



National Youth Policy of India 2014: Does it Meet Aspirations of Next Gen?

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1. Overview

The population of India is expected to reach 1.3 billion by 2020. The median age of the population will be 28 years by 2020 which is considerably less than the expected median age of China (37 years). Along with the increase in overall population, India's working population that majorly comprises youth is also increasing proportionately. India's working population is projected to reach 592 million by 2020. This points to a fact that youth will make significant contribution to the economic development of the country. Currently, youth in the age group of 15-29 years constitutes 27.5% of the India's population. Further, about 34% of India's Gross National Income (GNI) is contributed by the youth, aged 15-29 years (source: NYP). Given the importance of youth in the economy, the Government of India emphasizes that youth should be armed with appropriate education, skills, health awareness, and other enablers to be able to contribute productively to the economy. The National Youth Policy of India (NYP) 2014 is the result of such an initiative. The NYP states the Indian Government's vision for the country's youth. It also outlines strategies to achieve the objectives of the policy. The policy is drafted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Government of India.

The objective of this research is to analyze the National Youth Policy's and policy measures. The policy objectives will be analyzed against the basic policy design framework, policy adoption, and evaluation. Further, analysis of policy measures in key priority areas for the youth such as education, employment, healthcare, lifestyle, social values and politics will be done and conclusions will be noted.

The data presented in this report are gathered from multiple sources. Majority of the data have been derived from secondary sources including government databases, technical literature, and press releases. Further, information has also been gathered from online surveys and social media platforms as well.

The image shows five silhouettes of business professionals (three men and two women) standing on a path made of large, interlocking puzzle pieces. The path leads from the bottom right towards the top left. The background is a gradient of blue and purple. The text 'National Youth Policy' is written in a bold, black font in the bottom left corner.

National Youth Policy

2. Objectives of the Policy

The Indian Government's vision for youth is "to empower the youth of the country to achieve their full potential and through them enable India to find its rightful place in the community of nations". The NYP-2014 states five key objectives to achieve this vision. Further, it identifies specific actions in 11 priority areas, identified as important for youth development. These are summarized in the table below.

Exhibit 1: Objectives and Priorities

Objectives	Priorities
Create a productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to India's economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education• Entrepreneurship• Employment & Skill Development
Develop a strong and healthy generation equipped to take on future challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritizing good Health and promotion of a Healthy Lifestyle• Sports
Instill social values and promote community services to build national ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of Social Values• Community Engagement
Facilitate participation and civic engagement at all levels of governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in politics and governance• Youth Engagement
Support youth at risk and create equitable opportunity for all disadvantaged & marginalized youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on Inclusion• Focus on Social Justice

3. Analysis of Policy Objectives

The policy objectives are analyzed in two parts. First, the basic design of the policy framework is studied to identify the essential policy parameters. Then, an analysis has been conducted against the identified parameters as demonstrated in Exhibit-2. In the second section, the adoption and evaluation terms of the policy are analyzed. The parameters and outcomes of the analysis are finally stated in Exhibit -3.

Exhibit 2: Basic Design of the Policy Framework

Policy Analysis Criteria	Analysis
Focus on the needs and requirements of youth and young women	The policy does focus on the needs and requirements of the youth and women. It talks about devising policies for different segments of the youth. Lifelong learning, vocational education, and skill development are other areas where requirements of the youth are specifically targeted.
Encouraging active participation of youth	The policy calls for increasing access to education and for ensuring equity. This could pave way for the increased participation of youth in education in a country such as India where access to education is imited
Use of countrywide survey on youth and reference to other database	The policy takes into account the Employment & Unemployment Survey by the Ministry Of Labor & Employment, Government Of India. However , there is no specific mention about any extensive surveys focused on youth in India. This could impact the validity of some of the policy measures.

Budget provisions on a medium and long term basis	The overall spending by the Government of India (GoI) in a year on the education of youth is mentioned in the policy. It states that the GoI invests more than Rs.900 billion per annum on youth development programs. Further, the GoI spends about Rs.370 billion on schemes targeted at development of youth in areas of education, health, skill development and engagement. However, medium or long term spending is not specified in the policy.
Promotion of equal opportunities for young women and young men	The policy objectives are clear and firm on equitable opportunities for women to ensure a dignified life. It emphasizes that women must be protected from any sort of discrimination and that equitable access to justice should be provided to them. Special provisions are envisaged for women in education and skill development.

Exhibit 3: Adoption and Evaluation of Policy

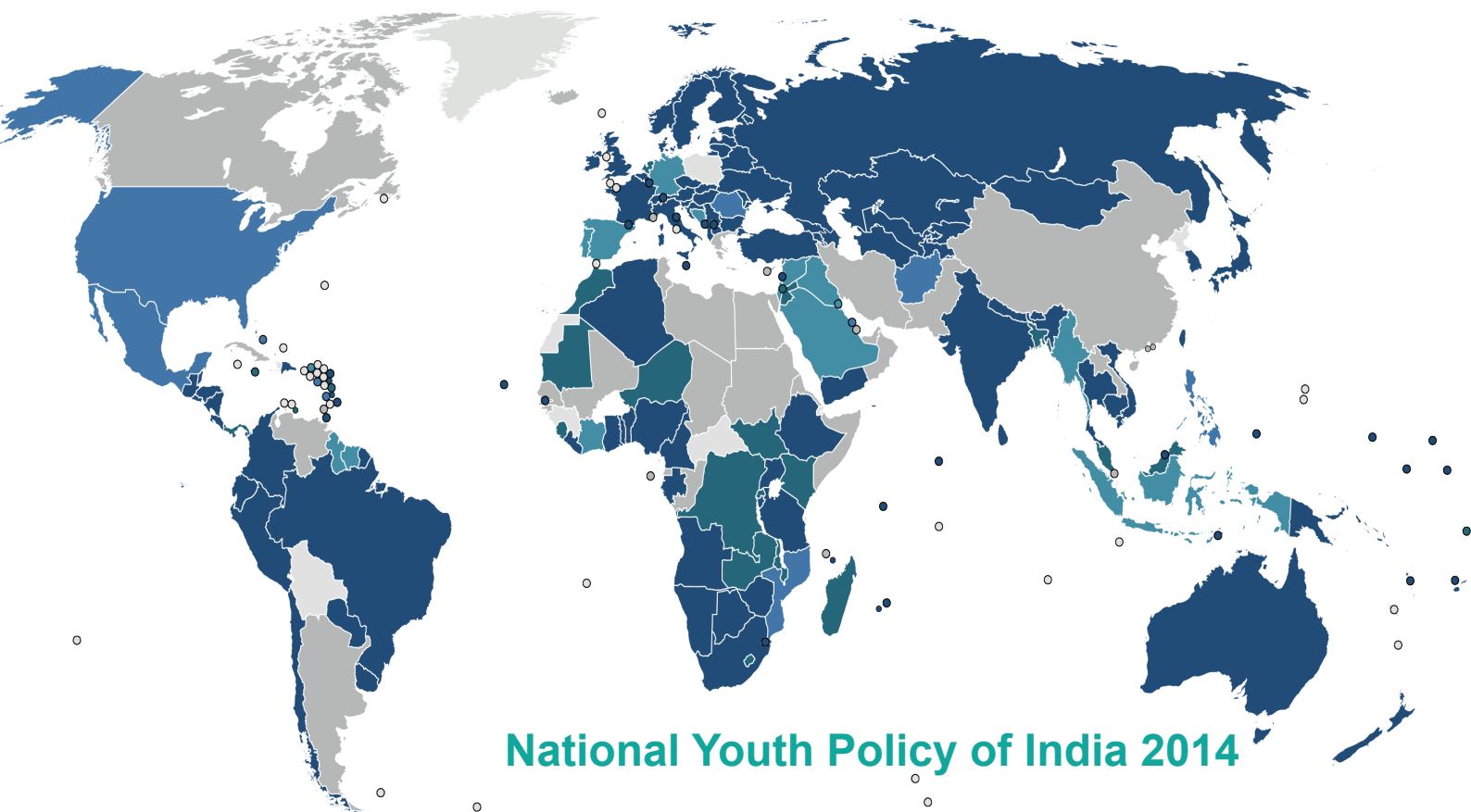
Adoption and approval of the youth policy by parliament and state governments	The NYP has been approved by the Indian government. The central government has directed State governments to proceed with policy implementation.
Visibility of the policy in the public	The policy was unveiled amid lots of promotions. NGOs, youth organizations and state governments are promoting the policy by organizing public functions. However, the government has not yet aggressively marketed the policy by using the booming internet as a platform. Hence, the visibility of the policy on social media and online sources is not very good.
Partnership between youth, NGOs and the government at all levels	The government has tied up with NGOs to establish connect with the youth. There are more than 13,000 NGOs working with the Youth Affairs Ministry to achieve this objective.

Challenges faced by the National Youth Policy

The proper implementation of youth policies has been an issue in India ever since the first youth policy was released in 1988. The NYP 2014 is also facing a similar fate. The Ministry is yet to formulate a proper plan of action, and youth councils have not yet been formed.

Evaluation of the policy on a regular basis with performance indicators

As per the policy document, the progress made in achieving the policy objectives is to be published on every two years. Further, the policy will be reviewed on every five years for any revision of objectives and priorities. Since the policy was formulated in 2014, the first status update report is expected in 2016.



National Youth Policy of India 2014

4. Analysis of Key Policy Priorities

The effectiveness of the policy measures in key areas is analyzed with a goal is to assess how effective will be the policy measures in resolving challenges faced by today's youth. Education, entrepreneurship, employment, health care, lifestyle, social values and politics are the key priority areas that are analyzed

Education

The education policy measures are weighed against the youth's needs and challenges faced by them. Among the important parameters analyzed include access to education in rural areas, gross enrollment ratio, infrastructure, social factors and financial issues. Exhibit-4 depicts the analysis.

Employment and Skill Development

Employment and skill development is an important priority area in the NYP. The analysis focus on factors such as scale of the employment required, importance of un-organized labor, vocational education and importance of enterprise training.

Exhibit 4: Education: Challenges and Needs vs Policy Measures

Challenges Faced by Youth & Needs	Analysis of Policy Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The access to education in rural areas is still limited to the youth• Proper access to education is still not available to girl children• Lack of infrastructure at schools• Lack of availability of quality teachers• India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 16% was much below the world average of 27%, as well as that of other emerging countries such as China (26%) and Brazil (36%) in 2010.• Cultural and social factors limit access to education• Financial constraints within families	<p>Building capacity and quality is one of the key priorities of the policy. Further, it emphasizes skill development and lifelong learning. The policy calls for physical infrastructure improvements and a greater reach to regions with lower education enrolments. Further, the policy also hopes to implement enhanced teacher selection and recruitment programs. It also promises to grant financial support to students, evaluate government policies and promote accountability in the system.</p> <p>It includes policy measures which are focused on providing increased access to education for women. A major drawback of the policy measures in the educational sphere is the lack of focus on accessibility of education in rural areas. Though it calls for access to education for all sections of the society, emphasis on rural areas is missing. Education in the rural areas is major concern as close to 70% of India's population is in villages. Overall, the policy measures take care of the needs and challenges faced by the youth in India on the education front.</p>

Exhibit 5: Employment and Skills Development: Challenges and Needs vs Policy Measures

Challenges Faced by Youth & Needs	Analysis of Policy Measures
<p>Youth Population: The country has more than 253 million youth population who are aged 15 to 24 (census 2011) and this segment comes around 21% of the total population. Such a large segment calls for higher investments in skills development and further employment generation.</p> <p>Unorganized labour: The un-organized labor segment accounts for majority of the workforce. Casual workers and the self-employed account for more than 90% of rural workers and about 50% of urban workers (source: World Bank)</p> <p>Lack of access to education and literacy rate: The employment opportunities are proportional with the level of educational attainment. India's literacy rate stood at 73% (census 2011). This means that basic education is yet to reach all sections of society to help them to take up skilled jobs</p> <p>Enterprise-based training: Since most of the jobs are in the un-organized sector, enterprise based training is not prevalent in India. 17% of the manufacturing firms in India does not provide any training for employees according to market info.</p> <p>Gender inequality and social issues: Gender inequality is more prevalent in employment sector in India. Women and men still play traditional roles in India. In rural areas and in some communities, girls are restricted from traveling long distance for work. They tend to get married at an earlier age than men and are subject to family expectations thereafter.</p> <p>Shortage of skilled manpower: India is among the top countries in which employers are facing difficulty in filling up the jobs. According to market info this difficulty to fill up jobs in India is 48%, which is above the global standard of 34% in 2012. The lack of qualified applicants, shortage of hard skills, and shortage of suitable employability including soft skills, are some of the key reasons in finding a suitable candidate for available jobs in the country.</p>	<p>The NYP emphasizes that the information about skill development programs should be made available to youth. Further, the country's youth should be educated on the employment options which they can avail after completion of such skill development program. The NYP also states that the effectiveness of the youth outreach programs must be monitored, and strategies should be modified in order to ensure sustained benefits. Other key measures include developing linkages between training institutions and employers, gathering financial support from government and private sector, up-grading Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), training teachers and generating employment for women.</p> <p>Overall, it does address several challenges faced by today's youth. However, it lacks policy measures to tackle a few important challenges currently faced by the youth. For instance, the scale of employment generation required in India is very large. However, the policy doesn't identify priority areas where the employment generation could be significant so that it can satisfy the demand for jobs. Further, measures for improving the conditions of the un-organized sector are not mentioned in the policy. Nevertheless, Vocational training programs are highlighted. However, given that only 3% of the student population has access to vocational training; the policy measures don't look promising.</p>

Entrepreneurship

A fast growing economy such as India calls for greater investments in startups and subsequent generation of fresh employment opportunities. This has been an area that has been largely ignored in India. The analysis here focuses on factors such as entrepreneurship, financial issues, and partnership between educational institutes and industries.

Exhibit 6 : Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Needs vs Policy Measures

Challenges Faced by Youth & Needs	Analysis of Policy Measures
<p>Lack of entrepreneurship education: Entrepreneurship education programs are in place in some communities, but majority of Indian youth have little or no access to such training.</p> <p>Lack of funds: At present, fund is lacking for entrepreneurship programs in India. Greater infusion of funds is required to support teacher training, curriculum, professional development and to evaluate program design and outcomes.</p> <p>Partnership between institutes and industries: Strong partnerships between schools, businesses, and other community organizations, are required so that youth can be encouraged to take up entrepreneurial roles.</p>	<p>The highlights of the policy measures include building sufficient capacity in various entrepreneurship development & training institutes and ensuring sufficient budgetary allocations to entrepreneurship financing schemes. While the policy includes some measures to address challenges in capacity and finance, it falls short in terms of implementing measures for imparting entrepreneurial education to youth in schools and colleges. Entrepreneurship education should be initiated in schools and colleges, and there should be measures for such initiatives. The focus of the policy measures is to impart training to the already available pool of entrepreneurs. On the other hand these policies lack focus on creating measures for creating new entrepreneurs.</p>

Healthcare

The youth in India encounter both major and minor health issues. Health issues adversely affect the productivity of the youth. Hence, it is important for the government to ensure that these issues are addressed in the policy document. The analysis in this section is focused on health challenges faced by the youth such as common health issues, suicide cases, access to healthcare and impact of sex education in healthcare.

Exhibit 7: Healthcare: Challenges and Needs vs Policy Measures

Challenges Faced by Youth & Needs	Analysis of Policy Measures
<p>Common health problems faced by the youth in India: Nearly 30% of young people in India suffer from some kind of health problems. Health issues including nutritional disorders, stress, injuries (from road accidents, violence) communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including mental and neurological disorders specifically affect this segment of the population.</p> <p>Access to primary health centers and doctors: Still limited in rural areas</p> <p>Suicide among India's youth: Suicide rate in India is among the highest reported from any country. India accounted for the highest estimated number of suicides in the world in 2012 (WHO). Suicide rates are much higher in rural areas and in the southern states of the country.</p> <p>Healthcare and sex education: Sex education is not a part of the school curriculum in major parts of India. Private schools do integrate sex education into their curriculum. However the instructions and teaching modules are often outsourced. It is important that children and young people are empowered with correct information and various ways of handling matter related to their own sexuality. This will help them to take care of their sexual and reproductive health and protect them from any kind of sexual abuse or violence.</p>	<p>Important policy measures include providing adequate healthcare access for individuals across the country (especially pregnant and lactating mothers) and creating large trained pool of doctors, nurses and health workers. The policy calls for active participation of the private sector. Further, it focuses special attention on the health issues of female youth. Additionally, the policy calls for targeted disease control programs and educational programs on nutritional choices & a healthy lifestyle. Overall the policy addresses most of the challenges faced by the youth. One drawback of the policy measures is that it lacks a focus on sex education in schools.</p>

Lifestyle

Owing to Globalization, the youth in India have access to multiple lifestyle choices. A few decades back, Indians did not have access to a wide variety of choices like they have today. The lifestyle changes can have a negative impact on the health of the youth in India. The health related issues which are faced by the youth are given in Exhibit-8.

Exhibit 8: Lifestyle: Challenges and Needs vs Policy Measures

Challenges Faced by Youth & Needs	Analysis of Policy Measures
<p>Stress and sedentary lifestyle: Today's urban youth is burdened by their sedentary lifestyle. As people get busy with their jobs, exercise and physical activities take a hit. Further, changes in sleep and lifestyle patterns adversely affect their health. This has resulted in an increase in the number of lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, depression, neurological problems, and cardiac problems among the youth in India.</p> <p>Obese population: Millions of Indians are now morbidly obese, with one in three Indians in urban areas classified as overweight. Lifestyle is often the reason for such disorders.</p>	<p>The policy includes measures such as inclusion of health and nutrition awareness programs in the curriculum of schools. The objective is to increase awareness about health problems so that the youth are encouraged to follow a proper lifestyle. The policy also talks about increasing awareness about the ill-effects of drug abuse. It mostly addresses issues faced by the youth today. As the target population for such programs includes working executives and college students, efforts should be made to encourage youth from colleges and businesses to participate in such initiatives.</p>

Social Values

India is a nation with multiple ethnic groups who follow different religions, languages and customs. This diversity brings along a wide socio-economic disparity across the country. Hence, it is very important to instill a sense of social values in individuals from a young age. This will help the communities to understand each other and move together to achieve the vision of a prosperous India. Exhibit-9 provides a few of the key issues along with policy measures.

Exhibit 9: Social values: Challenges and Needs vs Policy Measures

Challenges Faced by Youth & Needs	Analysis of Policy Measures
<p>Erosion in Indian values: The social values followed by the Indian population over the centuries have undergone many changes. The youth of today are often influenced by western values and follow them blindly. This is more prevalent among the urban population.</p> <p>Inclusion of values in education: Education plays a major role in making a person socially and culturally distinct. Hence education should be accompanied with the knowledge of social values as well. In schools and colleges, students should be educated on the significance of social values.</p>	<p>The focus of the policy is to spread brotherhood and harmony among youth and supporting non-government organizations that work disseminating values and harmony. It calls for a formal system that will impart social & cultural values at all levels of schools and colleges. Overall, the policy addresses most of the youth's issues.</p>

Politics

Politics is not a preferred career option among the youth in India today. Often, politics is chosen by individuals who fail to secure good job in the job market. This has resulted in shortage of talented youth in Indian politics. Politics in India is dominated by the older generation and youth has limited representation in decision making and governance processes. Key issues and policy measures affecting youth in India are given in Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 10: Politics: Challenges and Needs vs Policy Measures

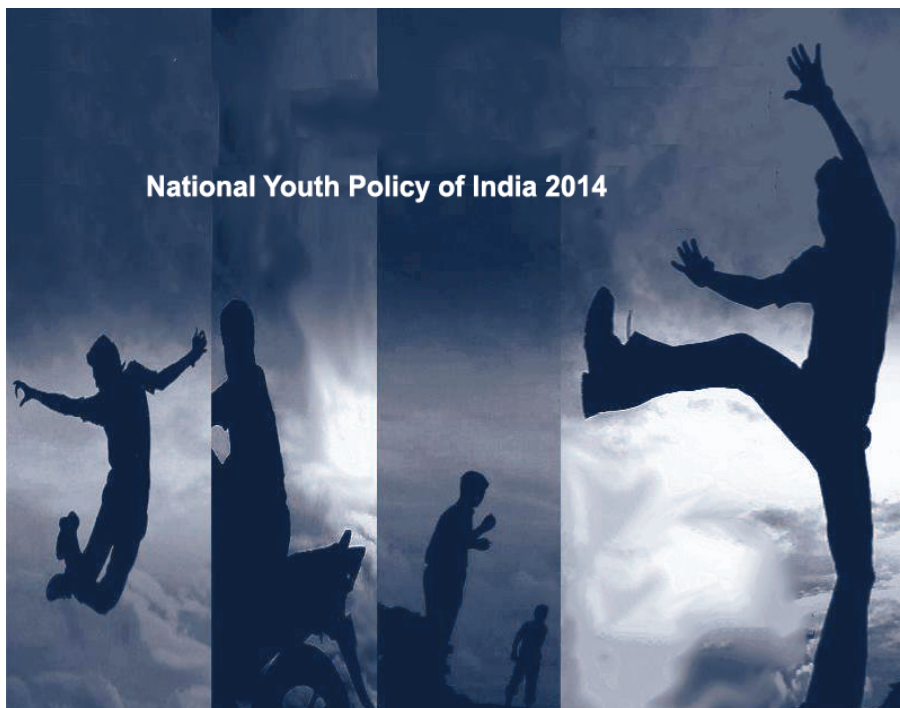
Challenges Faced by Youth & Needs	Analysis of Policy Measures
<p>Image of politics as a career option: The brand image of politics among the youth in India is not so good. As Indian politics is often marred by scams and corruption, the image of politics has taken a beating. Hence parents often advice children not to venture into politics. This results in talented candidates opting for alternate professions such as medical and engineering rather than politics. This has also indirectly resulted in degradation of the quality of politics and governance in India over a period.</p> <p>Lack of representation in parliament: The just concluded 2014 Lok Sabha elections witnessed the highest number of young voters ever, but resulted in highest ever proportion of older candidates becoming MPs. The average age of the 2014 Lok Sabha is 54 while the average age of Indians as per the 2011 census is 27.8 years.</p>	<p>The policy highlights include creating effective strategies to combat negative perceptions of politics, lowering barriers for entry into politics, consistent efforts to engage with young voters, creating governance mechanisms and promoting youth engagement in governance. Overall, the policy addresses most of the issues faced by the youth with regard to India's political scenario.</p>

5. Conclusion

The National Youth Policy 2014 does focus on the needs and requirements of the youth and women in the 11 key priority areas as identified. The highlights of the policy include increasing access to education, ensuring equity, ensuring lifelong learning, vocational education and promoting skill development. Building capacity, improving access to finance, engaging stakeholders and also emphasized across all priority areas of the policy.

On the downside, there is no specific mention about any extensive surveys focused on the Indian youth while formulating the policy. This could impact the validity of some of the policy measures. Further, the government has not yet aggressively marketed the policy using the growing internet and online media that are highly popular among the youth. Hence visibility of the policy is not very good.

Among other drawbacks, the policy lacks a clear focus on rural areas though it calls for access to education for all sections of the society. With regard to employment, the policy doesn't identify priority areas that could be sources of employment generation. These areas could be so significant that they can satisfy the demand for jobs. Further, the policy misses out on measures for improving the condition of the unorganized labor segment. While vocational training programs are mentioned in the policy, the policy measures do not look aggressive. Also, it falls short in terms of emphasis on entrepreneurial education to youth in schools and colleges.



This publication has been prepared for general guidance, and does not constitute professional advice on this subject. Roopesh P.P., Business Partner - DART Consulting & Author of this report, can be reached at roopesh@dartconsulting.co.in for any further queries.

