

Pre-Budget Expectations for the Skills Sector by Mr. Rahul K Patwardhan, CEO Designate, NIIT Limited, a Global Leader in Skills and Talent Development

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The government has been laying a lot of emphasis on skills development to promote economic growth, hence we are hopeful that the Finance Minister will announce some much awaited reforms to hasten the pace of the sector. As private sector participation is key to developing skilled manpower, we expect specific indirect tax rebates in the forthcoming budget, for the companies and its partners i.e. be it direct partners or their franchisees, involved in skilling.

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We would also expect the government to take initiatives to build social acceptance and industry buy-in for skills development through high decibel media campaigns, through which vocational skill courses/jobs are made aspirational. Placing a premium on certification by ensuring only certified people get government jobs is much required. Accelerated tax benefits should be provided to organizations that enable their employees to upskill through Sector Skills Council approved training and certification bodies.

The government should also create and empower Skills Universities within existing universities, and enable them to provide training pan-India through distributed, technology-connected hubs or delivery centers. High government spends on skills development initiatives should be continued.

Further, schools and colleges should be mandated that every student of class 9 and above, acquires at least one QP/NOS certified job ready skill - in addition to regular school/college curriculum and school-leaving/college graduation certification. And all schools to be free of any restriction to work with reputed private training partners to enable this. This will ensure that every student who completes 8th standard, gets definite access to at least one certified job ready skill set.69459)