

# Focus on skill-based hiring, says Centum Learning



## Sanjeev Duggal

CEO and Director, Centum Learning  
talks to Sanjeev Sharma

*Skill development is among the major programmes of the government and has been one of the focus areas in the recently announced Union Budget. Sanjeev Duggal, CEO and Director, Centum Learning, talks about how hiring needs to become skill-based rather than qualification-based and how fragmented decision making between the Centre and states is hindering the skill development programme.*

### **Q: What are the main initiatives for skill development in the Union Budget?**

A: In its first Union budget, the new government seems to be making good on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make in India agenda. The core campaign revolves around making India the manufacturing hub of the world and for this to happen



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we need a highly skilled pool of human resources. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's Budget announcement to launch a National Skills Mission to provide employability skills to rural youth is a step in the right direction. Some of the key proposals for skill development and education sector in the Union Budget include allocation of Rs 1,500 crore towards skills development and entrepreneurship, allocation of Rs 196 crore for support for skills based higher education, including community colleges, alloca-

tion of Rs 1,000 crore towards establishment of Self Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) fund to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in the country among others.

### **Q: How can Skill India programme be accelerated?**

A: There cannot be a more opportune time to consider how closely a nation's growth agenda is aligned with the skill level of its manpower. Jobs and hiring in India need to shift from being ‘qualification-based’ to ‘skill-based’.

Partnering large and credible training providers is critical to achieve the end objectives of ‘Quality’ & ‘Scale’. The employability skills gap is costing India dearly with uncoordinated initiatives between the Centre and the state, and disjointed efforts from various organisations, the private sector and educational academies. That needs to be addressed urgently.

### **Q: What has been the partnership model with the state governments?**

A: We work majorly with the governments both at the Centre and the state level. We have partnered government agencies across India

to roll out skilling programmes. Centum Learning is NSDC's largest partner contributing to 20% of their skilling programmes.

### **Q: What are the main areas of focus for the company?**

A: Centum Learning is a leading skilling multinational which has already skilled 1 million people in emerging economies. It is present in rural and urban locations across 21 countries, including India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, and 17 countries in Africa.

Centum Learning has partnered Central and State Ministries, CBSE, PSEs and more than 350 corporates. Additionally, Centum Foundation, the non-profit wing of Centum Learning, partners leading corporates to fulfil their CSR mandate.

### **Q: How can skill development translate into creation of jobs?**

A: Employment in India needs to shift from being ‘qualification-based’ to being ‘skill-based’ as this will ensure that even the educational institutions will focus on imparting skills that lead to employability, rather than doling out certificates and degrees.