Eg. Thailand, Vietnam etc.). In totality, outbound tourism has



also become costlier. Therefore, value for money tourists are opting for destinations in the east.

Now, let us look at the developments in the regime of Domestic Tourism in the past few years. In the Independence Day speech of 2019, the Prime Minister said that India has so much to offer and that if domestic tourism increases, it will, by default, attract international tourists. He said, "I know people travel abroad for holidays but can we think of visiting at least 15 tourist destinations within India by 2022". Pandemic induced lockdown, that persisted too long, resulted in halting international tourism. Therefore, to counter the loss due to halt in international tourism, MoT-Gol gave more impetus on domestic tourism in 2020 and launched 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign, with an objective of promoting various tourism destinations of India. According to India Tourism Statistics 2022 MoT-Gol, International Tourist Arrival for India (Inbound Tourism), in 2021, stood at a meager 7 Million, with an annual growth rate of 10.6 per cent. No. of Domestic Tourist Visits to all States/UTs stood at a magnanimous 677.3 Million with an annual growth rate of 11 per cent. Another statistical data that we need to specially concentrate upon is No. of Indian Nationals departures from India (Outbound Tourism) in 2021, which stood at 8.55 Million. Annual growth rate of 17.3 per cent for Outbound Tourism has been the highest among the three forms of tourism mentioned above.

In line with the theme of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat, capitalising on the key theme of latest IMF projection i.e. 'resilient domestic demand', it is absolutely pragmatic to promote Domestic Tourism, as it may help in countering this consistently

growing trend in Indians (fuelled by social media platforms) to aspire for foreign destinations (despite increase in air fares and visa delays) when they think about tourism. Outbound tourism does not benefit the TGR. The foreign country visited by the tourists reaps the majority of economic benefits of tourism. The global economy continues to be plagued by uncertainties. Pandemic exposed the world to the vulnerabilities of the globalisation, especially in tangible domains, affecting the supply chains, but same is true for experience driven tourism sector. Inbound Tourism makes a country earn foreign exchange which positively impacts the balance of payments but over dependence of tourism industry on Inbound Tourism may lead to very severe shock, if Inbound Tourism halts due to un-controlled variables (refer the examples of Srilanka and Thailand).

Sectoral Allocation-Union Budget 2023

The key budgetary take aways regarding tourism sector in Union Budget 2023 should be seen in the light of the above perspective. The budget allocation for tourism sector was ₹ 2,400 crore. ₹ 1412 crore have been allocated for Swadesh Darshan Scheme. MoT, Gol had launched Swadesh Darshan Scheme in year 2014-15 with a view to promote integrated development of thematic tourist circuits in the country. MoT, Gol has sanctioned 76 projects under the scheme since its inception under 13 themes. ₹ 242 crore has been allocated for promotion and branding of tourism. The budget speech mentioned 'Tourism' as one of the four opportunities (other three include, Economic Empowerment of Women, PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman i.e. PM VIKAS and Green Growth), that can create credible transformations in India in the coming decades.

Budget underlined the potential of tourism to boost jobs and create opportunities for entrepreneurship for youth. Budget speech mentioned that the focus of development of tourism would be on domestic as well as foreign tourists. To meet the requirement of trained manpower in the tourism and hospitality sector, an allocation of ₹ 105.00 crore has been made for Training and Skill Development (Assistance to FCIs/IITM/NIWS, Capacity Building for Service Providers). ₹ 250 crore have been allocated for the PRASHAD Scheme. National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation

Drive (PRASHAD), is a Central Sector Scheme, focussed on integrated development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations. Under PRASHAD scheme, 57 sites have been identified at present in 29 States/UTs for development. Allocation of ₹ 229 crore has been done for tourism infrastructure, promotion of North-Eastern states.

Hosting G-20 Meet 2023- Showcasing India as a destination

Qatar has one of the highest GDP per capita in the world. It is a country that has traditionally been known as an oil and gas exporting nation. The country did huge infrastructure investments in airports, hotels, roads, stadiums etc. in order to host the FIFA World Cup 2022. One of the latent objectives to host an international event of that magnitude was to provide a fillip for furthering Qatar's long-term tourism goals by showcasing their country to the world. The Union Budget 2023 emphasised on the opportunity India has to present itself as a preferred tourist destination, in being the host to the Group of Twenty (G20) presidency. India assumed the G20 presidency from Indonesia and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in the country in 2023. The G20 members represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population. These statistics are important as India, through the Summit, has an opportunity to showcase its multitude of tourism attractions. This may lead to higher inbound tourist arrivals from the participating countries in future.

50 New Tourist Destinations

While tourism growth is great news overall, the excessive burden on handful of destinations in India, be it hill stations or those located seaside, is doing tremendous damage to India's tourism hotspots (witnessing 'Over-tourism') which are crumbling. Continuous violation of the carrying capacity of a tourist destination deteriorates it irreparably and it severely diminishes the tourist experience. India needs alternative destinations to offset the pressure on destinations like Joshimath (being the most recent), Goa, Shimla etc. which are witnessing fatigue due to Mass Tourism. Union Budget 2023 announced development of upto 50 new tourist destinations, these destinations may evolve as alternatives to existing ones. These destinations will be selected through a challenge

mode, and developed as a complete package, using an integrated and innovative approach. The mobile app will provide tourist-friendly information like physical and virtual connectivity, and details on tourist guides, amongst other guidance. A high standard of street food would be ensured, to enhance the tourist experience. 50 new destinations will make India more attractive to international tourists as their options will increase.

Accessibility and Supportive Infrastructure

Accessibility and supportive infrastructure are crucial for tourism development. Accessibility comprises of road, rail, air and water transport required to reach tourist destination. 'Infrastructure and Investment' is one of the seven priorities (Saptarishi') adopted by the Union Budget 2023. Air accessibility has great role in opening up new tourism destinations. According to a 2018 'International Air Transport Association' report on Indian aviation, in 2010, 79 million people travelled to/from/or within India and it doubled to 158 million by 2017. That number is expected to treble to 520 million by 2037. Union Budget 2023 mentioned that under Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS), 50 additional airports, heliports, water aerodromes and advance landing grounds will be revived for improving regional air connectivity. Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) was launched as a RCS under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016, to develop the regional aviation market and to provide affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on regional routes to the common man even in small towns. Like the popular Golden Triangle (comprising of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur) tourism circuit, regional connectivity will give a boost to the dedicated tourism circuits. This will help promote local tourism and trigger investment in hospitality projects in the region. Indian Railways is the lifeline of the nation and it is a preferred accessibility mode, especially for budget conscious tourists. A capital outlay of ₹ 2.40 lakh crore has been provided for the Railways in Union Budget 2023.

Amrit Dharohar: Facilitating Eco- Tourism

Under the Ramsar Convention, Wetland is described as "areas of marsh, peatland, or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish, or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tides does not exceed

six meters". Wetlands are vital ecosystems which sustain biological diversity. Many wetlands are areas of natural beauty and are offered as eco-tourism attractions (Eg. Sur Sarovar in Agra, U.P.). The total number of Ramsar sites in our country has increased to 75. Local communities have always been at the forefront of conservation efforts. The Union Budget 2023 says that government will promote Wetland's unique conservation values through Amrit Dharohar, a scheme that will be implemented over the next three years to encourage optimal use of wetlands, and enhance bio-diversity, carbon stock, eco-tourism opportunities and income generation for local communities.

Sunderbans Mangrove forest is a world famous eco-tourism spot; it lies on the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers on the Bay of Bengal. It is adjacent to the border of India's Sundarbans UNESCO World Heritage site (Natural). Mangroves have been the focus of conservationists for years and it is difficult to overstate their importance in the global climate context. Mangrove forests consist of trees and shrubs that live in intertidal water in coastal areas and they host diverse marine life. They also support a rich food web and act as a breeding ground for small fish, mud crabs and shrimps, thus providing a livelihood to local fishermen. Mangroves act as effective carbon stores, holding up to four times the amount of carbon as other forested ecosystems. Another initiative of Union Budget 2023, though not directly related to tourism, that will aid sustainability in tourism, is MISHTI i.e. 'Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes'. It will involve mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands, wherever feasible, through convergence between MGNREGS, CAMPA Fund and other sources. Climate change mayhem also gets tackled through this initiative.

Unity Mall (Souvenirs in Tourism) and MSME facilitation

Souvenir shopping may represent a significant proportion of overall travel expenditure. It is an integral component of one's travel experience. In a move facilitating the availability of indigenously made souvenirs to the tourists, Union Budget 2023 mentions that, states will be encouraged to set up a Unity Mall in their state capital or most prominent tourism centre or the financial capital for promotion and sale of their own ODOPs (one

district, one product), GI products and other handicraft products, and for providing space for such products of all other states.

This announcement should be understood in the context of Multiplier Effect in tourism where total spending done by the tourist filters through the economy and stimulates other sectors as well. In tourism the multiplier effect is usually applied to encompass the direct and secondary effects of tourist expenditures on the economy, although it can be applied to employment or other variables. The term multiplier effect is actually the application of a general economic technique developed by British Economist Keynes in the 1930s.

In Union Budget 2023, PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PMVIKAS) has been conceptualised for encouraging traditional arts and handicrafts. Components of the scheme will include not only financial support but also access to advanced skill training, knowledge of modern digital techniques and efficient green technologies, brand promotion, linkage with local and global markets, digital payments, and social security.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector is an important pillar of the Indian economy as it supports growth and aids tremendously in job creation. The tourism ecosystem is MSME dominated. MSMEs in tourism sector exists across segments including hotels, tour operators, business travel, restaurants, travel agents, tourist transporters.

Relief for MSMEs- Union Budget 2023 has proposed revamping of the credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs. The revamped scheme will take effect from 1st April 2023 through infusion of ₹ 9,000 crore in the corpus. This will enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of ₹ 2 lakh crore. Micro enterprises with turnover of up to ₹ 2 crore and certain professionals with turnover of up to ₹ 50 lakh can avail the benefit of presumptive taxation.

Rural (Border) Tourism: Vibrant Villages Programme

‘Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural location, thereby benefitting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the local people for a more enriching

tourism experience’ is Rural Tourism. Diversifying the basket of rural tourism offerings, in Union Budget 2023, under the scheme of Vibrant Villages Programme, tourism infrastructure and amenities will be facilitated in border villages. Border tourism is being given huge importance also because of its strategic connotations.

Cruise Tourism

India is a potential cruise destination with 7,500 km long coastline and vast river systems which are yet to be unveiled to the world. Recently, in Varanasi, the Prime Minister flagged off the world’s longest river cruise named MV Ganga Vilas (managed by private operators), curated to showcase the best of India to the world. The Inland Waterways Authority of India, under the Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways has supported the project. The project will boost river cruise tourism. Union Budget 2023 mentions that coastal shipping will be promoted as the energy efficient and lower cost mode of transport, both for passengers and freight, through PPP mode with viability gap funding. This will aid the development of cruise tourism in India.

Associated Sector Allocations

Budgetary allocation to Ministry of Culture stood at ₹ 3,399.65 crore. Under the allotment, ₹ 1102.83 crore has been allocated to the ASI for protection, preservation and conservation of Centrally Protected Monuments/sites. Additionally, to improve the financial and socio-economic status and support the Veteran artists, financial assistance under the Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana launched by the Culture Ministry has been enhanced, showing an increase from ₹ 4000 to ₹ 6000 per month.

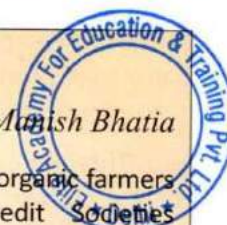
Conclusion

It is irrefutable to question the growing influence of the tourism sector as an economic powerhouse and its potential as a tool for development. Tourism sector spearheads growth, improves the quality of people’s lives with its capacity to create large scale employment of diverse kind. If properly managed; it supports environmental protection, promotes diverse cultural heritage and facilitates peace in the world. Ultimately all the government initiatives, including the budget, should make travel more experiential which is exactly what travel enthusiasts are looking for. Government projects, executed properly can make the tourist experience more wholesome and seamless. ■



Thrust to Indian Organic Produce

Manish Bhatia



The majority of the population is now quite mindful about the quality of food they consume. It is believed that Organic food strengthens the immunity and prepares the body to fight back against the diseases. Organic farming is one such system of agriculture where the produce is grown without the use of chemicals, man-made fertilisers and pesticides. It also entails environment friendly and socially responsible approach. Data reveals that in 2020, the total retail sales of the world organic food market was around ₹ 10 lakh crore of which USA, Germany and France contributed 64 per cent. There are around 34 lakh organic producers in 190 countries with total land coverage of 749 lakh hectares. This is just 1.6 per cent of the total agricultural land of the world.

India ranks 4th with 27 lakh hectares of organic land of which 7.6 lakh hectares is in Madhya Pradesh, 3.5 lakh hectares is in Rajasthan and 2.8 lakh hectares in Maharashtra. Besides, India tops the world with regard to the total number of organic producers in the world by having 16 lakh producers. The top ten organic foods that India exported, in the last three years, are Cereals, oil seeds, sugar, millets, spices, condiments, pulses coffee, fodder and tea. Presently, the India organic retails sales is around ₹ 27,000 crore which includes export of ₹ 7,000 crore. India accounts for 2.70 per cent of the world organic market and thus has a huge potential to expand.

The Government of India, having realised the absence of effective institutional mechanism to promote organic products, has approved formation of a Multi-State Cooperative Society which will act as an umbrella organisation for organic products in India. The need for such umbrella organisation has been consistently felt as India, despite having largest number of Organic producers in the world, accounts for only 2.70 per cent of the world organic market

The proposed society will provide institutional support for aggregation, certification, storage, processing, branding, labelling, packaging, logistics facilities, marketing of organic products and

arranging financial assistance to the organic farmers through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)/ Farmers Producers Organisation (FPOs) and will take up all promotion and development related activities of organic products with the help of various schemes and agencies of the Government of India. It will also utilize the policies of different Ministries of the Government of India in a focused manner through the "Whole of Government Approach".

The society will empanel accredited organic testing labs and certification bodies who meet the criteria specified by the society to bring down the cost of testing and certification. It will also adopt various business models by utilising the brand and marketing network of AMUL and other agencies on chargeable basis and will develop the same simultaneously on its own.

To give shape to the proposed Society, three leading Cooperatives viz., Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED), National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Limited (NCCF) and other two National level Organisations viz., National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) have resolved to contribute ₹ 20 crore each and become promoter members for establishing this Multi-State Cooperative Society for Organic Products.

This proposed society will have an authorised share capital of ₹ 500 crores, with an initial paid up share capital of ₹ 100 crore, having an area of operation all over the country. Initially, the Registered Office will be at NDDB, Head office, Anand, Gujarat.

The Multi-State Cooperative Society for Organic Products will help increasing domestic consumption and export of organic products produced by the cooperative related entities, thereby, promoting "Make in India" and leading to Atmanirbhar Bharat. Thus, this initiative of the Government of India will help achieve goal of "Sahakar-se-Samriddhi" through inclusive growth model of Cooperatives.

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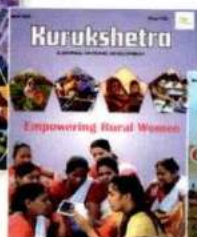
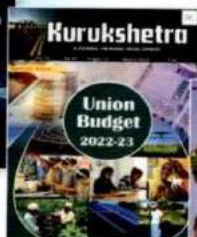
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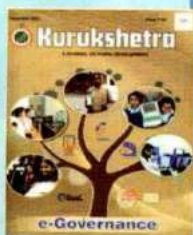
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