

# ON THE PATH TO 'SKILL' INDIA

In an exclusive interview with Millennium Post, Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Rajiv Pratap Rudy talks about the Centre's desire to enhance India's skill ecosystem



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The MSDE is the country's flagship Ministry. What is your vision for the future?

SKILL is a government across all industries. The Skill India Mission is like a 'start-up' introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Since its commencement last year, every day has been exciting. Our Ministry is a living example of an early stage startup that 30,000 employees (all the officers and employees of the Ministry) along with me are working together on it to make it successful.

Our basic strategy is to bring about better coordination and convergence across all ministries, states, departments, and organisations and ensure that we meet our goal of creating a "skilled" India. The existing ecosystem has been quite fragmented for a long time. Our endeavour is to bring everyone under one umbrella and align them to one common skill framework. This ensures standardisation across all 50 odd skill development programmes that are being run across the country.

We also seek to introduce new technology, infrastructure, and best practices to further strengthen the skill ecosystem. We are also encouraging more private companies/institutions to come forward and contribute to the country's development by investing in the skill development of its workforce.

How will you achieve Prime Minister Modi's dream of transforming India into the world's "skill capital"? How successful have you been so far and what is your target for the next three years?

We are trying to create better opportunities for the youth of our country at home and abroad. With our demographic dividend it is just a matter of enhancing their productivity.

Our endeavour is to ensure that we align with global standards so that our youth can avail of job opportunities at home and abroad. We have partnered with countries like the United Kingdom, US, Canada, Germany, France, Australia on best practices and standards for skill development.

We have also partnered with Ministry of External Affairs for the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Yojana (PMKVY) under which 50 centres will be opened by the end of this year in India. These centres will focus on training and certification of Indian workforce to enhance employment across skill sectors and job profiles in line with international standards to facilitate overseas employment opportunities.

The scheme will be implemented by



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(NSDC) through its Training Partners in consultation with MHA and MSDE.

Overall success is not merely calculated by numbers, but also through policy interventions and reforms that we have introduced in the last one year to up-scale the skill ecosystem. In the past year (2015-16), we have managed to train over 1.04 crore youth under the Skill India mission, which is 30.4 percent higher than the previous year.

MSDE has recently obtained the Union Cabinet's approval for an outlay of the 12,000 crore under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Yojana (PMKVY). This year we have set a target to impart skills to 1 crore employees who are being trained (2016-20). Consequently, the results will see a substantial increase across sectors and regions.

The National Skill Development Cor-

poration as well as the Ministry are making investments to further scale this up.

What are the biggest challenges in the skill development sector? How can your Ministry overcome them?

The biggest challenge is the ambitious goal we have set for ourselves. There is still a significant mismatch in demand and supply. The youth have shifted their

focus from the lack of skilled workforce. It is imperative to have an integrated database of skilled, unskilled, employed, and unemployed citizens and then ensure that our plans go ahead in the fast track. We have launched the Labour Management Information System (LMIS) which will cover, on this issue, a great relief.

Another challenge is to rope in the private sector to skill its workforce. They have been given an important role in the Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) to ensure that the standards and the curriculum are recognised by the industry. We have provided several options in the private sector by which they can contribute to skill development in the country.

A large section of the workforce is informal and untrained, but not assessed or certified. As a result, they are not recognised for their skills. There is another section which just needs to upgrade its

transforming the work environment. This is being undertaken by the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program under PMKVY, while the skilled workforce is being certified according to their existing skills.

We have to ensure convergence and standardisation across all skill initiatives so that our programs assessed and certified through a common skill framework. Our endeavour is to convert the National Skills Qualification Framework into a legal entity that is mandatory for all skill development programs in the country.

With big challenges come big opportunities. The MSDE has imparted skills to over 19 lakh youth under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Yojana (PMKVY) in the past year 2015. We are aiming to impart skills to another 1 crore in the next four years under the same scheme.

The MSDE has formulated a crash "Skill Development" scheme in 34 North-bit districts. Do you have any specific new schemes in mind for the troubled state of Jammu & Kashmir and the highly underdeveloped North-East?

The Jammu & Kashmir, the focus is on enable graduates, post-graduates, and 2-year diploma engineers, to be able to work with corporate India and move towards a better livelihood under the MSDE career program - UDAYAN, which is being implemented by NSDC. More than 30 corporates have partnered under the scheme till date and several candidates have benefited from the programme and work in big companies like Tata Motors, Accenture, etc.

Similarly, for the North-East, under PMKVY in Assam, we have 82 training providers, 74 training centres in which 3221 candidates have enrolled and 3510 have been trained.

The MSDE has also asked the Assam Labour & Employment Department to identify untrained ITIs/IKVs for MSDE compliant training providers (including NSDC training providers). There is additional focus on skill development of inmates who have surrendered to bring their back into the mainstream.

There are also plans to skill the garden workers under Recognition of Prior Learning for which the details of the top workers/candidates are being shared by Labour & Employment Department, Assam. In addition to these ongoing efforts, the Ministry of Development of North-East Region also has a capacity building scheme and have invited MSDE-NSDC in drafting the same.

Overseas, Bhatnagar is Special