



Announcements

ASERF has instituted **Dr Stya Paul Young** Educationist Award' for honouring Young Educationists who have demonstrated their potential by making an impact on Indian education. Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2013. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Stya University announces admission for the session 2013-14

Apeejay Stya University is offering diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the Fall Admission 2013-14. Applicants for admission accepted on the basis of comprehensive merit, judged by their academic excellence, their extracurricular achievements, and their utilization of the resources they have had available. As part of the application, the University recognize a number of examination scores to establish academic excellence, including AIEEE, GMAT, SAT, SAT-II. **For more,** [click here](#)

Apeejay Stya University announces Founder's Scholarship

On the Death anniversary of our beloved founder Dr. Stya Paul, Apeejay Stya University (ASU), Haryana announces a Merit - Based Scholarship Scheme for *Undergraduate, Post Graduate and MBA Courses*

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Please visit our website for more: [click here](#)

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Partnership

Dear Partners,

The Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation (ASERF) invites news, articles, resource material, opinions and analyses on relevant educational issues that can be highlighted in our by-monthly e-bulletins and on the ASERF portal.

We request if you could spare a few moments of your valuable time to have a look at our website and guide us on our regular initiatives.

Editor

[Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh](#)

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ASPECT

Rising crimes: Pranab Mukherjee calls for instilling social values in young minds

The President also stressed on the need for making critical reforms in country's educational system to ensure quality education.

Noting that recent cases of crimes against women have shaken the nation's conscience, President Pranab Mukherjee on Saturday advocated inculcation of ancient values in young minds so that these social evils can be checked.

Recent happenings especially crimes against women have shaken our conscience, he said.

"Now again people are talking about it. This thing should have not happened if we had not forgotten our civilisational wealth — respect for women, care for children, respect for elderly and tolerance for pluralism.

"The values inherent in our ancient civilisation. These are basics which need to be inculcated in the minds of the young students since the very beginning. If we have that (values) then we do not need to bother thinking about a strong, stronger or strongest legislation to deal with this monstrous social evil," the President said in his speech at the valedictory function of Golden Jubilee of Dayanand Education Society in Latur.

Education can play a key role in women emancipation, he said.

The President stressed on the need for making critical reforms in country's educational system to ensure quality education.

"Not only quantity, we require quality in education also. I have shared my disappointment earlier...Out of top 200 universities in the world, there is not a single Indian university," he said and asked educationists to work towards providing quality education.

India had seen many universities like Nalanda and Takshila in ancient times which were centres of excellence, he said. "I do believe that if we make efforts, we may get back to those glorious days."

Mukherjee asked the private sector to invest in innovation and for betterment of the education sector. He said the government is making huge investments in the education sector.

"The government has earmarked six per cent of GDP for expansion of education in the 12th Five Year plan (2012-17)," Mukherjee said.

The country's higher education sector has expanded significantly, he said. The total number of students enrolled in the sector was 2.6 crore at the end of the 11th Plan period which is projected to increase during the 12th Plan.

Though the country has over 650 degree awarding institutions and over 33,000 colleges, the President said, "But we are short of good quality academic institutions, on account of which, many bright students prefer going abroad for higher studies."

He asked private industries, teachers and government to support grassroot innovators and research work. As per an international survey, only three among the 100 most innovative companies in the world are Indian companies, the President said.

Mukherjee said India needs to work for making quality education more affordable and accessible.

"Many bright students are circumstanced by geographic location or economic difficulty from seeking higher education. There is an urgent need to increase accessibility. This will not only improve the enrolment rate in higher education, but also enhance quality of graduates."

The President, who is on a two-day tour of Maharashtra and yesterday visited Mumbai and Pune, arrived at Latur which has emerged as an important educational centre in the state.

Latur, which is gradually growing into a city, has more than 50 colleges providing technical education among others.

The Dayanand Society, which was established in 1962, has around 10,000 students studying in its education institutions.

Maharashtra Governor K Sankaranarayanan, Punjab Governor Shivraj V Patil, who hails from Latur, and Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan were among the dignitaries present in the function.

Patil has earlier been a lecturer in Dayanand Education Society here for 10 years.

"Maharashtra has faced severe drought. Despite that, we assure you that we will continue to contribute in the country's growth," Chavan said in his address.

Source: 01 June, 2013/ [DNA India](#)

NEWS

HRD min likely to form coordinating body for education regulators

New Delhi: Keeping aside a contentious proposal for an over-arching body subsuming existing regulators

in the higher education sector, government has decided to come up with a coordinating body instead through an executive order.

The development comes in wake of the Parliamentary standing committee on HRD opposing the viability of a proposed over-arching body which would have subsumed regulators like UGC and AICTE.

While examining the Higher Education and Research Bill 2011 for creation of National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), it feared the over-arching body would give rise to "undesired results".

It had instead suggested to form an over-arching commission which would work as a coordinator with the specialised bodies like UGC, AICTE and NCTE, as a workable formula under the overall supervision of the Commission.

Taking note of the suggestion, HRD Ministry officials said they have given "in principal" approval to the setting of the coordination mechanism.

However, a lot of ground needs to be covered before the move bears fruition as the proposal has to be cleared by the Law Ministry.

The development could be seen a major climbdown for the Ministry, which under the then Minister Kapil Sibal had vigorously pursued the over-arching body, triggering backlash from the medical and legal fraternity as well. The proposed bill had sought to cover both these subjects too.

Drawing attention to the apprehension of the state governments with respect to their autonomy and jurisdiction over higher education, the standing committee had also underlined that "any attempt to infringe upon the autonomy of the state governments would not be a wise move..."

The panel was of the view that the HRD Ministry should have pursued the issue with the state governments to allay their apprehensions and arrive at a consensus on areas of concerns in the Bill.

Source: 03 June, 2013/ [Zee News](#)

UGC member opposes dissolution of Distance Education Council

A member of the University Grants Commission (UGC) has opposed the dissolution of the Distance Education Council (DEC) — open and distance learning (ODL) system regulator — under the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), saying the move was untenable under the law.

"The manner in which the laws framed by the Parliament have been substituted by a bureaucratic process, to evade and avoid meaning discussions, calls for a debate on the procedure followed by the government to undo the laws," M.M. Ansari, member of the UGC and a former Director of DEC-IGNOU, has said.

The HRD Ministry dissolved the DEC on the recommendations of the Madhav Menon Committee to "Suggest Measures to Regulate the Standards of Education Being Imparted through Distance Mode." All regulatory responsibilities of the open and distance learning education system in the country have been entrusted to the UGC. The government proposes to create a separate regulatory body for distance education.

According to a notification issued by the UGC, it is working on development of appropriate regulations for maintaining standards of ODL programmes/courses. All universities have been asked to ensure that no further affiliations or approvals are granted to any new centre for ODL programmes/courses until such regulations are notified and come into force.

Questioning the authority of the officiating Vice-Chancellor, who was also an aspirant for a regular appointment, in taking this major decision, Mr. Ansari said the power to regulate ODL system had been entrusted to the IGNOU by Parliament, which alone can decide as to which authority was competent to perform this role. "But, the concerned officials hardly bothered to respect the laws," he said.

The DEC's mandate to regulate ODL system is provided in the IGNOU's Act which cannot be obliterated through any process, other than the procedure followed by Parliament for enactment of laws, he said. "In violation of established practices, the Central government is allegedly interfering in the functioning of institutions, without caring for the wisdom of Parliament, which of late could not take up many serious matters for providing policy directions," he added.

HRD Ministry order

The HRD Ministry on December 29 last year had issued an order saying that the UGC and All India Council for technical Education (AICTE) – technical education regulator – would create necessary physical infrastructure and qualified manpower to discharge the regulatory responsibilities of the ODL system in their respective areas.

The two were also mandated to prepare an action plan within three months for the growth and

development of distance education system in the country.

The UGC and AICTE were to take all necessary steps to ensure that as soon as notification regarding dissolution of DEC was issued by the IGNOU, the UGC and AICTE should be in a state of readiness to take over the responsibility without any confusion or delay.

“Interestingly, this order was issued much earlier than formal notification of the dissolution of DEC. Since DEC was created as a statutory body to effectively implement certain mandate of IGNOU, the powers to regulate ODL system are still with IGNOU till the IGNOU’s Act is suitably amended by Parliament. In fact, administrative order cannot substitute the legal provisions made by Parliament. Therefore, UGC and AICTE, which are governed by their respective Acts, are neither legally empowered nor professionally competent to perform the role assigned to them,” he said.

Source: 04 June, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

Women teachers for girls’ schools: move slammed

Teachers oppose govt. order; say having teachers of both sexes is healthy for students

Teachers and activists in the city have expressed their reservation over a recent decision of the school education department mandating the appointment of women teachers and headmistresses in government girls’ high and secondary schools.

The order, dated May 28, would apply only to all-girls high and secondary schools. It also requires the appointment of male teachers and headmasters in all-boys high and secondary schools. Co-education schools can continue to appoint male as well as female teachers for 2013-14.

A school education department official said this was being done to ensure safety of girl children against sexual abuse. “This is in addition to earlier efforts such as installing complaint boxes and warning of stringent action against offenders,” the official said. In May 2012, the school education department issued a G.O. stating, any teacher indulging in child sexual abuse would be punished with compulsory retirement, removal or instant dismissal.

However, teachers and activists are not convinced. A government teacher, who works in a co-education middle school, said the way ahead is to have more co-education schools with a mix of male and female teachers. “Instead of having a blanket

rule, stringent action must be taken against offenders so that it acts as a deterrent,” she said, adding that it takes a lot of effort for girls to speak out about abuse.

A headmaster of a government school felt it was not right to generalise. “At a time when discussions are about inclusion of awareness about sexual abuse in the curriculum everywhere, this is a backward step. In the long run, questions of feasibility too will arise, when a vacant position has to be filled based on seniority but eligible candidates may lose out,” he said.

P. Krishnamoorthy, child rights activist, Tamil Nadu Child Rights Observatory, said the focus must be on gender parity and inclusiveness in schools. “Reporting of cases is comparatively high in Tamil Nadu. There must be a school counsellor and a student representative in school management committees. You have to take into account that younger children are as vulnerable to abuse,” he said.

When asked if the new rule would be applicable only in high and higher secondary classes, or for all the classes in high and higher secondary schools, the official said it would depend on the number of vacancies and candidates.

Source: 05 June, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

More technical, higher education centres to come up in North East

More institutions imparting technical and higher education are likely to come up in the north east with the government working for the uplift of the region, HRD Minister M M Pallam Raju said today.

Speaking at the 15th Convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology—Guwahati (IIT—G), the Minister said the premier educational centre should emerge as the regional hub for research and development, besides collaborating with other south east Asian institutes.

“With the projected development of infrastructure and progressive industrialisation in wake of the government’s look east policy, more institutions imparting technical and higher education are likely to come up in this region,” he said.

The north east today has seven central universities and eight National Institutes of Technology (NITs), he added. These include six new NITs, which are in different stages of development.

Talking about the importance of IIT-G, Raju said: “I would like to see IIT—Guwahati act as a regional hub of the national knowledge network and share its expertise and resources with other institutions of

higher education and research through virtual classrooms and collaborative research."

IIT—G, being the only IIT in the north east, has to act as a pace setter and provide academic leadership through active networking with all existing and upcoming institutions, he added.

"In view of its strategic importance, the government is committed to substantially upgrade the infrastructure in this part of the country in coming years where, again, the technical expertise of IIT—Guwahati will be useful," he said.

Source: 08 June, 2013/ [The Hindu Business Line](#)

All India Management Association launches a postgraduate programme in retail management

To give students the right skill-set through industry oriented courses, All India Management Association has launched a postgraduate programme in retail management to keep up with the expansion of e-retailing and the opening of Indian market to retailing multinationals.

It is estimated that the retail sector contributes 8-10 % of India's GDP and the organised retail industry directly employs about 300,000 people, a count that will keep growing with every new store addition.

"The retail course is job-oriented and it is aimed at building a career in the growing retail industry. The course will fill major competency gaps in retail industry, such as merchandising, supply chain management, vendor development, product design and development, customer relations management, cross functional capabilities, social networking and e-commerce," says Raj Agrawal, director, Centre for Management Education, All India Management Association.

The one-year programme focuses on developing an in-depth understanding of all the verticals of retail management — operations, selling, customer relations, communication design, software application, data management and analytics, decision making and people-management. The course would focus on skill development and not merely on imparting theoretical knowledge.

"The programme will offer handsome experience to the candidates through live projects, role plays, case-study based teaching, simulation exercises, mentoring and coaching by industry experts," says Agrawal. The teaching will have a judicious mix of subject experts from academia and practicing managers from industry. "After completion of the course, a participant could choose to be a store

manager, category manager, operation manager, merchandiser, buyer, franchisor, or business development manager in any leading retail chain," informs Agrawal.

The course is open to all graduates. Fresh graduates and working executives can enroll for the course. The selection is based on past qualification, job experience and statement of purpose. There are 40 seats for the programme.

Source: 10 June, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

Virgin Atlantic opens scholarship for Indian students

Virgin Atlantic's founder Sir Richard Branson announced a unique scholarship worth Rs 5 lakhs for Indian students flying to the UK and the USA. The British tycoon is inviting young Indian brains to share their vision on why and how they plan to use their education to actually solve a problem the world faces today. The student whose idea appeals the most will win the scholarship.

Branson, president, Virgin Atlantic said, "Young people are the planet's future. While students work hard to fulfill their academic ambitions, it's important to remind them that education is not just a means to an end of getting a job and earning money. With the privilege of education comes the responsibility to give back and help others. Every generation owes it to the next to try to solve the problems humanity faces and to care for our beautiful planet. My advice is to be bold, challenge the status quo and believe in yourself. Virgin Atlantic welcomes students on board as you begin your worldly adventures.

The British airline is also offering a package for students flying to the USA and the UK including an exclusive excess baggage allowance. Students can avail the special baggage allowance of up to 50kg in Economy (2 bags of 25kg each) and 75kg in premium economy (3 bags of 25kg each). Moreover, understanding that their departure date often needs to change due to factors unforeseen, students will be allowed one date change free of cost.

Source: 13 June, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

Goa CM favours compulsory sex education in schools

Sex education could soon be compulsory in Goa's schools, chief minister Manohar Parrikar said on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters here, Parrikar said he was inclined to accept the suggestions of a legislative committee, which has recommended making sex education mandatory for school students.

"It is needed. I have seen the committee's report," the chief minister said.

The legislative committee under ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislator Vishnu Wagh was set up a few months ago in the wake of allegations made by a student that her teacher had raped her. A few weeks after the arrested teacher was released on bail, the minor girl committed suicide.

The committee was tasked with making suggestions to the government for curbing such sex crimes.

"Health and sex education should be made mandatory in the school curriculum. The department should also organise talks by resource persons, open forums, workshops, street plays and others to make students, teachers and the public aware about the sex education," the committee has said in its report.

The report has also recommended that a police verification should be carried of both existing teachers as well as before appointing new teachers in order to ascertain the character of the potential recruit.

Source: 13 June, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

All-women tech university opens

Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit on Thursday inaugurated the Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women (IGDTUW).

The university was earlier known as the Indira Gandhi Institute of Technology (IGIT). It was established in 1998 by Directorate of Training and Technical Education as the first engineering college for women. Under the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University earlier, it has now been promoted to the level of a university and will function from the same campus independently.

"The university has been set up to impart quality education to women so that well-qualified women engineers become part of the workforce to meet the growing demands of industry," Dikshit said.

She told authorities that the university should expand gradually as "it may soon feel constraints of space".

Nupur Prakash, vice-chancellor of the university, said IGDTUW will begin MTech programmes from August, with degrees being offered in multiple disciplines such as information security management, VLSI design, mobile and pervasive computing, and robotics and automation. The university currently runs four BTech courses and

two Masters courses with an intake capacity of 300 per batch.

Higher Education Minister A K Walia launched the university's website and announced that 85 per cent seats would be reserved for students from Delhi.

Source: 14 June, 2013/ [Indian Express](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Too specialised?

The Yashpal Committee report says that specialised universities in our country are a bane and do not contribute to broad-based knowledge of students. Educationists worldwide feel that research in single-subject universities is bound to suffer.

As its policy initiative states, the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) intends to create a robust and vast system of higher and technical education. For this to happen, the Ministry concurs with the view expressed by Yashpal Committee that in order to prevent fragmentation of knowledge, single-discipline or specialised universities should not be created.

The Yashpal Committee report on renovation and rejuvenation of higher education, which recommends protecting intellectual autonomy of educational institutions and creation of an all-encompassing National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) to replace or subsume existing regulatory bodies, conceptualises the university as a place for diverse growth of knowledge. This idea agrees well with the emerging consensus amongst higher education systems worldwide that an institution can legitimately be called a university only when it addresses a number of academic subject areas, academicians say, explaining that research culture in single-subject universities is bound to suffer.

The essence of academic life is in trans-disciplinary knowledge and discovery, they believe, and caution that establishing specialised universities for science and humanities, medicine, engineering, law, teacher education, physical education, agriculture, marine sciences, veterinary science, agriculture, and fisheries would be detrimental to the higher education system.

Holistic education

Says M. Anandakrishnan, Chairman, IIT Kanpur: "The presence of specialised universities is unfortunate. Fortunately single-subject universities are confined only to a few States in India. The concept of a university as defined by the Radhakrishnan and Kothari Commissions rests of the idea that a graduating student must be

equipped with broad-based knowledge. The student may have a core subject, but must have a broad knowledge of other areas." Elaborating, Prof. Anandakrishnan cautions that the knowledge base would be stunted in single-subject universities. For instance, understanding biological principles is important for students of a sports university. When sports-related courses are offered in a university with a composite outlook, the best people in the biology department will teach the students. Likewise, students in any branch need to know the economics related to the society they live in.

The latest technological developments

"Ideally universities have to provide opportunities to get holistic education, enabling students to move forward beyond what they studied in school. In broad-based universities, multiple career avenues could be explored. On the other hand, the options are very limited in single-subject universities, and will cause frustration to students," he said.

Interference

It is improper to call specialised subject institutions by the name, universities. Single-discipline institutions such as Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institutes of Technology and National Institutes of Technology also grant diplomas and degrees, but they are not universities. Standards in the so-called single-subject universities are deplorable, which is most of the time accentuated due to excessive interference by regulatory bodies," says P.S. Manisundaram, the first Principal of Regional Engineering College, Tiruchi (now National Institute of Technology – Tiruchi). Universities need to be assertive in exercising their autonomy, Prof. Manisundaram advised.

Though it is desired, the idea of restoring universities composite character is difficult to implement in the prevailing scenario wherein regulatory bodies or professional councils created for recognising courses and promoting professional institutions end up diluting academic autonomy of universities, according to C. Thangamuthu, former Chairman of National Council for Teacher Education's Southern Regional Council, Bangalore.

The existing norm that a specialised university must secure the consent of relevant regulatory bodies for the courses it offers is harmful. A medical university, for instance, has to secure the nod of the Medical Council of India, Indian Nursing Council, Pharmacy Council of India, Dental Council of India and Rehabilitation Council. The medical

university gets fragmented by the regulatory bodies that reinforce artificial barriers, says Prof. Thangamuthu, advocating restriction of the role of regulatory bodies to post facto ratification of the courses.

As Thangamuthu says, "The very idea of a specialised university is false. What actually happens is that such universities end up starting various departments haphazardly in contravention of UGC norms, wreaking havoc with the higher education system. Ultimately, students struggle to make sense of their degrees as they find themselves ineligible for pursuing doctorates or applying for jobs."

Source: 02 June, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

Indian education system: It's for bread alone

How many colleges does India have? How many graduates do they churn out every year? How many of the graduates manage to get jobs that match their education? How many are left by the wayside – literally?

There are questions galore. And the answers lie in dry data, being read and re-read by experts. Meanwhile, millions like Santosh Kumar, a graduate from Bihar's Motihari district, continue to do unskilled menial jobs for eking out a meager living in India's towns and cities.

Kumar, who drives an auto-rickshaw in Delhi, says, "I don't qualify for a technical job. I didn't even manage to get a peon's position in a government department after several attempts. What could I have done?"

He is right. As millions jostle for a college seat in the coming weeks, Santosh's tale mirrors a hard reality that has come to characterise the Indian economy and society burdened with an education system that fails to provide enough job-skills to around 15 million additional hopefuls every year.

Of India's 1.2-billion population, 60% are of the working age. And of the 15 million individuals who join the queue of job seekers every year, only 3% undergo vocational training.

On a global benchmark, the country still has a long way to go before bridging the skills deficit. India has won only one medal – a silver one – at the World Skills Competition, a biennial event popularly known as World Skills Olympics.

Consider this: According to data collated by central government think tank Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR), during the five years from 2004-05 to 2009-10, employment in the

manufacturing sector has actually declined by 5.03 million.

In all, 460.22 million people — or less than 40% of the population — were employed across various sectors. And the work force expanded only by 2.76 million during the five years.

“Imagine if we can come up with products and solutions to train the under-skilled population, a lot of contribution can be made to India’s development,” said Dilip Chenoy, CEO and managing director of National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC).

NSDC was formed to provide and upgrade skills for 150 million people by 2022 by encouraging the private sector in skill development. It provides funding to build scalable and for-profit vocational training initiatives.

Equipped with a low educational and skill base, the surplus labour from agriculture is generally absorbed in the unorganised segments of both industry and services.

IAMR said in a recent paper, *Jobless and Informalisation, Challenges to Inclusive Growth in India*, that the second stage of transition — from the unorganised to the organised sector — will happen with a considerable time lag.

Besides, it will depend on access to education for the marginalised sections, proper implementation of legal provisions and skill development initiatives by the government.

While Chenoy says it is a great national challenge to impart the right skills — although “we now have the appropriate policies and programmes in place” — it may soon become more than a national challenge as 15 millions are joining the queue of job seekers every year.

Source: 03 June, 2013/ [Hindustan Times](#)

Let a fresh wind blow

We need to break the silo culture in higher education

Higher education in India looks like a kaleidoscope of degrees, each having different credit requirements. Fortunately, the school system is uniformly using the 10+2 format. However, different bachelor's degree programmes have different durations. A bachelor's in the natural sciences is usually three years, while one in engineering will be four years. The programmes in education and library sciences are even shorter. This variation is not simply in terms of duration but

also in terms of the breadth and depth of content and training.

This variation is unique to India. Internationally, academic programmes are designed in terms of credit requirements and the semester system. If India has to evolve a vibrant and efficient tertiary education system, it is necessary to adopt these basic concepts. Further, the credit requirements and number of semesters to acquire a bachelor's degree should be comparable. It is standard practice now to have a bachelor's programme of eight semesters with an average of 160 credits. The number of credits may vary, but within a band around this average. This model is needed for a definite direction for reforms in higher education.

Any bachelor's programme should have two major components — core and professional. The core programme should provide basic elements. For example, a degree in the natural sciences should have some elements of logic, philosophy and creativity. The core should also provide some common elements such as mathematical and computational capability. A degree in sociology should provide some basic elements of computational and mathematical sciences. Usually, the core programme carries about 45 to 55 per cent emphasis in the 160-credit, eight-semester bachelor's programme.

Professional courses should have some compulsory elements as well as some elective elements. Students should be able to fashion a minor by choosing electives that will complement their basic degree. Project work and/ or research should also be an essential element. The primary aim of such a component is to train students in real-world problem-solving and thinking in an integrated manner. Students also learn in a collaborative manner. The project or research activity should be about 10 to 15 per cent, and the elective the same, in overall credit requirements.

Such a model will help students transfer credits from one university to another. It will also be possible to develop twinning programmes within India. Students can migrate from one institution to another or one programme to another if the credit basis is acceptable as a common model. Unfortunately, the silo culture is too strong in higher education of India.

It is, therefore, clear that all bachelor's degree programmes should be considered credit-based, eight-semester programmes after 10+2 school education. One can consider only one exception, and that is medicine. This degree can be deferred

till a student completes nine or 10 semesters — a period of practical internship.

Delhi University's decision to switch to the new model has made its faculty angry. One would have expected them to welcome such a move. However, the practical difficulties seem to be a major concern. It has been observed that the academic world in India is very rigid about experimenting and it resists change vociferously. In fact, faculty groups and academic senates should be at the forefront of change. Rather than being agents of change, faculty groups are active in preventing change. By and large, Indian institutions are public ones, fully supported by government. Job security allows academic and other staff to form unions and other associations. These carry out campaigns not simply within the university but even outside. It is shocking that the proposed change to the eight-semester programme is sought to be raised in Parliament. An academic issue should be dealt with by academic bodies alone.

It appears that DU's FYUP is a case of an excellent idea getting implemented in a bumpy manner. Several decades ago, I happened to be among the first students who got admitted to a four-year, eight-semester engineering programme of Pune University. We all accepted one extra year and graduated with excellent training. But when one sees the political turmoil arising out of the FYUP, one feels sad. Academics should have worked with each other and with all prospective students.

Change is a way of life. The education system in India badly needs a seasonal change. Fresh winds will likely improve the atmosphere and quality of higher education. The academic community should realise that management of change should become a natural process, and not a political battle.

Source: 07 June, 2013/ [Indian Express](#)

Why private universities are set to be the future of quality education in India

"Ruined result, ruined career, ruined life" Facebook status of Aman, a Delhi student after the CBSE class 12 results a fortnight ago.

Aman (name changed on request) scored 90%. That evidently isn't enough for the 17-year-old to dream of a career. And a life. The cut-off at Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), University of Delhi's (DU) bellwether for higher studies in commerce and economics, was 96.5% to 98.5% in 2012. At other perceived top colleges of India, it's nothing less than 95%. If Aman thinks his life is ruined, it's clearly because 90% isn't going to get

him admission to SRCC or any other of the country's Tier I colleges.

While he will later learn in life that marks are not necessarily the most accurate barometer of success, unfortunately at the moment Aman may be right. And he's not alone. There are tens of thousands of Indian students all over the country who aren't assured of quality education not because they didn't score top marks but simply because the Indian education system cannot accommodate so many overachievers.

The bottom line: if you are not right up there at the top of the heap, you will miss out on quality education. The other option is for parents to fork out a small fortune and send their children to universities abroad. It's an option only for the elite.

If it's not about cut-offs at universities it's about those cut up with them. Ishita Batra, 18, is among the 7,231 students in India who have crossed the 95% threshold in their class XII results for the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) this year. Batra, a student of Delhi Public School (DPS), RK Puram, scored a neat 95.6% in the science stream.

Indranjan Banerjee | 19
chose Shiv Nadar University primarily because it offers a four-year degree

A four-year degree gives a lot of opportunity to research. Few universities give you that opportunity"

Ishita Batra | 18
is headed to University of Pennsylvania after crossing the 95% threshold in CBSE class XII

Indian education is inflexible. And I don't have much faith in how the four-year undergrad programme will be implemented by University of Delhi"

Lure of Foreign Lands

But it won't be an Indian institute for her from hereon. After getting admission into half a dozen universities abroad, Batra has chosen to head to University of Pennsylvania to do a major in biology in a couple of months. Given an option, she would have stayed back in India for her undergrad education. But Batra didn't see any option.

"Indian education is inflexible. And I don't have much faith in how the four-year undergrad programme will be implemented by DU," she says with a shrug. DU's executive council has approved a shift from a three-year to a four-year undergraduate programme. At the time of writing, DU had begun the admission processes and sold over 90,000 forms, including all categories, in the first three days.

This shift in the cornerstone of undergraduate education is just one of the changes playing out on the landscape of Indian education.

The DU move has polarised the country's capital (more of that later), but less controversial" and arguably more promising" is a slow yet decisive shift that centres on the advent of quality education through private universities at the undergrad level. The shift is not without challenges, but if it comes through it promises to transform the education ecosystem in India.

Says TV Mohandas Pai, chairman of Manipal Global Education: "Students are now beginning to choose quality over lower fees, are looking for assured employability, have more choices than before and have more financial power to pay fees than before. We see the beginnings of a flight to quality. In engineering and management, many mediocre institutions are closing down and that is very good news."

"Let's face it," adds Dhiraj Mathur, executive director at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), a consultancy, "Apart from the big universities like DU, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, etc, the standard of education in most government colleges is at best spotty.

Private universities can play an important role in bridging the gap between demand and supply of quality education." He adds that because of greater autonomy, the private brigade has more flexibility in designing innovative programmes, "including the semester system".

For now, semesters are largely the privilege of the well-heeled, who can afford to step overseas for further learning. The cost of a year's education at an Ivy League university is prohibitive at around \$60,000, or upwards of Rs 30 lakh.

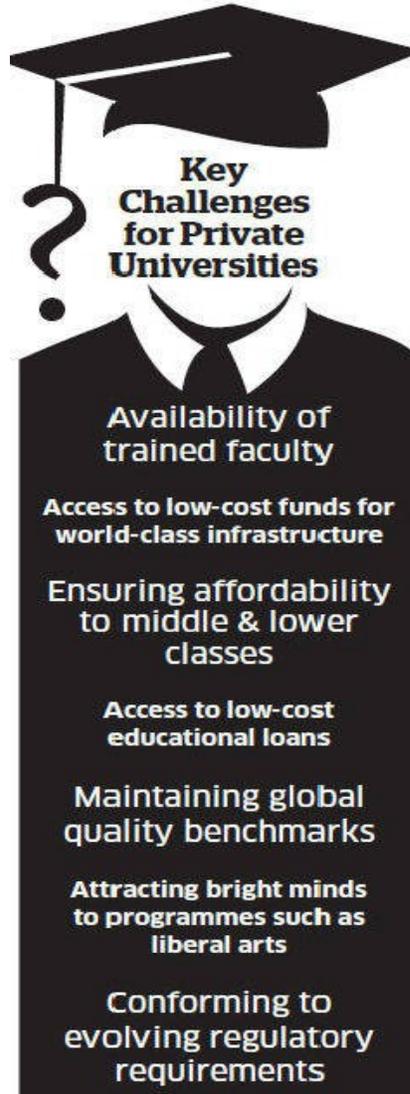
Batra was among the few lucky ones to get 60% financial aid at Penn. Still, with or without aid, more and more youngsters who are unable to get into the domestic top league are taking flight to the US, Singapore, Hong Kong and to some universities in Europe.

Sample these numbers from Princeton University, one of the Ivy League universities. The number of undergraduate students enrolled from India in the 2006-07 academic year was 14; that has gone up to 59 in 2012-13. At Yale University, too, there has been an increase in the number of undergraduates from India. "Our enrollment of undergraduate students from India has more than doubled from a decade ago," says a university spokesperson.

Source: 09 June, 2013/ [Economic Times](http://www.economic-times.com)

Engineering a future?

Making good use of an engineering degree needs careful thought before and after making the decision



Looking at the number of engineering colleges in India and the number of engineers coming out of these colleges, the questions that form in everyone's minds are, "does India need so many engineers?" Are they all employable? The negativism brought forth by such questions has crippled engineering education in India.

In this global era, rather than focus on India, the question should be whether the world needs so many engineers. The answer is a big, "yes." Is there a need for scientists? The answer is again, "yes." The world needs in plenty well-equipped, talented graduates with the right attitude. There

are job opportunities for those who have the potential. In addition, opportunities for self-employment are also plenty for innovative and energetic minds.

Breaking free

I will look at the Indian education scenario from the point of view of parents whose wards are applying for admission to colleges. As the trend goes, most students would like to pursue professional programmes such as medicine and engineering. Since fewer seats are available for medicine, getting an MBBS seat has become extremely difficult and the majority is left with the next popular option—engineering.

Our school education system offers combinations of courses in the higher secondary level such that a student by choosing these groups can pursue engineering or medicine, even though these two streams call for entirely different aptitudes. The ideal higher secondary system would orient the student towards evaluating their aptitude and choosing to pursue one of the two streams. This would ensure that the chosen stream matches their aptitude. This is not happening now.

In the absence of proper orientation in the system, parents and their wards follow an inappropriate procedure while selecting their branch of study in the college. During counselling, we notice that the selection of a branch of study is based on the following: (1) The most sought-after branch in counselling, (2) The branch having good job opportunities as seen by the previous year placements, (3) Parental pressure and (4) Peer pressure.

This is not the right practice. The correct way will be to spend some time assessing one's interest for a particular branch and check if it matches well with the aptitude one has and the chosen branch of study.

It is because of such practices that we face problems of employability and dissatisfaction in existing jobs, which can lead to high turnover rates, low productivity and increase in the stress level of employees.

Myth and reality

Having understood the education scenario, parents should free themselves of a few myths that surround them, and make a fair decision concerning the future of their ward.

Myth

- 1 One should be a professional such as a doctor, lawyer or engineer to be successful in life. Other degree programmes are not useful.
- 2 Marks scored in higher secondary are a true reflection of one's intelligence, and the one who has scored 95 per cent is more intelligent than others.
- 3 Those who studied higher secondary education in vernacular medium cannot shine in professional courses taught in English.
- 4 Unemployment is high, so campus placement is everything.
- 5 An engineering degree in the most popular branch, with 8.0 CGPA and above will definitely fetch a job.

How to make the choice

There are some thumb rules to be followed in choosing an engineering education.

- The interest of the candidate and his/her choice of branch should be the criteria for admission.
- Every parent should orient the child towards finding out their natural interest and the aptitude for the particular subject or branch of study.
- Parents should avoid deciding for the candidate.
- For a strong-willed person, if the choice is made based on his/her liking and natural taste, then studying that branch will be the best thing rather than joining any other branch, for whatever reason.
- It is not wise to join a branch of study because it is popular or because the job opportunities are high.
- The choice of institution is also critical.

The other option is for the students to take the branch of study available in a reputed college and start liking that branch, plan well and work hard. What is critical is students' interest in the branch of study and the efforts put in by them to equip themselves adequately enough during their studies.

Source: 09 June, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

Innovation to be key in ICT research

Vijay Bhatkar, eminent scientist and architect of PARAM series of supercomputers, underlines a dire need for filing innovative patents through researchers in the field of information and communication technology.

Technology has become an integral part of human life. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a force to reckon with in every field right from education, administration, communication and healthcare to governance. From the Indian perspective, technology is reaching the grassroots and the country needs good engineers and researchers to take it further. Invention of transistors in laboratory, which won the Nobel Prize, was a landmark research. This field gradually spread its wings encompassing electronics, semiconductors and microprocessors. Computers, supercomputers, Internet, web-tech and mobile are all manifestations of ICT. Computing and IT research is far-reaching. It is the base of human evolution as no other field has transformed human life so much.

Innovation holds centre-stage. There is a crying need for talented and innovative researchers. Research is a long-term career. There is an acute shortage of people holding PhDs. However, Indian IT engineers have now started understanding the need for research and patents. ICT research in this field is exciting and stimulating and researchers are the most valued people in the industry. We need a lot of innovation in design. India is now set to expand the number of IITs and is also coming up with IIITs.

A question asked over and over again is, can computers replicate human beings? Can they have thinking and intelligence? Recent breakthroughs in ICT research have efficiently answered these questions. Once a query was raised if computers could play chess.

We have seen that programmes were developed wherein computers got the better of grandmasters.

Now, the thrust is on making computers indistinguishable from humans. Machines should be able to mimic man. Of course, human imagination reins supreme but the challenge is to create such machines. In the years to come, everything is going to be mobile. Computer researchers have to make machine more interactive.

There are scores of hardware opportunities in India, the field being in its nascent stage here. India's hardware import is \$50bn, which is expected to reach \$400bn by 2020. This speaks for itself. India requires research capabilities, understanding the country's needs, even Indian languages. A researcher must have inclination towards mathematics, physics, electronics, algorithm and even languages. India can have an impact on ICT research and development. IBM, Microsoft and CISCO are setting up research centres in India. ICT is an astounding industry contributing phenomenally to India's economy.

By 2020, 20% of the nation's economy will depend on electronics. India emerged as an IT force in the 1990s. This agrarian country is now becoming a knowledge-based civilisation. Software forms 25% of the country's total export. The Union government has declared 2010 as the decade of innovation. Over 2000 patents were filed from India in ICT alone. A survey by The Economist has termed IBM PCs as 'the largest wealth on the planet.' Innovative people like Steve Jobs established Apple that has a turnover more than GDPs of 60 nations individually. There is no doubt that research holds the key to India's economy.

Source: 10 June, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

RESOURCE

'More investment needed in education, research and development'

To address the huge disparities in India, the country should invest more in education and R&D, said Anil Kakodkar, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. Delivering the keynote address at the launch of the Vikram Sarabhai Science School in Kochi on Saturday, he said that the development gap is glaringly visible in India.

“The country is witnessing huge disparities in the developmental front. A large number of people still depend on agriculture. But the contribution of agriculture to the GDP is disturbingly shrinking. Our current account deficit is also becoming problematic. We should make innovations in science and technology in such a way that it can address the burning challenges in the society”, he said.

The top scientist pointed out that science and technology should be used for the benefit of the society, including improving human development indices. “This aspect is very important in India. Climate change and depletion of natural resources are the major problems faced by us. Science should help address these challenges”, he said. Kakodkar added that it is very crucial to inculcate a scientific temperament among the youth to tackle the challenges faced by the country. “We need to mentor our youth to be innovative. Learning and doing science are important. But the crucial aspect is to create a capacity for innovation. The youth should be able to carry out advanced research. The government should provide the right ambience to students. A well organised education system can create right opportunities”, he said.

Yannick D'Ecastha, former president of the French Space Agency, delivered the inaugural speech. “Science should help protect life on earth, in the context of challenges like climate change. It is extremely important to develop a scientific temperament among students. Most of the students now opt for courses like IT instead of pure sciences. They should be taught about the beauty and possibilities of science”, he said. He also added that India and France are increasingly entering into strategic co-operations.

Madhavan Nair, former chairman of the ISRO, said that mainstream education largely aims to produce clerks.

Source: 02 June, 2013/ [New Indian Express](#)

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