

**Press Release**

## **MSDE Charts Roadmap to Scale Apprenticeships in MSMEs, Driving Viksit Bharat Workforce Vision**

**New Delhi, April 29, 2026:** In a decisive push to unlock the untapped potential of India's apprenticeship ecosystem, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) today convened a high-level Consultative Workshop on "Scaling Apprenticeship Uptake in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)." The workshop reinforced apprenticeships as a transformative pathway for building a future-ready workforce aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat and focused on translating India's strong policy framework into large-scale, on-ground adoption.

The workshop aimed to discuss on-ground realities of MSME apprenticeship participation, including key barriers, successful practices, and factors influencing employer engagement. It assessed the feasibility of models such as cluster-based consortia, earn-while-you-learn, and work-integrated learning.

While the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) has witnessed robust growth, apprenticeship engagement continues to remain concentrated among large and medium enterprises. Notably, 94% of MSME apprentices are currently hosted within private sector establishments—highlighting the need for solutions that are tailored to the operational realities and constraints of the private MSME ecosystem.

Deliberations underscored that strengthening MSME participation is critical to unlocking apprenticeship scale and improving workforce absorption outcomes. Participants engaged in candid discussions on persistent barriers, including low awareness and perceived complexity in compliance processes.

**Ms. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, MSDE,** said, *"India's youth have immense potential, but for that potential to turn into real opportunities, we need stronger connections between learning and work. Apprenticeships help make that connection. MSMEs are the backbone of our economy and also one of the biggest sources of employment. If we can make apprenticeships simpler, more practical, and easier for small*

*businesses to adopt, we can create opportunities for lakhs of young people while helping enterprises grow with skilled talent. This workshop is an important step towards building solutions that work on the ground for both industry and youth.”*

As a key outcome, stakeholders identified priority challenges and actionable levers to accelerate MSME participation in apprenticeships. The workshop also facilitated the co-design of near-term pilot initiatives across select sectors and geographies, with clearly defined success metrics. In addition, a focused set of policy and regulatory recommendations was articulated for MSDE’s consideration, distinguishing between immediate interventions and longer-term reforms.

The workshop also explored a range of practical and scalable apprenticeship models. These included Group Training Organizations (GTOs), where clusters of MSMEs can collectively host apprentices under a common administrative anchor; the Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programme (AEDP), enabling students to pursue UGC-approved undergraduate degrees while working with MSMEs; and Work-Integrated Learning Programmes (WILP), which combine formal education with structured on-the-job training leading to recognized qualifications.

Through structured dialogue, participants examined the feasibility of adapting these models within the Indian MSME context and deliberated on targeted policy, regulatory, and financial interventions required to make apprenticeships more accessible and attractive for smaller enterprises. The consultation concluded with a clear action roadmap, outlining roles, responsibilities, and timelines to ensure coordinated implementation.

After the workshop, the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Promotion of Inclusion and MSME Participation in Apprenticeship Training, constituted under the 38th Central Apprenticeship Council, was convened to deliberate on key policy and implementation issues. The Sub-Committee reviewed its mandate of promoting inclusive apprenticeship opportunities for women, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), SC/ST/OBC categories and individuals from remote areas, while focusing on significantly enhancing the participation of MSMEs.

Detailed discussions were held on agenda items aimed at strengthening MSME engagement, expanding apprenticeship intake with safeguards, and introducing targeted incentives and social security measures under National Apprenticeship Scheme, discussion on the guidelines for online/virtual apprenticeship, with a view to making apprenticeship training more inclusive, accessible, and industry-responsive.

The workshop was attended by Shri N.K. Sudhanshu, Additional Secretary, MSDE, and Shri V.S. Arvind, Director, MSDE, along with a diverse group of policymakers, industry leaders, practitioners, and MSME stakeholders.

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