

## Skill development to get leg-up

Stitch in time: The skill development ecosystem is keen on special schemes to support skilling of women. *afp*

With poor employment generation being a major concern, the skill development ecosystem is keen that the Union Budget should have adequate allocation to help complete the plan to set up model training centres in all districts, and special schemes to support skilling of women and the disabled. The Budget is also likely to have an allocation to upgrade Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), sops including interest subsidies to boost skilling in 'difficult' areas, including the hilly States and those affected by left wing extremism, as well as financial incentives for corporates to engage more apprentices, according to sources in the skill development ecosystem.

### Model training centres

Pointing out that the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship envisaged establishing 650 (one in each district) 'model training centres' or 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras' (PMKKs), Jayant Krishna, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, National Skill Development Corporation, said that so far, allocations had been made for setting up 527 PMKKs covering 484 districts in 27 States.

These allocated PMKKs would cover 406 Lok Sabha constituencies.

As of January 25 this year, 356 PMKKs have been established in 24 States and two Union Territories and work is going on at 124 additional sites for setting up of these centres.

"To cover the remaining unallocated districts/parliamentary constituencies, proposals from market were invited through request for proposal, released on September 12, 2017, covering the remaining 185 unallocated districts/parliamentary constituencies," he said. "There could be a push [in the Budget] to complete [the setting up of] PMKKs in the coming fiscal in the remaining districts..."

Then, there would be complete assessment of the PMKKs by around mid-2018, when the placement data would be available, Mr. Krishna said.

There was also the expectation that the Budget would have some measures to take forward the Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) and Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) programmes, he said. The SANKALP has a \$250 million loan assistance from the World Bank to the Government of India to boost the National Skill Development Mission.

The programme provides specific incentives to the States to help skill disadvantaged populations through innovative models, with focus on women and persons with disability. The STRIVE — a \$425 million Central scheme, with half of the outlay as World Bank loan assistance — incentivises ITIs to improve their performance by involving small and medium firms, business associations and industry clusters, Mr. Krishna said.

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