

# Budget 2018 should focus on strengthening the competencies of Indian education

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INVC NEWS New Delhi, The Indian education sector today is in an inflexion point. Learning systems in the country have undergone a systemic evolution over the years changing the functional paradigms of the academic ecosystem. The first draft of the much-anticipated and awaited New Education Policy (NEP), which is slated to release in March 2018, is set to lay a concrete roadmap for boosting the competencies of the sector.

Technology has firmly emerged as the cornerstone for expanding the outreach of education across the nooks and corners of the country. The rapid emergence of education-startups on the Indian education horizon has changed the quality and scope of education delivery in the country. Budget 2018 should focus on propagating the technology tool to make education universally accessible by reducing angel tax on edu-tech startups, which will boost investment in the sector and bolster a student-centric learning model. There should be higher budgetary allocation to facilitate the assimilation and integration of ed-tech in traditional education processes. The government should also place high emphasis on technology

enablement in schools and make academic campuses tech-friendly to build a technologically robust national learning framework and solve the problem of a skewed student-teacher ratio. Budgetary provisions also need to focus on reducing tax burdens, particularly the 18 percent GST slab on ed-tech products and services to make education broadly affordable. The “Skill India” campaign launched by the Modi government is a key corollary in imbuing industry-relevant skill in students and helping augment their employability skills. The government has initiated several noteworthy skill development initiatives and it is greatly hoped that the forthcoming budget will provide a much-needed impetus to early-age skill development with the onus on advancing the communication, computing and numerical faculties of students with a view to enhancing their professional competitiveness.

Higher funds should be allocated for advanced teacher education programs by setting up training institutions for boosting their teaching competencies and equipping them with the necessary skills and training to enhance their theoretical and practical teaching abilities. The budget should also concentrate on broadening the use of digital tools in the classroom and acclimatizing teachers on the finer tenets of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) modules. The budget also needs to focus on providing a competitive remuneration structure to teachers to ensure their economic well-being and concentrate on imparting quality education to students. A competitive wage structure will also ensure in attracting qualified professionals in the teaching profession and plug the dearth of qualified teachers, leading to improved student-teacher relationships, better mentoring of pupils and enhanced student proficiencies.

The budget should also increasingly concentrate on consolidating teaching learning outcomes. An Outcome-based Education (OBE) system is an effective tool to monitor the academic performance and intellectual development of a student on a periodical basis. The government needs to formulate a competent assessment model for improving the efficiencies of learning outcomes.

The government should aim at streamlining education processes and encourage student exchange programs. The budget should also focus on providing grants to Indian schools and colleges to enter into tie-ups with globally reputed and accredited academic institutions to place India on the global education map.

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