



## 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 2009. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

**Apeejay Education Society launches courses in Biosciences & Clinical Research:** Apeejay Education Society (AES), has now established an institute for Biosciences and Clinical Research to meet the growing demand for technical personnel in the Biosciences sector. The institute, **Apeejay Svrn Institute for Biosciences and Clinical Research, Gurgaon, (AIBCR)** has been established in collaboration with leading companies in the industry, viz Martin & Harris, ASG Biochemicals and Walter & Bushnell Health Care.

For more, visit: [www.apeejay.edu/aibcr](http://www.apeejay.edu/aibcr)

## 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.

**Director**  
**Aditya Berlia**

**Editor**  
**Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh**

**Associate Editor**  
**Pradipta Kumar Sethi**

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### Aspects

#### CRUCIAL HUNDRED DAYS

We are rapidly passing through these hundred days which are crucial when we think of implementing reform and rejuvenating of higher education dealing with the universe of fundamental and applied knowledge with its vastness of liberal arts and fine arts including performing arts, humanities and social sciences, commerce, economics, sciences of human behaviour, animal, plants; and fundamental and applied sciences of chemistry, physics and bio-sciences all with a strong base of mathematics and the subject areas also the engineering and technology and health sciences.

A question which comes to my mind is whether the present national agenda concerns correcting administrative and financial efficiency of Indian higher education developments or resolving issue of failure / inadequacy of the current functioning of Statutory bodies. We know that all statutory bodies were thoughtfully considered, debated and established by our national leaders of independent India through various Constitutional provisions. The NKC (Sam Pitroda Committee) and the Yashpal Committee Reports have been prepared with a lot of hard work by many individuals committed to the Indian higher education sector. Besides NKC, the Yashpal Committee originally meant to review the UGC/AICTE (later named as 'Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education 'without any change of TOR) has clearly mentioned that the statutory bodies are subsumed into "One Regulatory Commission/Council" and thus their present existence is abolished/scrapped. This is in fact a major recommendation of Yashpal Committee.

It seems that all unfulfilled issues in India namely, research in Universities, learning across the disciplines, autonomy of institutions, etc. which the Yashpal Committee have focused in its report have remained unfulfilled as per the report, because of a lack of actions of UGC/AICTE and similar other organizations, and thereby have assumed conveniently that all these unfulfilled tasks shall stand resolved through creating One Commission/Council on Higher Education and Research. This is not appealing.

My cumulative experience in higher education by working about three decades as a faculty at the most prestigious Roorkee University ( which is now under the IIT emblem), a decade in UGC and one term in AICTE, does not allow me to accept the thought that all that the NKC and the Yashpal Committee desire to

achieve, would come through just by establishing one single Commission/Council. I do not believe that all unfulfilled present tasks before higher education sector are due to doing or not doing or due to mere existence of the dedicated statutory bodies namely, UGC, AICTE, MCI, Bar Council and others.

As a nation, we need to accept and believe in unity through diversity. India is a vast country. We have varied needs of education contents at different levels, rural, urban, regional, national and international to deal with local, regional, national and international issues. It is not similar prescribing or enforcing single mandate as we do in many sectors, namely Taxation, Shipping, Railways, aviation, Broadcasting and Telecommunication etc., Radio, telephones and mobile communication etc. The Higher Education sector can not be regulated similar to Telecommunication Sector by establishing an arrangement like TRAI. Stake holders of higher education sector are dramatically more compared to those of stake holders in telecom service providers. In fact, stake holders in education sector in India are less individual, but India as a nation is a stakeholder as a whole. Higher education needs are not necessarily constant or similar as tailored by any authority or even Central or State Government and so are its growth, management and operation.

In our country, we have central Institutions, Universities central/ State, IITs, IIMs and similar other institutions in many other subject areas. Our maximum student population is in the college sector affiliated to the universities, and most of these are state universities. So we need to develop an appropriate mechanism. True, a possible outcome of NPE, UGC proposed a model of State affiliating University and almost very close to it, a proposed University at Ajmer was considered by it for concurrence. It started in the same manner, but today it is a respectful classical (usual) State university. So 'the university model exclusively meant for affiliation of colleges as proposed by UGC, did not work. So where do we go from here?

If there is going to be single National Council/ Commission for Totality of Higher Education, we should first disengage the State participation in higher education even for the State universities and therefore as a result it would need to take over funding, maintenance and development of total higher education system of the country. The fact is that even today universities and colleges are deprived of funds, so by taking over total financial responsibility including that of State sector may end up in chaos.

Can we really disengage State Governments from education sector, even if the subject is in the concurrent list of the Constitution of India? In fact taking advantage of the provisions, statutory bodies so far have been carrying out many innovations through their acts under “maintenance of standards.” Up until now, large numbers of State Universities have been created by the respective State Assemblies by law. We shall be required to convert all State Universities in that case by the Parliament Act.

For most of the policy matters, consultations and workings with State Governments is the accepted procedure by all the existing statutory bodies including the Central Government. For MHRD in particular, the arrangement is through CABE. Over the years, particularly, after our independence, our parliamentary system in its wisdom after extensive deliberations as are recorded in Archives of Parliament Library, most of the statutory bodies, namely UGC, MCI, COA, Pharmacy Council, Bar Council, IGNOU, AICTE, NCTE came in to being “for maintenance of standards of higher education “and also to take measures for the planning and development and to provide funds for doing so.

Let us accept that we have a vast system of Institutions dealing with almost every dimension of subject areas being pursued in the Indian higher education system including those which are frontal areas globally primarily through initiative of bodies like UGC . There is no subject area mentionable which is being pursued any where globally that the Indian academia is unaware of. This awareness of Indian academia through higher education system is nurtured by the statutory bodies established by the Government of India over last six decades. So let us not pass judgment swiftly without reasonable hearing! So it is time to hear.

Growth of Higher education compared with the pre-independence era is beyond imagination of education planners and developers. We are proud of it. The good thing is that all of us- thinkers and members of the eminent committees related with education and their chairmen, are products of the existing Indian higher education system. The issue concerning growth of education, its dimensions, inequality, access, regional disparity, quality and preparedness of becoming leaders of knowledge society have been always debated among academia and among the Governments' Ministry/s. In recent years, it was National Policy of Education 1987 which was steered through the nation by HRD ministry under the dynamic Leadership of Late Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi. This is the time we need its serious reconsideration.

National Policy of Education 1987 for higher education including all sectors namely, technical, management, and vocational education was very comprehensive

and was supported by strategy for implementation under the document of programme of action. All aspects included therein were fully debated nationally before it was placed in the Indian Parliament. In preparation of the national policy, all national organizations including UGC worked day and night. The primary aspects in respect to higher and technical education as included in National Policy were: 1) Expansion and consolidation 2) Quality of education 3) Assessment and national accreditation 4) Management of higher education Institutions 5) National testing service. It also included concerns about inadequate faculty and training and retraining programmes including the performance appraisal.

Besides all these issues, NPE 1987 recommended a proposal for establishment of Higher Education Council. Thus it is briefly to state here that all issues that we are considering afresh are all those on which Government of India, Statutory Organizations, particularly, UGC and higher education Institutions have worked very hard to achieve prescribed targets as were being monitored periodically and nationally.

UGC had taken major responsibility out of the prescribed targets which mainly included: (1) Taken measures of consolidation through provisions made in five year and annual development plans of Higher education Institutions, (2) Establishment of academic staff colleges, (3) Establishment of Autonomous Colleges, (4) Establishment of National Assessment and Accreditation Council, and (5) Development of major Report on Governance of Universities etc (Gnanam Report).

Regarding establishment of Higher Education Council, MHRD held large number of consultative meetings involving many organizations and representatives of statutory bodies and relevant Departments of Government of India including the major role played by UGC. All these efforts converged in to defining the objectives of the proposed Council along with its Structure. It did involve Ministry/s of HRD, Agriculture and Health The proposed structure was to have on its Council mainly ex-officio members like Chairman UGC, Chairman AICTE, DG -ICAR and also MCI and some other Councils etc. It was possibly being considered at that time that the Council shall be chaired by PM as similar to the Planning Commission and the Deputy Chairman is HRM.

So it may be worthwhile for us to search our records from MHRD archives and briefly relook our old time proposals which were favourably considered by the academia at large and reconsider it again if there is still any merit in what was thought earlier. It is worth mentioning that some of the people who had significant involvement at that time are still around. Main features which differ in the structure of the proposed Commission/Council are its members,

powers and functions. The main focus of the proposed body (NPE 1987) was to be an apex organization for policy planning, financial allocations and coordination with the various statutory organizations of Higher education sector.

Comparing the proposed Council/Commission by NKC and or Yashpal Committee with NPE 1987's proposed structure is that present structure intends in scrapping existing Statutory Bodies and do all the jobs of planning, development, implementation fulfilling all functions of statutory bodies as well as to perform all functions carried by the Government at Centre and State to day, and also to keep State Government out of the scope in higher education sector.

It appears that the proposed structure would take over functions of Planning Commission of India. It will therefore be a gigantic body. It has been argued that it would be similar to the Election Commission of India; yes, possibly for its creation through the Constitutional provisions by appropriate amendments. By and large, the proposed Commission on Higher Education would be working itself from the grass root for the entire country, that too on 24x7 basis.

This is a mammoth task of implementation and monitoring which can not be implemented by a single commission (Commission for Higher Education & Research) as proposed. Now the question that arises is when dedicated statutory bodies are not proving efficient, then how will a single supreme body would succeed!

Let us accept that HR employed in carrying out the work and also the national experts and others, who shall have pivotal role in carrying out the tasks, are going to be the same, our countrymen! Sure we can import many thoughts to design systems and also the hard ware, but we can not replace HR, our attitude and our commitment. To day, UGC and AICTE as organizations exist having sizeable structures at New Delhi and also their seven or eight regional sub structures around the country, and about 5,000 experts employed by each one of organizations implementing the provisions of the Parliament Acts and still there are many unfulfilled tasks as seen by NKC as well Yashpal Committee.

We should list out our problem areas hindering our path to become a Knowledge Society. It is possible that most of the problem areas have not changed since NPE 1987 except for their shape and size; possibly the content is the same. Still, it is fair enough to start listing them afresh for action agenda.

The Yashpal Committee recommends that there is no need of any directive to be given by bodies like UGC/AICTE/MCI/PCI, Central/State Governments on academic matters, let the Universities be self esteemed decision making bodies. No two opinions on

this recommendation and similar others. The question is whether any provision, constitutionally or by its own Act, any University has been prevented by the statutory bodies for its own academic decision making?

We should now take stock of all problem areas identified by the eminent committees in the spread sheet listing out measures taken and renewed measures to be taken to succeed. And we move forward.

*The Author Professor S.K. Khanna is the former Vice-Chairman UGC and former Chairman AICTE*

### NEWS

#### 'Right To Education bill to make India a knowledge hub'

Sixteen years after the idea was mooted, a bill aiming to provide free and compulsory education to children in the age group of six to 14 was introduced in the Lok Sabha Friday with the larger target of making India a 'knowledge hub' in the future.

'This was a matter of national importance for UPA (United Progressive Alliance). This bill is just not about taking children to school. This is a bill that speaks about quality education, it speaks about the physical infrastructure, teacher-pupil ratio, qualification of teachers,' Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal said after introducing the bill.

'The bill is integrated with the future of the country. It will create intellectual assets. Creativity of mind leads to creation of intellectual assets.

'We are trying to make India a knowledge hub in 15-20 years. This bill is the first step in that direction,' Sibal said.

The minister said that the the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Bill, after becoming law, will provide 'free education to students' and all states will compulsorily have to provide it.

'It means free for children and compulsory for states.'

Talking about the quality of education, the minister said an academic committee will be set up to evaluate the quality of teachers and if a teacher does not have adequate qualification, then he or she will have to acquire it within five years and failing to do so will mean losing the job.

If a school does not have adequate infrastructure, then it will have to develop it within three years. 'Else, its recognition will be cancelled'.

'The child is entitled to get education. Now it is a constitutional right for the child. It is the obligation and compulsion of state governments and the central government to provide that education. As long as

central and state governments do not walk together, the dream can not be fulfilled,' Sibal said.

'What kind of Hindustan (do) we want to build when 88 percent students don't go to colleges. (Through this bill) we can get a critical mass of education to go to colleges,' he said adding that this would help bring reforms in higher education.

The minister said the idea of such a bill was mooted in 1993 and in 2001, the Constitution was amended to make education a fundamental right. But the

amendment also had a rider that to make education free and compulsory, a separate bill has to be introduced. 'So, technically, we have had to wait 16 years for this.'

The minister said once this bill becomes a law, it will ensure 25 percent reservation in private schools.

'All private schools will have to reserve 25 percent seats for disadvantaged students in Class 1. They have to give admission to economically weaker section students living in the neighbourhood of the school.

'This too will be decided by the state governments - they have to decide which of their community is educationally backward and need benefit.'

Talking about the investment, the minister said: 'After the bill is passed, we will decide how much money the state governments will spend and how much will centre give. If we will feel that a state has some problem, then we have provision in the bill to take this in front of the finance commission.'

(The bill will) 'provide them (children) foundation for quality education. We will move together with state governments. We want to see India rise. The world is looking at India with hope', Sibal said.

**Source:** New Delhi [/in.news.yahoo.com/31<sup>st</sup> July, 2009](http://in.news.yahoo.com/31st%20July%202009)

### Centre seeks UGC's views on NCHER

The government-appointed committee on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education, headed by Prof. Yashpal, has suggested setting up of NCHER as an overarching agency

The Centre has sought views from state governments, University Grants Commission and other statutory councils on the proposal to set up a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), the Lok Sabha was told on Monday.

The government-appointed committee on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education, headed by Prof. Yashpal, has suggested setting up of NCHER as an overarching agency that would subsume many regulatory bodies, including UGC, AICTE and NCTE.

The government has written to the state governments, the UGC and other councils for their views on the recommendation of the Yashpal committee, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said in a written reply.

To another question relating to Yashpal committee, Sibal said Kaushik Basu, a member of the committee, had given a note of dissent. Basu had said private sector money should be allowed to come into higher education.

Basu had said differential pay should be allowed in institutions. The committee has responded to the issues raised by Basu, Sibal said.

The report is under the consideration of the government.

**Source:** New Delhi [/livemint.com/20<sup>th</sup> July, 2009](http://livemint.com/20th%20July%202009)

### Children demand quality education at G8

For 16-year-old Sanjukta Pangi, meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the G8 Summit in Rome, was a dream come true. Making the most of the opportunity, she spoke to him about promoting quality education for all Indian children and in particular, issues faced by tribal people and the need for access to education.

Pangi, who hails from Koraput, Orissa, was accompanied by Narendra Kumar from Rae-Bareilly, UP, and Samuel Venkatesan, Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu, representing India at the Junior 8 (J8) — a parallel youth summit for 52 young people between the ages of 14-17 from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, UK, US, Brazil, China, Egypt, Mexico and South Africa. At the meeting, the J8 representatives presented their recommendations for the leaders attending the G8. All of them emphasised the need for high-quality post-primary education for all children and a safe trip to school.

During her meeting with the Prime Minister, Pangi also read the recommendations made by the J8 on education, climate change, the global financial crisis and poverty reduction in Africa. Sharing her story, she says, "Transportation is a huge problem, especially in hilly areas like ours, where we have to walk down several miles to reach the school. So, I shared these problems with the Prime Minister and asked him to consider the matter as access to education is very important." She opined also that, since every child has a right to quality education, the standard of education in government schools should be the same as the private ones.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supports the J8 to allow young people to have their voices heard by the G8 and non-G8 leaders to help influence policies that affect these children's lives.

And Pangji's mission isn't over yet. "We have made an action plan that we all will implement when we go back to our daily lives," she says.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/20<sup>th</sup> July, 2009](#)

### Deemed universities can still grant affiliation

HRD minister Kapil Sibal might have stopped fresh sanction of deemed university status but that has not stopped his ministry from asking the University Grants Commission to continue the process of bringing educational institutions under the ambit of existing deemed universities.

A UGC official said deemed universities could bring institutes run by the same trust or group under its ambit. The process is that once an institute of a trust becomes deemed university, it approaches UGC so that other institutes run by the same trust could be affiliated to its deemed varsity. In the process, these institutions become affiliated to the deemed varsity run by the same trust. It saves the management cost of affiliating to some other university.

"So much so that a trust with deemed university status can run institutes in other cities and can still be affiliated to it. For instance, SRM University, Chennai has institutes in Modinagar, UP while DY Patil deemed university has more than 100 institutions under its ambit," a UGC source said. There seems to be a sense of urgency if the ministry's July 14 communication to UGC is any indication. The panel has been asked to "process pending cases of institutes being considered for bringing them under the ambit of its existing deemed-to-be universities in the next meeting of the panel and send its recommendation to the ministry".

The ministry has asked UGC to examine "very carefully" various parameters like academic standards. The meeting is slated for July 24 but sources said it may be postponed. To make the distinction that bringing institutions under the ambit of deemed university should not be misinterpreted, the ministry has taken care to mention that "timeframe of three months given to UGC to complete the review of deemed universities must be adhered to".

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2009](#)

### India becomes R&D hot spot as high-tech firms cut

At Microsoft's research centre in a leafy lane in India's tech capital, a new generation of researchers are being groomed half a world away from the software giant's sprawling headquarters in Seattle.

Complete with beanbags and coffee served in steel tumblers, the centre is helping change the

perception that India is no place for top-end research and development.

Staffed with about 60 full-time researchers, many of them Indians with PhDs from top universities in the United States, the centre is at the cutting edge of Microsoft's R&D. It covers seven areas of research including mobility and cryptography.

Its success, including developing a popular tool for Microsoft's new search engine Bing, underscores the potential of R&D in India at a time when cost-conscious firms are keen to offshore to save money by using talented researchers abroad.

Showing off the Bing tool which enables searches for locations with incomplete or even incorrect addresses, B. Ashok, a director of a research unit at the centre, said the innovation would never have taken root if the R&D had been done in the United States.

"It was completely inspired by the Indian environment, but is applicable worldwide," he said.

While India might seem like a natural location to expand offshoring into R&D, it is hampered by some serious structural problems that range from not enough home grown researchers to a lack of government support.

India produces about 300,000 computer science graduates a year. Yet it produces only about 100 computer science PhDs, a small fraction of the 1,500-2,000 that get awarded in the United States, or China, every year.

"Students here are not exposed to research from an early age, faculties are not exposed to research and there's no career path for innovation because there's a lot of pressure to get a 'real' job," said Vidya Natampally, head of strategy at the Microsoft India Research Centre.

With few government incentives and an education system that emphasises rote learning, India lacks the kind of environment found in say, Silicon Valley, where universities, venture capitalists and startups encourage innovation.

"China has a policy in place for R&D; we don't," Natampally said, adding that India could move up the value chain faster if even a small percentage of its engineering graduates went into research.

The small numbers of PhDs and the lack of government incentives for India's fledgling R&D sector are blunting the country's edge, analysts warn.

### Competition

Rival China has already pulled ahead with more than 1,100 R&D centres compared to less than 800 in India, despite lingering concerns about rule of law and intellectual property rights.

Aside from providing funding to encourage students to complete their PhDs, China also offers fiscal incentives such as tax breaks for R&D centres and special economic zones provide infrastructure for hi-tech and R&D industries.

India is also losing out in the patent stakes. In 2006-2007, just 7,000 patents were granted in this country of 1.1 billion people, compared to nearly 160,000 in the United States.

"We're nowhere near the U.S. or even Israel when it comes to innovations," said Praveen Bhadada at consultancy Zinnov, which estimates the R&D sector in India is worth about \$9.2 billion.

"Our costs are low and our talent pool is ahead of China, Russia and Ukraine, but China gives specific incentives, and produces way more PhDs than we do."

India is cheaper than China for R&D, those in the industry in Bangalore said. But salaries in India have been rising by about 15 percent every year and may soon reach parity with China. R&D centre costs in Shanghai are currently just 10-15 percent higher than in India.

### Beyond Coding

Microsoft and other firms have been working around the government's indifference.

Cisco, IBM, Intel, Nokia, Ericsson and Suzuki Motor have all gone beyond low-end coding and tweaking products for the local market, with hefty investments and recruitment.

Their success shows India's potential if the government starts supporting such ventures and building high-tech parks and incubators.

"If Paris asks for some work, it's not because they think it's cheaper but because they want inputs from India," said Jean Philippe, chief designer of the Renault India Studio, which competes with the French carmakers' five other global studios.

Texas Instruments and San Jose-based Cadence Design were among the first to set up R&D in India in the mid-80s, drawn by the legions of English-speaking software engineers who could be hired at about 20 percent of the cost of engineers in the United States.

The opening of the economy in the early 90's and the establishment of the software services industry drew more foreign firms looking to cut costs and tap emerging markets.

"From when a few companies offshored non-critical design work, we have seen India emerge as a preferred destination for design and development of chip, board and embedded software," said Jaswinder Ahuja, managing director of Cadence India.

Firms first focused on the 'D' in R&D, but research has grown in importance in recent years, and many of the facilities in India are now the largest outside their home base.

Half of Cisco's core R&D work, including innovations in WiMAX and optical networks, and about 40 percent of SAP's ideas for processes and product development come from India.

"The Indian units are more tuned to the needs of customers in emerging markets. Besides, Bangalore is only a 5-hour flight away from three strategic regions: Southeast Asia, east Asia and the Middle East," said Aravind Sitaraman, vice president at Cisco.

IBM's India Research Labs do a "fair share of patenting", helping swell the parent's record numbers every year, said director Guruduth Banavar in Bangalore.

Its new \$100 million-mobile communications research, Mobile Web, is the first time a big project has been driven from outside the United States, he said. "For a research lab it's the best environment to be in: you can see the problems and the opportunities," said Banavar, who was previously at IBM's lab in Boston and has, like several of his peers, returned to India to oversee operations here.

**Source:** New Delhi [in.news.yahoo.com/](http://in.news.yahoo.com/)21<sup>st</sup> July, 2009

### **Regulatory body to train doctors**

The government is planning an overarching regulatory body, the National Council for Human Resources in Health Sector (NCHRH), to train doctors and paramedics. This will mean either scrapping of or combining the Medical Council of India, the Dental Council, Nursing Council and Councils under Ayush. A taskforce constituted by Health Ministry will meet on July 31 to present the concept paper and action plan for NCHRH.

Key elements of the draft Bill for amendment in the Medical Education Act (Medical Council Act-1956) will later go to the Law Ministry and the PMO. The taskforce will look into shortage of doctors, ways of creating new resource, and cross-connectivity in medical education.

Sources said the decision to draft a concept paper was taken after HRD minister Kapil Sibal announced an integrated authority to sanction new professional colleges. The minister had said all regulatory agencies, including the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Dental Council of India (DCI), are likely to be scrapped.

"The NCHRH was proposed by President Pratibha Patil in her address to the Parliament. Medical

human resource and human resource development in other fields are two different things," said an official.

Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has said that setting up of the council is a part of a long-term policy to tackle the acute shortage of specialised doctors and trained paramedics in the country.

The taskforce includes eminent names like Dr Devi Shetty, Dr Ranjit Roy Chaudhary and Dr K S Reddy, among others.

**Source:** New Delhi [/indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com)/30<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### States back HRD's proposals on education

The HRD ministry's proposal for new laws is it to check malpractices in educational institutions or setting up of educational tribunals, met with the general approval of states on Friday.

As for the National Eligibility Test/state level eligibility test required for appointment as lecturer, the meeting of state education secretaries discussed the exemption for those who have obtained Ph.D as per UGC regulation. While the new regulation was welcomed, the secretaries of a number of states said legal issues might arise about recruitments that had already taken place before the new regulations came into place.

Barring Orissa and Gujarat, which expressed some reservations, most of the states felt the idea of tribunals to deal with things like disputes between students and institutions and faculty and institutions is needed. Orissa, which already has such tribunals, felt it leads to multiple litigations. Gujarat, which too has educational tribunals, said they did not have much work. However, an HRD official pointed out that the educational tribunals in Gujarat were set up with a limited purpose. But there was an overwhelming view that the number of tribunals to be created at the district level should be left to the discretion of the state government.

Earlier, inaugurating the meeting, HRD minister Kapil Sibal asked the states to prepare a vision document for higher education within three months. He said the document must contain the state's vision for higher education till 2020, including the current state of affairs, such as the number of universities and colleges, and how the state perceives the quality of these institutes as well as the states' budgetary outlay in this sector. This paper must then propose how the state plans to increase its Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER).

Sibal also asked the states to show how they propose to improve the quality of vice-chancellors.

Sibal wanted the states to increase their budgetary allocations for higher education, which, are showing a disturbing downward trend. While the Centre's

contribution in education, as a percentage of GDP, has steadily increased to 0.91% from 0.53% in 2000-01 (a huge increase in real terms with the country's impressive GDP growth rates), the allocation of the states has shown a decline from 3.76% to 2.73% in the corresponding period.

Sibal pointed out to the states that they should also have an accreditation system for their colleges. This accrediting agency would benchmark the institutes in the respective states, informing students about the quality and resources of the institute they are going to attend. He added that this would help create competition among institutions leading to their improvement. He also urged the state governments to hire faculty to fill in vacancies, saying that if there is a ban on recruitment, how can quality be improved?

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia](http://timesofindia)/25<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### Teaching good regulation

The recent indictment of education regulators on corruption charges makes it imperative to translate noises about reforming higher education into action

Human resource development minister Kapil Sibal has made some good noises in the past few weeks about reforming higher education. The recent indictment of education regulators makes it imperative for these noises to translate into actions soon.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) late last week took action against a number of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) members on charges of corruption. CBI said it found assets worth around Rs2 crore with AICTE chairman Ram Avatar Yadav and adviser H.C. Rai, while it arrested member secretary K. Narayana Rao and S.B. Subba Rao for accepting a bribe from an engineering college in Andhra Pradesh.

Fingers have been pointed at AICTE for years now, but this is perhaps the first time that regulators have been caught red-handed. Mint had reported in December 2007 that Yadav drew both an AICTE salary and a separate pension from the University of Delhi. Corruption goes hand in hand with the kind of regulations AICTE imposes: from deciding the number of seats per institution to the number of books in the library.

This makes deregulation all the more necessary, and how Sibal acts is key. He said last month that he would try to implement the recommendations of the Yash Pal committee within 100 days. Yet, as far as changing the regulatory regime goes, that may bring us back to the same problem we face with AICTE here.

The committee has suggested that AICTE and the University Grants Commission (UGC) be abolished. That's well and good, but the corollary to this recommendation is replacing AICTE and UGC with a single, powerful super-regulator.

In AICTE's case, the issue is that it is the same regulator that sets standards, rates institutions, recommends penalties and then enforces them—for fields as diverse as engineering and business. Such concentration of power is a perfect recipe for the egregious rent seeking and absurd regulatory norms we see—power that will only be magnified with Yash Pal's regulator. A super-regulator also isn't the best bet for promoting educational diversity—an important concern, given India's size and educational needs.

Regulation in education suffers simply because this sector has not benefited from liberalization yet. It is time these regulators learnt a thing or two about reform.

**Source:** New Delhi [/livemint.com/](http://livemint.com/) 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### The UPA Govt's Agenda in the Education Sector

The Government in its education agenda has laid a continued thrust on the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and increase in female literacy while also focusing on expansion in higher education through the setting up of new institutions. The Government will also work towards achieving the three-fold objective of expansion, inclusion and excellence.

President Smt. Pratibha Patil, in Parliament stressed that the Government's focus would be on making quality education a right through the enactment of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been able to provide access to children to elementary schools and retention has gone up owing to the universal mid-day meal programme.

The Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan will universalise access to secondary education. The massive expansion in higher education through the setting up of new institutions will enable the country to meet the challenge of education in full measure. The President further stated that in the last five years, a wide range of scholarships and educational loans were introduced for needy and deserving students. This effort will be reviewed and strengthened. The Government's strategy for higher education will be formulated around a three-fold objective of expansion, inclusion and excellence.

The President further observed that while male literacy went up to over 75 % in the last census and is expected to be higher now, female literacy was only 54 % in 2001. The Government will recast the National Literacy Mission as a National Mission for

↑ female Literacy to make every woman literate in the next five years. Increased female literacy is expected to become a force multiplier for all social development programmes.

For an increase in female literacy, it is very important to have gender sensitization programmes, in order to increase awareness among people and to ensure equal opportunities for girls. More and more girls need to get the benefit of school education. Girls from poor sections of society lose out on a chance to go to school because they are burdened with domestic work and the added responsibility of looking after younger siblings. A change can be brought about here with regular awareness and gender sensitisation programmes.

The Union Cabinet has cleared the Right to Education Bill. It is slated to be introduced in Parliament in the current session. When RTE becomes law, it will empower the seven-year old 86th Constitutional Amendment that made free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right. The RTE Bill includes guidelines for states and the Centre to execute and enforce this right. Once enacted, the bill will go a long way in ensuring free education for children in the 6-14 age groups and helping to achieve the literacy goals of the country.

The Union Minister for HRD, Shri Kapil Sibal, enunciating the plans and agenda of his Ministry, stated that all steps would be taken to enact the Bill. They would also evolve a consensus for the establishment of an All India Madarsa Board. He stressed that they would formulate a policy framework for PPP in school education and evolves a variety of PPP models. They would further the use of information technology in secondary schools and in open/distance schooling through broadband connectivity. Outlining the agenda of his Ministry in the first 100 days of UPA's governance, Shri Sibal said that they would evolve a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education in consultation with all stakeholders and in accordance with the NCF, 2005.

Shri Sibal also plans to bring in a tough law to prevent and punish educational malpractices. He plans to liberalise the education sector to bring in more finances, better academic infrastructure and multiple work opportunities.

The Government plans to set up an autonomous, overarching authority for Higher Education and research based on the recommendations of the Yashpal Committee and the National Knowledge Commission. They plan to bring in a law for mandatory assessment and accreditation in Higher Education through an independent regulatory authority. Shri Sibal's proposed policy initiatives include the launching of a new scheme of interest

subsidy on educational loans taken for professional courses by economically weaker students. A new policy on distant learning would be formulated. Model Degree Colleges would be established in 100 districts with significant population of weaker sections and minorities. Hundred women's hostels would be sanctioned in higher educational institutions in districts with significant population of weaker sections and minorities.

The Government will also review the functioning of the existing deemed universities; operationalise 12 newly established Central Universities and two new IITs. Assistance will be provided to States to establish at least 100 new Polytechnics in Districts without any polytechnic at present. Approvals would be obtained for establishing 10 new NITs in the unserved States so that every State has one earmarked IIT. This will go a long way towards achieving the three-fold objective of expansion, inclusion and excellence. The Government also plans to set up a National Council for Higher Education. The enactment of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill would give a further boost to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan by improving access to children to elementary schools.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme was started in 2001-02 to universalize elementary education in the country, in a time bound manner. The programme seeks to provide access, equity, retention and quality in the area of elementary education.

The programme is being implemented in partnership with the States to address the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The achievements of SSA till September 2008 are opening of 2,61,562 new schools, construction of 2,12,677 school buildings, construction of 8,83,479 additional classrooms, 1,82,539 drinking water facilities, construction of 2,47,071 toilets, supply of free textbooks to 8.11 crore children and appointment of 9.66 lakh teachers. There has been a significant reduction in the number of out of school children on account of SSA interventions. States/Union Territories have reported that there are only 45 lakh children in the 6-14 age groups who are not enrolled in a school.

From the year 2008-09, the Midday Meal Scheme was extended to upper primary stage (VI to VIII) in all government and government aided schools in the country. To streamline and strengthen the monitoring of the scheme a separate web portal is being developed. So the UPA government's term is going to see the opening up of the education sector in a big way. It will also ensure better access to quality education for girls and women, better retention in schools and massive awareness generation.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/) 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### UGC meet nudges women ahead

Encouraging women to play a key role in decision making bodies of educational Institutions and Universities, the United Grants Commission (UGC) sponsored a workshop on 'Capacity Building of Woman Managers in Higher Education'. The workshop is being held at St Ann's College for Women, Mehdipatnam.

The five-day workshop will be conducted for women in academic and administrative streams. The chief guest for the inaugural day function was Osmania University Vice-Chancellor T Tirupati Rao. The other guests who graced the occasion were G D Aruna, IAS, Addl Secretary to Home Department and Susheela Kaushik, Co-Chair, National Consultative Committee on Capacity Building of Woman Managers in Higher Education, UGC.

Susheela Kaushik stressed on the need for more women to be a part of the thinking process in education system. "Previously, the UGC consisted of only 10 per cent women.

We would like to see more woman managers in UGC and on par with men." She added, "Till now we have organised 150 workshops all over India. We want to motivate women especially youngsters and sensitise them into playing a active role as professors, vice-chancellors etc." Susheela informed that about 390 women were given training in these workshops so as to later take on the role of coordinators and trainers in their respective institutions.

OU Vice-Chancellor Tirupati Rao appreciated the trainers for taking up the responsibility of training. "This is not just a normal workshop. A lot of thought has gone into it." Rao felt that a leader, irrespective of the gender, should be liked by his subordinates and set a good example. He also praised the St Ann's College for taking the responsibility to conduct the workshop.

**Source:** Hyderabad [/expressbuzz.com/](http://expressbuzz.com/) 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2009

### Universalisation of Secondary Education

The new centrally sponsored scheme called "Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan" is meant to universalize access to secondary education and to improve its quality. The scheme has been launched in March, 2009. The allocation for the scheme for the 11th Five Year Plan is Rs.20,120 crore. A provision of Rs.1353.98 crore has been made in 2009-10 for this scheme. The sharing pattern between the centre and the state, for both recurring and non-recurring cost, during the 11th Five Year Plan is 75:25, while for the north-eastern states, the ratio is 90:10.

**Source:** Rajya Sabha/[PIB](#)/ Tuesday, July 21, 2009

### **HRD Minister moots ministerial level Joint Working Group in Education between India and Australia**

Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal, has mooted the raising of the level of the Joint Working Group for Education between India and Australia to ministerial level. In a meeting with Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Australia, Shri Kapil Sibal stated that this working group could have within its ambit the social welfare of students, mutual recognition of degrees, academic cooperation etc. Shri Sibal also said that the sub-group on social welfare of students must meet soon and submit a report by December.

Shri Kapil Sibal, during the meeting, made suggestions to the Australian Minister that both Australia and India could have a dedicated nodal officer at both ends to enable the free flow of information required related to students welfare and related issues. This could be particularly useful when there are doubts regarding quality of degrees being offered by an institute etc. Both sides discussed at length the issue of recent incidents of violence on Indian students in Australia. The Australian Minister emphasized that the Australian government sees this both as a criminal issue and a public policy issue and his government is dealing with this on both accounts. Shri Sibal thanked the Australian Minister in this regard stating that these were "our students".

Shri Kapil Sibal said that India was today at the cusp of opportunity and he is of the view that once the education sector in India opens up, what the world saw India become in services and manufacturing, will happen in the years to come in HR development. He said that he was saying this because in India the output dividend in education is greater than the input costs. He informed the Australian delegates that the Ministry was considering a regulatory framework for attracting foreign investments in higher education in India. He suggested that the foreign universities could set up their campuses in India in future. This model would be mutually beneficial as it would generate large number of skilled professionals who could meet the needs of the growing Indian economy as well as the global market. Shri Sibal, however, emphasized that the policies would aim to provide equity with excellence in education and not encourage investments guided by profiteering motive.

Shri Sibal apprised the Australian delegation of the massive expansion of higher education in India. He expressed the hope that this visit will deepen the ties between India & Australia and asked the delegates to convey the message to the Australian Government

that India attaches great importance to its bilateral relations with Australia. Shri. R.P. Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Higher Education and Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy were also present during the meeting.

**Source:** Rajya Sabha/[PIB](#)/ Tuesday, July 21, 2009

### **ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE**

#### **BEST Institute Brings Rutgers Intellectual Property to Market**

*Business, Engineering, Science, and Technology (BEST) Institute cultivates entrepreneurship by giving Rutgers Business School students hands-on learning experience to commercialize innovation*

The Business, Engineering, Science, & Technology Institute (BEST) <http://www.best.rutgers.edu> has created an environment that cultivates entrepreneurship by accelerating the commercialization of Rutgers' intellectual property. Rutgers Business School is promoting educational programs that teach and train Rutgers graduate and MBA students in all aspects of entrepreneurship and innovation commercialization, both in theory and practice.

The BEST institute builds on a rich Rutgers tradition of bringing research ideas to market -- the search engine Ask.com, the antibiotic streptomycin used to treat tuberculosis, and the famous Jersey tomato -- all are examples of applying Rutgers research excellence to innovation.

BEST epitomizes the Rutgers Business School multidisciplinary approach to business education. The institute is a unique collaboration between Rutgers Business School, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate and Professional Education, Rutgers Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC), and the Schools of Engineering, Pharmacy and Law. It seeks to bring promising innovations, born of university research, to market by investing in Rutgers intellectual property (IP) that offers commercial promise.

Headed by directors Professors Richard Mammone, Benjamin Melamed, Deborah Silver, Patrick J. Sinko, Ben J. Sopranzetti, and Associate Dean Thomas Gombar, BEST is working with RBS corporate partners to establish funds for investing in Rutgers' IP. The successful ventures will allow BEST -- through education, innovation, commercialization, business start-up, and job creation -- to contribute to the economic well-being of Rutgers University and the State of New Jersey.

"What we do is build the science, build the product, and build the business," said Mammone. "Entrepreneurship is the key. It is not enough to just have the idea. We have the expertise to build companies and network to get the capital there."

To achieve its mission, BEST is introducing a new operational model that integrates educational and business activities. The institute represents another hands-on learning experience for graduate and MBA students and faculty who benefit by applying RBS's new integrated business, science, and technology curriculum to real-world business activities in companies created by BEST.

It is also attracting leading faculty who teach courses about entrepreneurship and conduct research regarding all facets of private enterprise, including intellectual property and financial analysis. Faculty members also serve as consultants, mentors, and board members for start-ups.

"By giving professors and graduate students funding to start businesses based on research findings, BEST helps them obtain patents; create business plans and incubate companies; build and educate management teams; and guide companies to self sufficiency and successful exit," said Rutgers Business School Dean Michael R. Cooper, PhD. "BEST is emerging as a leader in creating and managing firms grounded in high technology and the life sciences."

### The BEST model

Both students and faculty benefit through real-world application of entrepreneurship.

- Educate students on commercialization of innovation
- Analyze the market opportunity for intellectual property
- Create business plans
- Build, educate and mentor management teams
- Help students and professors commercialize research by forming start-up companies
- Provide seed funding to newly-created companies
- Guide the companies through its stages of maturation and take them all the way to final acquisition or IPO

Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick is an integral part of one of the nation's oldest, largest, and most distinguished institutions of higher learning: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Founded in 1766, Rutgers Business School has been accredited since 1941 by AACSB International -- the Association to Advance

Collegiate Schools of Business -- a distinction that represents the hallmark of excellence in management education. Today, Rutgers Business School is educating more than 4,500 undergraduate and graduate students at two main campuses in New Jersey as well as six satellite locations in New Jersey, China, and Singapore. Rutgers Business School is ranked 10 nationwide for "Most Competitive Students" by The Princeton Review; and is part of the campus that is ranked 1 in diversity nationwide by U.S. News & World Report, for 12 straight years. Full-time MBA and part-time MBA programs give excellent options for people looking to boost their careers.

Source: Newark, N.J. [/prnewswire.com](http://prnewswire.com)/21<sup>st</sup> July, 2009

### **DU's political science now reading-based**

Delhi University (DU) has revised its syllabus for the BA (honours) in political science to focus on a reading-based approach. "The syllabus has been revised after 15 years and this is the first time we have created reading packages for students. Students would now be required to study according to 'topics' and not textbooks," explained Achin Vinaik, dean, faculty of social sciences and head, department of political science, DU. So, the department has prepared a list of books, mentioning page numbers and chapters that should be read by students to complete a particular topic.

According to Vinaik, so far students blindly followed certain textbooks and market-based guides to understand the subject. The onus was, then, on teachers to accordingly fill the gap between what has been learnt and what hasn't.

"This creates an uneven approach towards a subject in different colleges. But now, with a single reading list and prescribed topics, students from every college would have a level playing field," he said. He added also that the books suggested in the list were "popular books available in the market or online."

Also, while students would still have to appear for 10 papers over the three years, they would now have seven optional topics — instead of five — in the last paper. The department is now considering writing political science books in Hindi as well. "Students from a Hindi background face difficulty in approaching the subject. So we plan to train teachers to write books in Hindi," he informed.

In order to introduce the new syllabus to political science teachers, DU is organising a three-day workshop. The workshop would impart training on three topics and is being organised at the Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILLL). "Since the course is offered in nearly 46 colleges, we expect participation from about 100 teachers," said A K Bakhshi, director,

ILL. The institute will also organise a series of lectures by Mani Shankar Iyer, Neera Chandhok, Rajeev Bhargava, etc.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)20<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### Education is the victim

Mr. Hazlitt, a renowned if controversial economist, has pointed out that even great economists tend to commit two kinds of errors: one, argue in favour of immediate gain even if that be at the expense of future profit; and two, favour an in-group at the expense of wider benefit. As a political party, the Congress has evidently decided that it is worth its while to accept these two errors. It is thinking of immediate political gain and for the same reason desires to favour a few sections of the Indian society. It is doing so in the name of 'social justice'. Indian education is a victim of that policy.

Indian school education has many flaws of which the following are the most prominent: As the Planning Commission has reported, nearly half the children cannot read a sentence nor do a simple division of a two digit number even after several years of education; many teachers in state-run schools play truant most of the time; very few schools have water supply or toilets.

For these reasons, practically no politician will send his/her child to a school funded by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Almost all middle class (and even upper poor) families send their children to private schools or to those managed by the central government. For the same reason, children from most poor families either drop out or are so poorly educated that few of them can join universities.

As a remedy to this situation, the government offers reservation — not to poor children — but to members of the backward castes. The benefit has gone mostly to the growing middle classes in those communities rather than to the poor.

At the other extreme, the government allows the very rich to send their children to study abroad. It has been estimated that the country loses \$5 billion a year in the process. At the same time, both the government and the judiciary are strongly opposed to high fees in the private colleges within the country. Thus, state policy favours middle class, backward castes and the very rich. The poor get some substandard sops in the form of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The richer middle classes get practically no benefit unless they belong to backward groups.

As for higher education, both the Knowledge Commission and the Yash Pal Committee Report are concerned about the functioning of the UGC and of the AICTE. They like to replace both of them with

a single regulatory mechanism that will regulate education from the pre-primary to the university level. The minister strongly supported this move but the view within the UGC is nothing drastic will happen. On this issue the options are still open.

A few years ago, the then finance minister talked about the need to measure outcomes rather than inputs. Those days seem to be over. The present policy is to increase inputs to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, to special institutions like the IITs and to enforce reservation both in admission of students and in recruitment of faculty.

Politically, the government is probably wise and can secure large dividends five years hence. It might do so even though the benefits of the present policy to the poor are marginal; the benefits of reservation at the university level will help only a small section of the population and the benefits to the very rich will cost heavily in foreign exchange.

Therefore, the main problems with Indian education are: very poor quality of education in most state-run schools; loss of educational opportunities to most poor children; irregular admissions to (as also poor teaching in) many colleges; Poor availability of competent teachers.

In state-run schools, the biggest bugbear is that of the transfer of teachers. The power to transfer leads to considerable corruption. It is not unknown for MLAs to be given a quota of transfers for which they can demand money — either to transfer or to halt a transfer. Transfer prevents teachers from building a rapport or reputation with the local community. Countries like France have prospered without using the system of transfers. Evidently, it is not essential.

The Central government has the constitutional responsibility of ensuring standards in education. For that reason, it may take on the education of the top 10 per cent of the student population. As of now, in central schools, the Central government is looking after transferable government employees as also a few among village children in Navodaya Schools. It can extend the programme to the education of the top 10 per cent of the children either directly or through public-private partnership in charter schools. (In the US, the government gives a charter to private managements to run government schools with greater freedom of management in return for assured quality.)

Till the '60s, England used to have a system known as Eleven-Plus by which children would take a nationwide examination for admission to 'Grammar Schools'. The then Labour government abolished the system on the ground that it was unfair to 'late developers'. As a result, richer families withdrew their children from government schools. According to

the Economist, of the top 100 schools in the country, only three are managed by the government and even they are in the tail of the hundred. Further, the top professions, which, till the '90s, used to be quite democratic, have now become the preserve of the upper classes.

The reasons appear to be: In the Eleven-Plus system, poorer children had to compete with richer ones after five years of separate education. Now, they do so after 12 years of poor education. Hence, they have less ability to compete, and; apparently, the presence of upper class children improves education quality probably because of the pressure brought by their parents.

If a test is held similar to eleven-plus — not nationwide — but independently in every tehsil, and the top students are selected for education in quality schools, a large number of poor children and children from the lower classes are likely to qualify. Studying in good schools alongside children of the upper classes, they will be able to compete on their own without the crutch of the reservation system.

The Knowledge Commission and the Yash Pal Committee Report want to democratise higher education by increasing admissions. They forget that there is already considerable unemployment (and underemployment) of college graduates. It would be best for each college to have a close link with those who employ their students and limit admissions to the number the economy will support. An eighth-standard pass student can be a sincere and happy bus driver but a graduate in the same job will not be. We are wasting money and time by over-educating our children beyond the capacity of our economy to employ them.

The government's education policy will fetch votes but will probably not make Indian education good.

### Comments

"The closing lines of the article are quite pertinent. Practically neither the govt. nor the industry is concerned about the absorption of rightly qualified young people into the workforce. How will one explain the AICTE's decision to grant permission to start 85 more engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu even as Kapil Sibal talks about the quality of education? The big software companies recruit in big numbers engineering from all sorts of colleges essentially for programming, when school pass-outs can do the same with the similar training that is given to these engineering grads. The four years of learning all goes waste. This can ruffle the feathers of many. In the political arena we don't have the people of intellect & integrity like Rajaji to call spade a spade."

Source: New Delhi [/expressbuzz.com/](http://expressbuzz.com/)23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2009

### English for progress

More people ever before than want to learn English. India's economic growth has further led to the popularity of the language. However, according to David Graddol, linguist and writer, vernacular languages will play an equally important role in India's future growth. "Instead of focussing on English-medium schools, the emphasis should be on the quality of English teaching in vernacular-medium schools. There will be an increasing demand for multi-lingual speakers by corporate India," said Graddol, who is currently carrying out research on the growth of English in India.

As part of its global vision for English, the British Council has launched the programme 'Project English' in India and Sri Lanka. The aim is that by 2010 every teacher and learner of English in the world will have access to skills, ideas and materials they need from the UK. "This global ambition got a local fillip when, during his visit to India in 2008, Gordon Brown, British Prime Minister met his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh and committed the British Council to train, directly or indirectly, 750,000 English teachers in India over the next five years (2013). In order to achieve this vision, we have carved our work into three strands: corporate training, state partnerships and direct teaching of English," said Chris Gibson, director, Project English (India and Sri Lanka).

On the corporate side, British Council is working with companies such as Barclays, Orange, Tata Sky, Microsoft (on an employment skills programme), and are webcasting with Infosys to reach 86,000 employees and some 300,000 college students. "We have developed a low cost, language test for recruitment for the BPO sector. The test takes only 20 minutes to deliver yet produces detailed data on a candidate's spoken English level across five parameters: fluency, accuracy, range, interaction and pronunciation and the results are internationally benchmarked. Around 35,000 tests have been administered by Barclays alone as part of their India-wide recruitment drive," said Jill Coates, head, Corporate Training, British Council India.

Elaborating on the second strand, Alison Barrett, head, State Partnerships, said, "We are currently engaged with a number of state governments and state boards across India, in Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab and Kerala, delivering teacher training, developing new curriculum and materials for teachers as well as pupils. In 2008-09 we worked with 1,300 master trainers reaching over 4,00,000 teachers who teach some 17 million learners across the region." For example, in Delhi NCR, British Council worked with the department of education to train 40 mentors and 400 master trainers, which will

eventually impact over one million students. Also, in November 2008, “we launched the Indian edition of English Teaching Professional, a journal for English teachers in the UK, in partnership with Macmillan India, which will reach over 5,00,000 teachers across India by 2010,” she added.

In April this year, a new Direct Teaching centre was opened in Chennai and there are plans to open two more in 2009-10 in Kolkata and Hyderabad. The centres aim to provide quality English language at affordable prices to young people. Details of the courses on offer are available at [www.britishcouncil.org/india-english-learnenglishinchennai.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/india-english-learnenglishinchennai.htm)

“The Project English team works closely with local experts, for example with English and Foreign Language University (EFL-U, formerly CIEFL) and regional institutes of education, to find solutions to India’s needs. We are supporting the reform agenda for India in education and economy by focussing on developing the skills of teachers, English language teachers, teacher trainers and language learners so that they can fulfil their wants and needs and support India’s development,” summed up Debanjan Chakrabarti, head-Project English (East India).

Traditionally, in India, only a certain segment had a strong command over English, but initiatives such as Project English would help to widen that segment, and Graddol is optimistic that fluency in English and a vernacular language would give Young India a global edge.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)20<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### Exchanging culture and education

“THE children here are warm and respectful, also very inquisitive,” was what the 15-odd school teachers from the US had to say about school children here. “Education here is not just about studies, but character education. The experience we have had here is indescribable.

We are learning something new every day,” they said.

The group was here on the Fulbright- Hays Seminars Abroad Programmes, one of the teacher development programs conducted by the United States - India Educational Foundation (USIEF).

The teachers, who are from different states of the US, spent half a day at Chinmaya Vidyala, Vaduthala, during which time they had interactive sessions with the students.

The students at Chinmaya were very keen to know what the teachers felt about their school. “Some students here were talking about Beyonce, Shakira etc.

They seem to know more than me about US pop singers,” said Connie Greenleaf, teacher at Iowa City Community School District.

The groups were also impressed by the environment-friendly moves taken by the school to keep the campus clean and plastic-free and congratulated Maya Mohan, principal. When asked about the differences between schools in India and the US, the teachers unanimously said that there weren’t many.

There are more choices and options in the US, they said, although the competition is tough to get into a good university.

“The career choices of a person will depend on the family; while some might want their children to succeed in the conventional sense, others might just want them to be happy,” said Katherine Clary, visual arts teacher in Mark Sheridan Academy, Chicago. “I think the educational system is a reflection of the culture of a country. In India, the system is more orthodox whereas the society in the US encourages independence and fosters creativity,” said Mark Teseniar, teacher, Bluist Academy for Advanced Studies, Charleston.

The current group will be visiting schools in Chennai, Pune, Kolkata and then Delhi again during their visit. The purpose of the Fulbright programmes is cultural and educational exchange and better understanding between the US and other countries, said Sudarshan Dash, Indian Program Manager, USIEF.

The Fulbright programme was started back in the 1940’s soon after the Second World War, when there was a lot of mistrust between countries.

Nearly 17,000 scholarships are offered yearly to people from all walks of life - businesspersons, professionals, administrators etc.

Some of the USIEF alumni include S M Krishna, Minister for External Affairs and D Subbarao, Reserve Bank of India Governor.

Of late, the USIEF has been offering more scholarships to teachers, as the visit of one teacher will have its effect on hundreds of students. While many of the programmes are solely funded by the US state, others get funding from the government of India. For details on the USIEF scholarships, log on to [http:// www.usief.org.in/](http://www.usief.org.in/).

**Source:** New Delhi [/expressbuzz.com/](http://expressbuzz.com/)16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### For a new school of thought

The entire education system in India needs reforms so that it provides opportunities for the students who are going through the entire syllabus-examination rigmarole. Educationist **Vasant Deshpande** offers his views

Recently the statements of education ministers at the Centre and the State regarding our education system created controversies. Now it's time to think about the changes that need to be introduced in the education system. Here are some suggestions:

### Abolish SSC as a public exam

It was expected to have some diversification of courses at the +2 stage when the 10+2+3 pattern was introduced in Maharashtra in 1975. However, our experience over the last 34 years tells us that we have failed in realising this dream. Even after introducing the bifocal courses, the number of students rushing for the age-old professional courses has not decreased. Those who do not get admission into the streams of their choice invariably turn to the 'general stream' in frustration, adding to the number of 'unemployable' youth. And even the professionally-trained graduates are found lacking in soft skills.

All this is the result of the tyranny of public examination. Every commission and committee in pre- and post-Independence India has pointed out the faults and evil effects of our examination system. Curriculum, teaching-learning methods, student-teacher relationship are all affected by the requirements of the public examinations.

⇒ The way out therefore is to abolish the SSC examination. It will have the following effects:

1. It will reduce the unnecessary stress on the minds of students and their parents
2. It will reduce the work pressure of the Boards. This year 14 lakh students appeared for SSC examination. If the Board is relieved of this burden, it can use its expertise, time and money for bringing in academic improvements.

⇒ Evaluation should replace examination in schools. Examination gives marks for the performance of the students. Evaluation goes much beyond. It provides feedback to students, teachers and even to curriculum framers. As a result of this shift:

1. The gap between the stated and the achieved objectives will decrease; the gap between the professed and the practised teaching-learning methods will also get lessened.
2. There can be an all-round development of a student due to the stress on other academic and life skills than merely the writing skills.

⇒ Grading and credit system should be followed. The comparison between a student getting 98 per cent marks and the other securing 97.4 per cent marks is really unfair, but what's really worse is that the latter is denied admission for similar courses. Grading at least puts a number of

students in one category and offers the same opportunity to all of them.

↑. Grading system will end the unfair comparison among students and the resultant nagging at home.

2. Credit system will allow students to exert their own choice and progress at their own pace.

⇒ Government should make educational counseling available for X standard students in every school.

1. The growth of a student's brains is nearly complete by 16 years of age. They are able to understand advice given by experts.
2. Counseling will help students to know their ability and aptitude. They can have a reality check while undergoing a course of their own choice during XI and XII standard.

This will further enable them to choose the field of study, or a vocational/professional course.

### Improve the HSC Boards

There should be structural and functional changes in the Higher Secondary Education Board so that it can cater to the needs of the students and the aspirations of the nation.

The Education Commission (1964-66) considered education as an instrument of social change and productive development. It suggested diversification at +2 stage with a hope that enough manpower could be trained at this stage to assist the superiors on the one hand, and supervise and guide the skilled and unskilled workers on the other.

In the last 20 years, the situation in India has changed tremendously. Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation have opened new vistas of opportunity to the educated youth. Old professions are thriving and new ones are growing at an unprecedented speed. These will require technical and non-technical manpower. The number of students passing out of secondary and higher secondary institutions has become unmanageable for the government. Therefore, private partnership is sought to meet the demands. New thinking and practices are emerging rapidly. It is therefore necessary for the old agencies of education to change with the times.

Higher Secondary Education Board is one such agency which will have to think differently about its role and functions in the coming years.

⇒ The Central Board will have to take the role of coordinator and also of a protector of quality at the +2 stage.

⇒ The regional boards will have to work independently, but in collaboration with the Central Board



### That implies:

1. Each regional board will deal with manageable number of students. The examinations can be conducted more efficiently.
2. This will help reflect region-relevant requirements of industry and business in instituting various courses.

⇒ The process of delinking the +2 stage with institutions of higher education has already begun with the advent of such profession-related tests like CET, JEE or AIEEE.

1. The +2 stage needs to be turned into an independent and terminal stage of education by delinking it further from higher education.
2. The higher education level will get its own identity as a terminal stage of education, and not as a feeding center.
3. There would be less influence of higher education in the choice and content of the courses offered by the board.

⇒ There should be more representation of entrepreneurs, industrialists, businessmen etc on the academic and other decision-making bodies of the board.

1. It will help change the bookish nature of the courses, and bring them in relevance to the requirements of various fields of life.
2. Students will have a wider choice and will get more opportunities in their future careers.

All these suggestions are related only to the public examinations and relevant agencies. Many more suggestions related to the other aspects of education should be placed openly and with conviction before society. This will result into brainstorming on a large scale. People's voice needs to reach the rulers, so that more considered and mature decisions can be reached at.

Source: [sakaaltimes.com/](http://sakaaltimes.com/)22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2009

### **GLOBAL: The new dynamics of higher education**

We face the most highly synchronised recession ever, which has left no corner of the globe untouched. Fiscal stimulus packages have helped mitigate its worst effects but the crisis is not over yet. The world economy heads for zero growth in 2009 bringing with it an employment and social crisis that will affect higher education.

We need to address the social and human dimensions of the crisis. This means that recovery plans have to support the most vulnerable and

include investing in skills development, education and enhanced training projects.

But budgets will be strained for years to come. The way public money is spent will come under even greater scrutiny. This is inevitable. And that gives us the responsibility to get the most value for money from our education spending. The time to reform is now.

No one doubts the importance of education. You and I know that education is an investment and will be central to our future. OECD Ministers meeting last week recognised the need to maintain investment in human capital and education as a means to build a stronger, cleaner and fairer economy.

We need concerted action in three key areas. The first is access and equity.

Tertiary attainment levels have increased substantially in OECD countries. On average, one third of 25 to 34 years old have concluded tertiary education, up from less than 20% 15 years ago. And if we look at entry rates, they continue to increase, suggesting that the upward trend will continue.

This is very good news. Higher education should be available to all who can benefit from it. It is one of the best investments one can make. On average, completion of tertiary education yields an 11% rate of return.

In some OECD countries like the Czech Republic, Poland or Portugal, the return on tertiary education is in excess of 20%. This return may be even higher in some developing countries.

But challenges remain. There are still too many dropouts. This means that we have to work harder to better prepare secondary school students to succeed in their courses and then to move on to tertiary education.

Another challenge is to ensure equity between social groups. Developing fairer and more open access to higher education means diversifying funding sources for institutions. Some 86% of spending on education still originates from public sources and OECD countries spend on average 6% of GDP on education.

But in most, private spending has been increasing rapidly, especially on tertiary education. Given the shared public and private returns that education brings, costs and responsibilities also need to be shared.

We have recently published an extensive review of tertiary education policy in OECD countries. It shows that the best way to provide effectiveness and fairness is a well-designed model for charging students a contribution.

But we need to be careful here. To ensure the less well-off can go to university, the OECD recommends putting in place a comprehensive grant and means-tested loan system covering not only student fees but also living expenses. We need to ensure that education levels the playing field and creates opportunities for social mobility.

This brings me to another equity challenge which relates to the difference between males and females. In the OECD area, the battle to ensure that women are able to pursue higher study has been fought and pretty much won.

In fact, at the undergraduate level, our big worry is the boys, who tend to perform less well than girls. But in many developing countries, women still don't have full access to higher education. This means that there is an enormous under-utilised potential.

The second priority area is efficiency and effectiveness.

The crisis means that institutions need to work smarter. One proven way to progress in this regard is to encourage institutional autonomy. That means greater freedom to determine curricula, research priorities and strategy. Of course, that autonomy has to go hand in hand with accountability on outcomes and the way resources are used.

This in turn requires a new focus on institutional governance. There is a need for better governance in higher education. This means governing boards with clear responsibilities, well-informed external board members and effective procedures.

We must also recognise the international dimension. Higher education institutions are not confined by national boundaries. They never have been. About three million tertiary students are enrolled outside their country of citizenship.

The number of students that travel to a country different than their own for the purpose of tertiary study has been growing rapidly, reaching 20% in some countries. For higher education, globalisation is a natural condition that is to be embraced.

Globalisation of higher education can foster an exchange of cultures and ideas, opening minds, creating mutual understanding. It can also lead to closer economic links, more trade, and more investment.

France, Germany, the UK and the US receive about half of all foreign students worldwide. Many of those come from developing countries. Some stay after the end of their studies, where their skills contribute greatly to the economy and society.

This is very positive. But we need to ensure that the benefits of migration are shared between sending and receiving countries. And we must also

remember that education is the most effective way to help the successful integration of migrants in their host countries.

This means that OECD governments should strengthen their cooperation with developing countries. For instance, remittances contribute to poverty reduction and play an important role in supporting household spending on education and health.

By the way, although a lot of progress has been achieved greater efforts should be made to decrease the costs of remitting money. We also need to implement responsible recruitment policies in universities, as well as in other sectors, to avoid the risk of brain drain.

The third key area is quality and relevance.

In 2005, a publication of the Unesco-OECD provided guidelines on quality in cross-border higher education. These guidelines are a great example of collaborative effort between our two organisations, and a ground-breaking initiative in trying to ensure quality and a measure of consumer protection in a fast-growing but hard to regulate area.

The OECD also produces the most reliable indicators available today on educational attainment and resourcing, in *Education at a Glance*. However, we know very little about what students have learned in their time at university or college and that is why we are working on a feasibility study for the assessment of higher education learning outcomes in order to compare outcomes in different countries.

This study is in part a reaction to the dominance of university rankings based on research performance. Universities will lead much of the research which will help us tackle the great global challenges - health, climate change and poverty but publications and citations must not be the only yardstick by which they are measured.

We need our universities and higher education systems to train and develop the human resources which will enable us to progress. They need to be relevant. For this to happen, we need to ensure that institutions play to their strengths.

We are entering an era of even greater institutional diversity, with more specialisation. In 50 years, the number of higher education institutions has grown to more than 15,000, with a great diversity of styles and types - from the mega-universities to much smaller and more specialised institutions.

We must learn how to value them all. Not all students have the same needs & not all institutions need to be - or ever can be - at the top of global ranking lists.

So there you are: three simple tasks for higher education! Ensuring access and equity, improving efficiency and effectiveness while raising quality and relevance. These are major challenges and they will require countries, stakeholders and international organisations to work together. We need to get this right.

To help the world emerge stronger from the current crisis, the OECD will further develop its role as a global policy hub and maintain a strong focus on providing practical policy advice, based on reliable indicators and evidence.

We will develop new tools and venues for the exchange of good policies and practices, such as our online platform *Education Today Lighthouse* and the September 2010 OECD Conference on Higher Education, which we will host in Paris.

*\* Angel Gurría is Secretary-General of the OECD. This is an edited version of an address he delivered at the Unesco World Conference on Higher Education in Paris on 5 July.*

Source: [universityworldnews.com/](http://universityworldnews.com/) 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### GLOBAL: World conference a success? Yes&no

Was that it? The three-plus days of UNESCO'S 2009 World Conference on Higher Education flashed past in a flurry of plenary, round tables and parallel workshops. Those with memories of the first conference in 1998 were not surprised to discover that some of the debates had barely altered in tone and content in the intervening decade. Others were disappointed the harsh new realities of economic and fiscal meltdown passed largely ignored, other than in ritual references to the need to invest in higher education and research as well as in neutralising toxic assets.

Hours of discussion around abstract themes punctuated by refreshment breaks (often without the refreshments thanks to the inflexible catering staff who punctiliously followed orders even if it meant delegates went hungry and the food risked being spoiled). A crush around the piles of croissants at morning coffee offered the opportunity to make and remake professional contacts with people often known to each other only by their email addresses.

Cynics found comfort in the posturing of vested interests and many confident - read complacent - ministerial interventions.

In some respects they were right. There was a frequent tendency to substitute a description of an ideal state of affairs for the means with which it could be achieved. Everyone was 'for' certain self-evident 'good things' - wider access, quality, autonomy and

academic freedom - without setting out the practical steps that needed to be taken.

Delegates commented that the conference was a great success but mainly because it offered the opportunity to see and meet so many people with shared concerns and ideas. In contrast, some found the actual sessions less successful - the need to accommodate many voices made it difficult to go beyond the headlines,

Perhaps the lack of routes to mutually desired solutions is inevitable: it is obvious that conditions in an impoverished and democratically challenged state in say Africa requires different policies to achieve similar ends from those needed in a relatively prosperous post-industrial society in Europe or North America.

And we struggled with the vocabulary - diplomatic speak meets near-universal higher education jargon. The effect for the participants was that there were at least two conferences proceeding in parallel: one for the UNESCO-tutored quasi-diplomats and another for the higher education professionals.

The success of WCHE 2009 was that - every now and again - the dialogues matched up. Whether everyone got the message is open to doubt - the physical impossibility of being in the right place at the right time - every time - means that every delegate will take away a slightly different version of the conference.

There will be 1,000 (at least) detailed analyses of the final **communiqué**, itself a piece of knife-edged bridge building as the political agenda - higher education as a public good - cut across the requirements of access and quality.

Inevitably there were muddles. The UNESCO-OECD guidelines for cross border higher education were not endorsed in the final declaration, partly because UNESCO, unlike the OECD, has not formally endorsed them. But without them, the international strategy to harmonise quality across private and public providers is compromised.

And, despite an ardent intervention from Professor Brenda Gourley, retiring Vice-chancellor of the UK's Open University, the opportunities afforded by the new information and communication technologies received too little attention for some delegates.

The significance of regional collaboration was recognised - a reaction against the uniform application of one model, or one solution, in all situations.

If there was a lesson from 1998 it is that the pace of change is frenetic and could not have been anticipated. There were signs of change in one key area: the role of private providers. A cloud on the horizon in 1998, these have mushroomed since

although projection of world domination by global giants - the great fear in 1998 - has not materialised.

Private providers are now widespread and countries are working pragmatically to ensure that quality on both sides - private and public - is maintained. That this growth has been fastest outside the mature higher education systems of Europe and the developed world should come as no surprise: that an accommodation is clearly being reached might.

But the communiqué tells only part of the story. It will serve as a framework for the continuing discussions that the internet - now far more omnipresent than in 1998 - will make possible across jurisdictions, cultures and time zones. Some will be bilateral, others within the frameworks that have emerged out of the conference.

Even before the communiqué appeared (rather belatedly) on the conference web site, the follow-up discussion had begun. Small matter that the next constitutional stage is for the document to feed into the UNESCO General Conference in October.

It is the detailed conversations that will impact on policy and practice. If the 1998 WCHE achieved anything - and some cynics point to the incomplete to-do list from then - it was dragging the Bretton Woods institutions shamefacedly into recognising the role of higher education within a holistic education system.

Institutions such as the World Bank - whether it was true or not that prior to the millennium the bank had a priority on basic education - can now point to their role in promoting discussion on the big themes in higher education.

WCHE 2009 is not likely to provoke such a monumental sea-change but it will be recognised for what it did achieve: a focus on the needs of African higher education and the consensus around the international discourse of higher education.

Was it a good thing to wait more than 10 years before a second WCHE? On the basis of 2009, yes and no.

Yes, because the conference offers an opportunity to stand back and identify the big trends that will make or break the ability of universities to respond to our diverse and diversifying world. No, because the pace of change means that more frequent exchange of information and experience is needed for policy-makers and practitioners to keep pace.

Yes, because organising a conference of this nature is a mammoth undertaking that stretches the UNESCO bureaucracy and budget. No, because more frequent discussion is necessary. UNESCO has shown it can separate out the diplomats and politicians to allow the sector its say.

But does it need to jet everyone to Paris to achieve this objective? Internet-based forums are almost as effective. And there is no unseemly scrum for the coffee and croissants either.

Source: [universityworldnews.com/](http://universityworldnews.com/)19<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### IIM Bangalore selects SunGard Higher Education Solution

The Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), one of the top-ranked business schools in India, has selected SunGard Higher Education's Banner Unified Digital Campus (UDC) solution to help increase efficiencies in course administration, improve student services, and enhance capabilities for collaboration with institutions in India and worldwide.

"SunGard truly understands the global language of higher education" said Professor Pankaj Chandra, Director, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore. "IIMB is among the top management education institutions in the world. Along with a transformative and innovative education, we want to provide our students and faculty with quality services, global collaboration opportunities and tools, and a rich academic experience that reflects our reputation for excellence. SunGard Higher Education's student and faculty-centric solution approach aligns perfectly with our vision."

"We are pleased to welcome IIMB into the worldwide Banner UDC community," said Akila Krishnakumar, Chief Operating Officer and Country Head (India), SunGard. "We look forward to supporting IIMB in realizing their vision to offer more diverse and improved services to empower students, faculty and alumni, while helping enhance operational efficiencies and measurably improving institutional performance. In working with IIMB, we also hope to help set new performance levels for efficiency, communication and collaboration among its constituents that will be benchmarks for similar higher education institutions in India."

IIMB's choice of the Banner UDC heralds SunGard Higher Education's aggressive expansion plans in India. Having operated in India since 1993, SunGard's global solution centers in Bangalore and Pune function as knowledge and operation hubs, combining deep domain expertise and product knowledge with specialized technical capabilities that help to cost-effectively serve SunGard's vast portfolio of solutions and customers in the region and worldwide.

Source: Bangalore [financialexpress.com/](http://financialexpress.com/)16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### IIT alumni propose reforms

A group of alumni from seven IITs, PanIIT, has proposed a reform agenda for higher education to



President Pratibha Patil. “We met the President a few months ago and she asked us to formulate our expertise and experience in a document that could be used for improving the quality of the Indian education system,” informed Ashank Desai, chairman, PanIIT and founder, Mastek Ltd.

In the report, PanIIT has made the following recommendations: implementation of comprehensive reforms in policies and governance; mandate quality and increase capacity; enable quantum improvement in faculty service conditions; deploy technology for teaching and collaborative research, and; establish an active industry-academia interface.

“India has mandated that the gross enrolment ratio in higher education should go up from the current 11% to above 20%. For this to be possible, it is essential to set up new institutes and to run these, we need professional managers. So, we have suggested that an academy be established specifically to create leaders to manage educational institutes,” he said.

The lack of quality faculty is another area of concern. In response, the group has highlighted the need for more collaboration with overseas faculty — to improve the quality of Indian teachers. “Some IIT alumni teaching in the US have come together to form a group called Indo-US Collaboration for Engineering Education(IUCEE) to facilitate training of faculty at the IITs,” he said. Desai believes that creating such groups for non-engineering colleges as well could be a viable solution.

Krishna Vedula, dean emeritus, University of Massachusetts, US, and a member of PanIIT, explained, “Global collaborations will play a key role in bringing about a change in the Indian education system. So, we have already successfully implemented a project wherein more than 25 renowned US academicians have joined hands with 600 of their Indian counterparts to revolutionise the curriculum and teaching methodology for engineering colleges across India. Now in its second year, the programme aims to develop e-learning kits to maximise reach and promote research initiatives across colleges in the country. We, at PanIIT, are committed to improving the quality of the Indian education system.”

Desai also emphasised the need to create joint doctoral programmes, wherein PhD scholars in India could connect with guides (research supervisors) in the US. “Information and communication technology could play a big role in creating these networks,” he added.

The other recommendations made by PanIIT include clustering universities in three layers. “The first layer

should comprise universities pursuing cutting-edge research; the second of those offering professional and academic qualifications, and; the third of universities imparting skill-based education,” informed Desai.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)27<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### In the news - Skill

Journalism as a profession has acquired a broader dimension today. The skill-sets are no longer specific and the importance of digital media cannot be ignored any more. A holistic training is soon becoming imperative to equip students to meet the myriad demands of the industry.

Addressing the need of the times, Sir Michael Parkinson launched UK’s largest student dedicated newsroom at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) this April. “We begin our first academic year fully installed in the new centre this October,” says Robin Staniforth, director of the Centre for Broadcasting and Journalism, NTU.

The university launched UK’s first broadcast journalism degree course in 1992. Three years later, the Broadcast Journalism Training Council accredited the course. The course took off when it moved to the former BBC Studios in York House and the Centre for Broadcasting and Journalism (CBJ) was created. The same year, CBJ also launched a suite of MA journalism courses, including television journalism, radio journalism, newspaper and on-line journalism. Two years ago, CBJ launched an undergraduate course in print journalism. And this year, the centre has moved to its new premises, which includes UK’s largest student newsroom with 85 multi-media workstations, three radio studios and a 75 square metre TV studio.

Staniforth points out, “While we offer BA degrees in broadcast journalism and print journalism, we have MA degrees in television journalism, newspaper journalism, and radio journalism. All our students study online journalism, whatever course they are on, and are taught to shoot video, record audio, take still photography, edit and layout pages.

Above all, students are taught how to write well. We aim to deliver skills such as communicating ideas, problem-solving, team working, creativity and innovation, ability to work under pressure and, flexibility and multi-tasking.” One of the features of CBJ is its consortium of industry representatives who work with the faculty to ensure that students are provided the right education and training so that they can obtain jobs in the future.

To apply to the BA courses, students are expected to have good A level results (equivalent to 300 points on the UK model), and for the MA

programmes, students need a 2:1 degree or equivalent, and good English, equivalent to a minimum IELTS score of 7.

International students, too, can apply for the courses. The eligibility criteria remain the same. In fact, as the director points out, "We have large numbers of overseas students, including two from India on our MA courses at present, and one on our BA course."

Ideally, Staniforth points out, applicants should have boundless enthusiasm and a tremendous 'get up and go' attitude. According to Staniforth, who has 25 years of journalistic experience with the BBC, Reuters and ITV, journalism offers a fascinating career. On a concluding note, he says, "Students have to learn to write well, to communicate clearly, work well in teams, work to deadlines and learn how to be persuasive to get interviews, among other things."

Source: [/timesofindia/](#)27<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### INDIA: Call for massive overhaul of higher education

*"There is no doubt that the Indian higher education system, given the enormity of challenges it is facing, needs a drastic overhaul." The Yash Pal Committee Report, 2009.*

The problems facing higher education in India are manifold and demand effective and immediate action. Mushrooming of 'deemed' universities, poor governance of institutions, lack of funds, difficulty in providing speedy accreditation to colleges and universities, insufficient teachers, want of a revived syllabus and the necessity to encourage research are some that are ailing the nation's higher education system.

If the Yash Pal Committee report on [Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education](#) were to be judged on addressing these issues, it would find many supporters because it does take up matters that do need immediate attention. But there are key areas where, despite its worthy recommendations, many questions are left unanswered.

The committee, led by former University Grants Commission chairman Professor Yash Pal, was appointed by the then Minister of Human Resource Development, Arjun Singh, in 2008, to review the commission and the All India Council for Technical Education, as well as various other councils connected with higher education.

Foreseeing the huge task and to discover areas requiring further evaluation, Pal had suggested the committee's task be made broader and that it should be called the advisory committee on "Renovation

and Rejuvenation of Higher Education". Innumerable meetings, discussions and open interactions with vice-chancellors, teachers and students resulted in this revolutionary report being touted as an attempt at doing "something that would make a difference".

One of the key recommendations that will make a difference is the plan to create a single apex body to regulate matters related to the higher education. This all-encompassing organisation will be called the National Commission for Higher Education and Research and will replace the existing regulatory bodies.

The recommendation has been lauded by vice-chancellors, educationists, deans, students and even parents. But not everybody is happy: "The UGC will be subsumed; the AICTE won't remain AICTE any more. They feel ignored, shunned and even insulted. I am surprised that the press and universities have given a positive response," Pal commented.

The creation of one ruling voice would drown out the chaos of cries created by the multiplicity of watchdogs such as the UGC and AICTE. They had failed to work together and never seemed to agree with each others' decision anyway.

Even the report mentions that "the very little coordination among the statutory bodies has led to very embarrassing situations in which we find two regulatory agencies at loggerheads and fighting legal cases against each other".

Establishment of the national commission is likely to facilitate expansion and execution of the Pal committee's recommendations at a much faster pace: "The idea of unifying the fragmented governance into one governing agency is excellent. I would however like to see this regulator being funded through creation of a corpus," said Professor Samir K Barua, Director of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

"It should not depend on funding from the government in the form of allocation every year. The regulator may also be funded through a small charge on the revenues of the regulated institutions."

The report emphasises the need for interdisciplinary experiences and this should help students sustain themselves "when the demands of a particular job market change". It would mean that students would be exposed to multiple subjects under the aegis of one university or college.

"Connection with the outside world should be maintained at every cost. What we have currently is a steel box of a system within which there are smaller boxes with no interaction with the outside or with each other," Pal said.



Even the Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management needed to shed their isolation and expand their scope to include other subjects such as the humanities. This could prevent their isolation as just engineering or management hubs and introduce an inter-disciplinary approach.

Surendra Prasad, Director of IIT-Delhi, accepted the recommendation, saying: "Like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology we need to go beyond science and technology and nurture other disciplines as well. This is not to encompass each and every subject but to have a healthy exchange and inflow of ideas from every direction and field."

Private sector participation is seen necessary to reach the goal of doubling higher education's capacity. But the report lashes its whip at those private universities which make profitability their singular focus. It recommends massive modification in the legal framework to tighten regulations on auditing the accounts of such universities, on transparency, on paying a minimum salary to the teachers and so on.

The report also recommends that the granting of 'deemed' university status should be put on hold till unambiguous guidelines are evolved.

"Interest groups have been shocked. The shops that had opened up like family businesses will be rooted out now. They teach only business or management courses because of the high fee involved. Setting up a private college or university is a business proposition for them and nothing else," Pal said.

Years of theoretical learning may find a new dimension with the report insisting on summer jobs or internships as part of compulsory exposure for all students, irrespective of the discipline. The report also suggests that teachers should be assessed by the students although it does not state how and when any of this will be executed.

Teacher education should be the responsibility of institutions of higher education and all teachers must undergo refresher courses regularly, according to the report. It has also been suggested that since teaching and research go hand in hand, there should be an increased emphasis on research as well.

"It should be necessary for all research bodies to connect with universities in their vicinity and create teaching opportunities for their researchers and for all universities to be teaching and research universities," the report says.

Vocational courses have failed to gain popularity in India as they are seen as the recourse of those who fail to gain admission to a regular university or are poor and require a speedy source of livelihood. To remove this stigma, the report recommends a skill development council be set up at the central level.

"Alienation of this sector can be overcome by bringing it under the purview of universities and by providing necessary accreditation to the courses available in polytechnics, industrial training institutions and so on" the report states.

The neglected condition of the state universities has been addressed and the report calls for their liberal funding. It also recommends that the nearly 1,500 colleges providing good standards of education should be upgraded to the level of a university.

While the report welcomes opening doors to foreign scholars to facilitate exchange of ideas across borders, it suggests that only the best foreign universities be allowed to open campuses in India. It also says Indian universities should be given full autonomy and be subjected to the least interference and inspection.

This has been accepted by the educational institutes: "Autonomy is essential if we are to compete with the foreign institutions which are likely to be permitted to set up campuses in India," Barua said. "Otherwise, the foreign institutions should also be subjected to the same controls and regulations as the public institutions. I also think it would be good idea to specify what the foreign institutions desiring to set up campuses should bring in capital."

Kapil Sibal, current Minister of Human Resource Development, is enthusiastic about the report and has announced that it will be implemented within 100 days.

Although the report represents an attempt to give Indian higher education a facelift to match global standards, the weakest link is that it leaves many how-to-do-it questions unanswered. As the report itself states, "What exactly needs to be done in detail is beyond the scope of this report and we are separately suggesting that a Task Force is given the responsibility for it."

Problems with implementation are not just limited to devising ways to execute the recommendations but also arranging for funds to put them into effect. For example, the report suggests that education should be made affordable to all and an assured loan should be available to every student, apart from scholarships.

India's expenditure on higher education in 2009-2010 is Rs154 billion (US\$3.2 billion) which is around 20% more than the previous year but is not even half the required amount if the planned results are to be achieved. The teacher shortage needs to be tackled by making teaching a lucrative profession and that too requires attractive salaries.

Achieving results with less funds than required may be difficult but the promise of change has given hope to many. Deepak Pental, Vice-chancellor of Delhi



University, said: "It is a quite practical and promising report. I don't know how and where the funds will come from but at least we are going in the right direction."

### Comment

BITS Pilani which is one among the top ranking universities in India Today is a model worth studying and emulating. Admissions by online Test BITSAT, dual degree option for MSc(Hons) student to obtain a second degree in Engineering, cafeteria approach to selection of electives, Practice school option for all degrees analogous to Internship for doctors. BITS with various Engg branches is a T school, with various Science Programs is a S School, with various IT Programs IT School, with Pharmacy it is a P School, with its MBA it is a B School.... BITS itself was formed in 1964 by merger of Birla College of Engineering, Birla College of Arts and Birla College of Science, Commerce & Pharmacy. All degrees at BITS Pilani have common foundation years. BITS Education puts emphasis on Interdisciplinary approach. BITS Model of education has been acclaimed in many global forums.

Source: [universityworldnews.com/](http://universityworldnews.com/)19<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### Education Minister: Foreign Universities will have Observe Quota Law

Foreign universities seeking to set up campuses in India will have to follow the government's quota policies that reserve almost 50 percent of all seats at higher-education institutions for members of economically disadvantaged castes and classes, Kapil Sibal, the country's minister in charge of higher education, told parliament on Wednesday, *The Times of India* reported.

Since taking office, in late May, Mr. Sibal has often reiterated his desire for foreign universities to operate in India. This is the first time, though, that he has said categorically that those institutions would have to observe government-set quotas. Opponents of the idea of allowing foreign universities to operate here have said that they will limit access to higher education for needy students because they will charge much higher fees than government-run colleges do.

"All institutions must be inclusive," Mr. Sibal said in a debate in parliament on Wednesday. "If any institution has to set up in India, then it has to ensure a place for backward castes. There is no compromise on it."

Mr. Sibal said that treating foreign institutions like Indian ones was an obligation under the World Trade Organization's principles, *The Economic Times* reported, although he did say that the quota system would not apply to any Ph.D. programs offered by foreign universities.

Mr. Sibal's remarks about quotas for foreign universities could foreshadow the Indian government's move to impose quotas on private higher-education institutions here as well. A bill to extend quotas to the private sector is pending in parliament.

Source: New Delhi [chronicle.com/](http://chronicle.com/)16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### Mechanism to register students going abroad

By the year-end, the government will put in place a mechanism to register students going overseas for education, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

He made the statement in response to concerns expressed by members over the welfare of Indian students going abroad for higher education. The mechanism is part of the 'e-Governance in Emigration' project being implemented by the Ministry.

Responding to BJP member Prahlad Joshi's question on the total number of students studying in foreign countries now, he said the exact number was not available, as most students did not register themselves with the Indian diplomatic missions. As per details available, 2,64,324 Indian students were studying abroad at present; the largest contingent of 1,04,522 was in the U.S. It is followed by Australia (97,035 students).

### Regulation of agents

Asked about the steps taken to regulate education agents, who were duping students, especially those going to Australia, he said steps were being considered by both countries to rein them in.

Referring to a demand of K. C. Venugopal (Congress) that cells be formed in diplomatic missions to deal with students' problems, he said he would request the External Affairs Ministry to consider the suggestion.

When CPI(M) member M. B. Rajesh drew the Minister's attention to the fact that many of the students attacked in Australia did not have medical insurance, Mr. Ravi said the government was working with the Australian authorities to ensure that those going Down Under had adequate insurance cover.

Source: New Delhi [hindu.com/](http://hindu.com/)16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### 'Need to upgrade skills in geo-informatics'

There is a need to upgrade knowledge and skills in the field of geo-informatics, so as to evaluate the water resources of any river basin more precisely, said Prof D Nagesh Kumar, department of civil engineering at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.

Kumar was addressing the gathering after inaugurating a short term training programme on geo-informatics for integrated river basin development at the department of applied mechanics and hydraulics, NITK Surathkal, on Monday. The programme is sponsored by AICTE-MHRD, New Delhi.

A lot of work on the river basin development and management is going on, with an integrated approach at the national and international level. The usage of important tools, including remote sensing, geographical information system, digital elevation models in studying hydrological parameters are gaining popularity these days, he observed.

With the addition of new satellites into the orbit and new sensors being incorporated into the RS technology, there is need for research workers and hydrologists to understand and be acquainted with these advancements. Further, he insisted the research workers the importance of use of isotopes and its applications in the field of hydrology.

Over 50 participants hailing from different engineering colleges both from Karnataka and other states, besides research organizations and industries took part in the event.

**Source:** Surathkal/ TNN [/timesofindia/20<sup>th</sup> July, 2009](#)

### No plan for common Class-X board: Sibal

Making it clear that there would be no single class 10 boards, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal on Thursday said while retaining the diversity, stress should be on uniformity of excellence.

However, Sibal's idea of making the class 10 examination optional in CBSE-affiliated schools will be discussed in the three-day meeting of state secretaries of school education and special [project directors](#), which began here on Thursday. In the meeting, the state governments' views on the issue will be sought.

Addressing the meeting, Sibal said the government did not want to destroy diversity but state boards need to improve their quality. "We do not want to destroy diversity of school boards. We do not want a uniform board. But we want excellent quality," he said. Sibal asked states to give up their "laidback" approach and work with the Centre to bring quality. "But what is the diversity in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry or Biology? We must have a uniform teaching of these subjects. This uniformity will bring excellence," he said.

Sibal said the government wanted to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education that is the percentage of youths in the age group of 18-23 years pursuing higher [studies](#). At present, the

GER is 12.4%. This needs to be increased to 30% to 40% by 2020, he said.

Sibal sought the full support of all states in achieving the target. "I have come here to hold out a hand of friendship to every state. This is something for the country."

He called for partnership between the Centre and the states towards the goal of delivering education to the people. He pointed out that today there is disconnect between the people and the policy makers and the quicker this was realised, the quicker it would be able to deliver education to the people.

Sibal also asked the state governments to prepare plans on how to monitor neighbourhood [schools](#) and teachers' attendance/teachers' absenteeism that stands at 19%. He also pointed out to the states that if the vacancy position for teachers is as high as 50%, as is the case in some states, the national enterprise of education would not work.

Sibal said in the 11th Plan the government would be implementing the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in order to have a critical level of attendance at the secondary school level, so that adequate number of students moves to college.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/31<sup>st</sup> July, 2007](#)

### Practical experience for DU's science students

In order to promote a research-based approach at the undergraduate level and to encourage students to pursue science courses, Delhi University organised two workshops at the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS) and Solid State Physics Laboratory (SSPL).

The three-week workshops, which concluded recently, are part of a collaboration DU entered in last year, wherein top research laboratories will organise workshops and lectures to expose the university's students to state-of-the-art equipment.

According to the course co-coordinator, Vinay Gupta, the participants were second and third year students selected on the basis of their performance in previous years and their passion to pursue science. In all, 52 students were selected from different colleges — 26 for each programme. Swati Mendiratta, a third year chemistry (honours) student from Hindu College, was one such participant. Despite being a chemistry student, she chose to attend the programme on radiation in biology and medicine held at INMAS. "It is a field I am interested in and I thought prior exposure would help me decide whether I want to pursue it," she said.

Recounting her experience, she added, "Overall, the programme was very helpful as it exposed us to

various laboratory techniques. There are many techniques that we come across in theory, but to actually see these techniques in such advanced laboratories was great.”

On the other hand, Jayeeta Sen, a chemistry (honours) graduate from Sri Venkateswara College attended the programme on solid state materials and devices at SSPL. “Professors from IIT-Delhi and JNU were also invited to deliver lectures. During the workshop, we learnt how to use advanced research equipment in the lab.”

The workshops were divided into two parts. The first half of the day focused on the theory aspect and the second saw students learning and operating lab equipment. “The most exciting part was interacting with researchers and scientists working in the lab. Not only did they tell us about the equipment, they advised us on the basics of doing research, selecting a topic and writing a paper. The experience was extremely beneficial for those wanting to pursue a PhD,” said Mendiratta.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)27<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### Redefining India's higher education and global civil society

“Certainly redefining of Indian education is in the process; rather it's a kind of structural changes that are taking place. India is according greater priority to education. But still renowned universities of Britain and United States draw a large chunk of Indian students there. And they have been doing so for a pretty longer period of time even before independence,” said Prof. Shri Prakash, from the Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Milia University.

“We cannot say India is posing an existential threat to the western countries or that we have crossed that laxmanrekha but yes, the recent initiative taken by the Union government does create a conducive environment for the ‘brain reversal.’ And this is certainly a welcome move,” said one Academician from Delhi University.

Rick Trainor, president of Universities UK and Principal of King's College, London, said, “Now, more than ever, collaboration across borders among our leading universities is absolutely necessary. The strength of the UK/US partnership, the leading longstanding pre-eminence of the two countries in the higher education sector and more recently, the crisis in the global economy validate the case for internationalised collaboration.”

As India is closing in on global affairs, startling revelation of a report in UK informs that India unlikely to pose a threat is a feather in the cap of the growing

education system in India. This was adequately proved at the very outset of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) summit in Russia, where India had a substantial presence. Hence, not surprisingly, India is on the global ride. And the current twenty-first century belongs to India. With the latest induction of Arihant, the nuclear submarine, India is increasingly making its presence internationally.

But there are some questions that haunt us. Will there be a reversal mode of brain drain? Will we be heading for the days where India was known worldwide as the centre of learning? Or are we heading for a collision with the west? Given the latest report of the western media, at least that indicates so.

Till now, the whole of Asia was on the edge of quality education deficit. Priority to be always accorded to the good education aspirant was ‘the grand learning of Britain and United States.’ But it appears, the monopoly is going to be short-lived. Going by India's zeal, the higher education is getting top priority. American and British universities are having existential threat from India to maintain their pre-eminent position or global supremacy in the global and civil society. How much threat perception is in the offing is reflected by the report commissioned by none other than British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. The report suggests merging of top American and British universities rather than competing with each other internationally.

This report is based on the extensive researches and consultations of leading educationists and consultations in the UK and the US. This included Eric Thomas, vice-chancellor of the University of New York and Katherine Fleming and University of Bristol. “Within both the UK and USA, the higher education sector has long held a position of prominence and prestige even though there are signs that this position is under threat.” “This will enrich the universities of both the countries, foster growth of an open competitive and accessible higher education sector in other nations ...” the report highlighted.

John Sexton, president of New York University said, “In the future, the UK/US higher education agenda must go beyond seeking only greater mobility and partnership between the two. The report further said that universities must focus on ways to expand the strengths of the UK/US model in multilateral ways to create a world-wide network of cooperation and excellence.”

“This is an era of globalisation. India is on the verge of a turning point. Until recently, we have been

continuing with our education system, the old model of imperialism barring some reforms here and there. It's good that our present government and the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) headed by Kapil Sibal are stressing upon the tangible changes in the present set-up of the education," said Prof. Nisar-ul-Haq, from Department of Political Science, Jamia Milia Islamia (JMI).

"I don't think western countries should perceive any kind of existential threat from India. Rather expertise from third world countries particularly India will be an asset for the western countries. But if somebody goes out of the country in the quest for better facilities and come back home later, it's all because India is now on the way of 'Brain gain' and this is definitely a positive sign for the country," remarked Prakash.

**Source:** New Delhi [dayafterindia.com/](http://dayafterindia.com/)30<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### School question

*The reforms Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal announced in the evaluation system spark a debate on school education.*

On June 26, less than a week before the Economic Survey for 2008-09 was released, Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal announced certain radical reforms in the evaluation and examination system of school education, inviting criticism from some Non-congress State governments. Unveiling his Ministry's 100-day agenda for school education, Sibal announced a slew of measures that included abolishing the Class X examination, replacing it with internal assessment and giving an examination option to those planning to leave school, and introducing a grading system for Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) schools for Classes IX and X from this year. A framework for public-private partnership in school education, allowing the private sector to run government schools, was also suggested.

These were the controversial parts. The non-controversial part of the agenda included evolving a consensus to establish an all-India Madrassa Board and giving incentives to madrassas where modern subjects are being taught; enacting the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill; revamping the curriculum for teacher education; recasting a National Literacy Mission for Women; and intensifying efforts to modernise madrassas and to develop skills of Muslim children. The blueprint definitely carried an emphasis on matters dealing with minority education.

The Economic Survey, too, highlighted the urgent need for replacing bureaucratic controls in education by professional regulators, along with private-public

partnership to ensure universal primary education. It also recommended the entry of registered societies (non-profit) and publicly listed (education) companies into all fields of education. Apart from some homilies on how there was pressure on children, affecting their mental and physical development, and how there was a need to streamline admission procedures in private institutions; the survey categorically recommended an increase in the number of institutions through the entry of private players.

The main intent of the 100-day agenda for school education was ostensibly to reduce the burden on and the trauma of schoolchildren. It drew its share of criticism, coming soon after the Yash Pal Committee's report with suggestions of reforms in higher education. Replacing the University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education were options considered in the report.

The Education Ministers of Bihar, West Bengal and Kerala expressed strong disapproval of the suggested school education reforms. The Ministers of the latter two States, both Left-ruled, said the suggestion went against the federal character of the Constitution. The Education Minister of Bihar sought a consensus. The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in Tamil Nadu also criticised the move, stating that a unilateral decision would be a blow to the autonomy of States.

The Left parties, notably the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the All India Forward Bloc, criticised the proposal to do away with the Class X boards. School education, the CPI(M) argued, was the primary concern of States and education was on the Concurrent List. Each State government had the prerogative to frame courses taking into account the social, cultural and geographical factors relating to the State and most school examinations were conducted by State boards, it said.

The proposal to hold an all-India examination for Class XII through a single board was also criticised by the Left parties. It was argued that any such proposal should have been placed before the State governments and the matter discussed in the Central Advisory Board for Education, in which all State Education Ministers were represented.

In a statement, the CPI(M) also rejected the Yash Pal Committee's recommendation that there should be a Graduate Record Examination-type test for admission to universities, arguing that what was necessary was the reform of the pattern of examination accompanied by an increase in the number of seats at the higher levels of education. Further discussion, it said, was also needed on the Yash Pal Committee's recommendation of setting up



a National Commission for Higher Education and Research to replace bodies such as the UGC.

It is another matter that the Minister, in his 100-day agenda for higher education, announced the setting up of an autonomous overarching authority for higher education and research as well as a law to regulate the entry and operation of foreign educational providers. The Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operation, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialisation) Bill, 2007, was intended to be introduced in the Rajya Sabha but following concerted opposition from the CPI(M), it could not happen. And one of the first things Kapil Sibal did after assuming office was to declare his intent to revive the Bill, which now has found its way into the programme of his Ministry for the first 100 days.

The proposal to scrap the Class X board exam owes its origin to the recommendations of the National Focus Group on Examination Reforms, which were incorporated in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, soon after the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government took over. The Focus Group, chaired by Cyrus Vakil, Director of Studies, Mahindra United World College of India, recommended that the tenth grade board examination be made optional forthwith. It held that tenth graders who intended to continue in the 11th grade in the same school and did not need the board certificate for any immediate purpose should be free to take a school-conducted examination instead of the board examination. Also, it said that under no circumstances should board examinations be extended to other grades such as 11th, 8th and 5th. The Focus Group expressed concern that several State boards had initiated such exams.

The Focus Group said examination reforms were needed because school board examinations were largely inappropriate for the “knowledge society” of the 21st century and its need for innovative problem-solvers, and also because they did not serve the needs of social justice. Besides, the quality of question papers was low; they called for rote memorisation and they failed to test higher-order skills such as reasoning, analysing and lateral thinking. Additionally, the Focus Group felt that board examinations were inflexible inasmuch as they made no allowance for different types of learners and learning environments and that they induced in children an inordinate level of anxiety and stress, which in turn caused suicides and nervous breakdowns. It also suggested that board examinations should not be looked at as entrance examinations for professional courses or vocational streams.

The Focus Group expressed concern at the shortage of analytical thinkers and problem-solvers. It said that the negative impact of this was already being felt in the shortage of skilled personnel. An example of the crisis came from a NASSCOM estimate which suggested that there would be shortage of several lakh programmers by 2010. The report of the Focus Group also quoted the head of a leading Indian software company who said that 19 out of 20 graduate applicants and six out of seven postgraduate applicants are unemployable because they lacked problem-solving skills and often did not even know what it meant.

The issues of examination reform cannot be seen from the perspective of producing problem-solvers alone. An army of qualified software engineers, too, will not result in a young population sensitive to the problems of the country.

“If the examination system is made optional, everyone will write the examinations. Everyone in this country is crazy about examinations. Why does a parent want his child to score over 90 per cent? They all want to see their wards in St. Stephen’s,” said Janaki Rajan, former Director of the State Council for Educational Research and Training, Delhi, and now the Director of the Sarojini Naidu Centre for Women Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia. She said that one good step would be to ensure that every child received quality education, which should also be child-friendly, until Class XII. “The burden issue is not addressed by doing away with the examination system alone. Issues of curriculum are there, and that of the cut-offs. There is no doubt that States have to be consulted. There is also no reason why common tests cannot be conducted in regional languages,” she said.

The National Policy on Education, 1986, talked about a child-centric and warm environment. The Focus Group claimed that there were theories of psychology to suggest that if one wanted inquiring minds able to “think out of the box” at the age of 21, one could not begin training them at the age of 17; the process had to begin at seven.

Educationists are not questioning the wisdom of the suggested move to do away with the present examination system and replace it with a system of grades, but it is also pertinent to ask whether there will be a qualitative change in the manner in which the process of evaluation itself is conducted. Education as a means of economic mobility ought to be questioned. And if the objective of examination reform is to provide problem-solvers alone, then no amount of radical examination reform can address some of the real issues that plague education today. There are issues of larger systemic reforms and teacher training, too.



Some educationists believe that systemic reforms are needed and that the curriculum framework should be dissociated from textbooks. The material, they argue, has to be the kind that teachers are trained to transact. Teaching should take place in a socially inclusive classroom system where each child is given the opportunity to learn at his or her own pace. The tragedy, as one educationist points out, is that there is a tendency to equate the curriculum with the textbook or the syllabus with the textbook.

### Curriculum reform

State governments, educationists say, need to be encouraged to bring about curriculum reform. The National Curriculum Framework applies only to the schools run by the CBSE. Experiments in alternative forms of education were used only as add-ons, thereby increasing the pressure on children.

R. Govinda, acting Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, told **Frontline** that the intent to abolish examinations at the tenth grade was welcome but needed to be backed up by other things as well. The NCF, he said, was crafted around the CBSE syllabus. There were some 8,000-odd schools that were affiliated to the CBSE. In at least half a dozen States, the 12th examinations were conducted by different bodies altogether, not even State boards. In Karnataka, he said, the pre-university boards were run independently, as a result of which “children got completely destroyed”.

Several junior colleges in Andhra Pradesh or Maharashtra were not even part of any university system. In some States, public examinations were conducted at the eighth standard. Government schools in Maharashtra conducted examinations for the upper primary levels. “I think it is time we sat together along with the States and talked about a national system of education calling for a dialogue on what is to be done in the 12 years of schooling with the understanding that learning takes place at various levels,” he said.

Keeping diversity issues in mind, he said that there was a need for a common structure rather than a common curriculum for some degree of equivalence. There are universities that offer two-year degree courses while some others offer three-year courses. “Where is the equivalence?” he asked. The Kothari Commission on education in 1964-66 suggested that a school system of 12 years would be a part of school education. This, he said, was not being followed in many States.

Govinda said that having a single mega board was also not the solution. A small country like the United Kingdom, he said, had more than one board. The

NCF could be used for designing the levels of learning, not for designing textbooks. The 12th standard, he said, should be liberated from the notion of being an entry point to the university system. “Why should Delhi University be totally dependent on the CBSE? The day it stops being dependent, the CBSE will change,” he asserted.

Today, the situation is that teachers teach Class I children with the aim of preparing them for Class 12, he said. An NCF can be set up again, not necessarily by the National Council of Education Research and Training, to initiate a process of comparability. Private participation also was not a solution, he said; private entrepreneurs who wanted to invest in education could be encouraged to do so but by setting up schools or institutions that imparted free education with reasonable amenities. “Why do they opt for self-financing?” he wondered.

The problem is manifold. It cannot be set right by only reforming the examination system or by having a single board. School dropout rates are still quite high. Nearly 30 per cent of the children drop out at the upper primary stage, while 50 per cent drop out by the time they reach Class VIII. It was estimated that 50 per cent of those who make it to the tenth fail their board examination. Educationists are concerned that while so much attention is paid to higher education, there is little or no concern about the problems at the primary level.

Source: [frontlineonnet.com/](http://frontlineonnet.com/)18<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### **Sibal calls on State Governments to prepare vision for higher education for 2020**

All state governments must prepare a vision document for higher education. This document must contain the state's vision for higher education till 2020, including the current state of affairs, such as the number of universities and colleges, and how the state perceives the quality of these institutes as well as the states' budgetary outlay in this sector. This paper must then propose how the state plans to increase its Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). This was the appeal made to the Principal Secretaries, Secretaries of Higher and Technical Education of State Government by the Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Kapil Sibal, while addressing them in a meeting today. Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for HRD and R.P. Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, among other senior officials of the HRD Ministry were present at the meeting.

Sibal added that this document must also show how the states are proposing to improve the quality of Vice Chancellors etc. He stated once the centre has this vision from the states, can there be collaboration

between the two and for the centre also, it would be more possible to help those states which have a prepared vision document. Kapil Sibal underlined that the centre was looking at only a collaborated relationship with the states rather than one of control.

Sibal exhorted the states to increase their budgetary allocations for higher education, which, are showing a disturbing downward trend. While the Centre's contribution in education, as a percentage of GDP has been steadily increasing to 0.91 percent from 0.53 percent in 2000-01 (a huge increase in real terms with the country's impressive GDP growth rates), the allocation of the States has shown a decline from 3.76 percent to 2.73 percent in the corresponding period.

The Union HRD Minister pointed out to the states that they should also have an accreditation system for their colleges. This accrediting agency would benchmark the institutes in the respective states, informing students about the quality and resources of the institute they are going to attend. He added that this would help create competition among institutions leading to their improvement. He also urged the state governments to hire faculty to fill in vacancies, saying that if there is a ban on recruitment, how can quality be improved?

Kapil Sibal said that the centre is thinking in terms of allowing the setting up of autonomous colleges. These colleges would require higher level of parameters to be independent of universities and once they improve even further, they may be allowed to become universities themselves. Thus, there would be a three tier system in college education, i.e. affiliated colleges, autonomous colleges and universities. He said that this would allow colleges to improve themselves.

Sibal underlined that quality has to be along with equity, without which India cannot move forward. Towards this end, 374 model colleges for bringing in equity with quality are to be set up in 374 educationally backward districts in the country. He pointed out that through the Right to Education Bill which has already been passed by the Rajya Sabha, India is going to be spending huge amounts for neighborhood schools, the process by which adequate number of students will be thrown up for the university system. He also said that if India is to use its demographic advantage to provide the declining populations of the developed world with trained manpower, the emphasis must be on quality.

The minister informed the gathering that the 'National Mission on Education through ICT' has been launched, and in the current year's budget it is proposed to spend Rs.900 crore on this mission. The mission has two critical components – (a)

creation of very high quality e-content and (b) providing connectivity and related infrastructure to each of the 20000 + colleges and to each of the university departments, without any distinction of them being in the private sector.

Speaking on the occasion, R.P. Agrawal, Secretary, and Department of Higher Education said that the envisaged 5% increase in the GER by the end of the 11th Plan and raising it to the world average of 30% by 2020 can be achieved only if states come forward. Agrawal also sought inputs of the participating officers on the Yashpal Committee Report, the proposed law to prohibit/punish educational mal practices, setting up of educational tribunals and the setting up of a regulatory authority for accreditation and making it mandatory.

**Source:** New Delhi [/nvonews.com](http://nvonews.com)/24<sup>th</sup> Jul, 2009

### Sibal directive on deemed varsities

As part of efforts to clean up the deemed university system in the country, Union Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal on Friday asked the University Grants Commission (UGC) to direct such institutions to place their admission criteria, fee structure, faculty, facilities and details of funding in public domain. Also, UGC has been asked to insist on compulsory accreditation for release of grants.

To issue these instructions, Mr. Sibal invoked Section 20 of the UGC Act which allows the Centre to give directions to the Commission. And, this intervention has been made in view of an apprehension within the government that certain practices adopted by the deemed universities are damaging the credibility of the entire university system.

The order issued by the Minister states that the Centre is conscious of the need to respect the autonomy of institutions. But, equally important, according to the order, is to "harmonise the interests of stakeholders to promote accountability of higher educational institutions."

#### Websites

As per the Minister's direction, the UGC should ask all universities and deemed universities to have websites furnishing details that a student might need.

This includes availability of infrastructure and physical assets; grants-in-aid provided by the Centre, the State government or any agency assisted by the two and its utilisation; information regarding admission criteria and the process of admissions in all courses -- degree or diploma, by regular mode or distance mode.

Also, the websites should detail the faculty positions in each school/ faculty with their photographs and the nature of their employment – regular or temporary, visiting or guest; fee structure, including all its components; and curricula. All study centres opened by these universities to impart distance education also have to be detailed.

The UGC has been asked to provide a link to the websites of all these universities and the deemed universities on its own website to act as a one-stop-window for stakeholders.

Besides, the Minister has instructed that fees of the deemed universities should be regulated by the State-level fee committees that have already been constituted. And, a committee would be constituted to formulate the methodology and standards for bench-marking appraisal of faculty performance throughout the country. This committee has been asked to submit its report within three months.

**Source:** New Delhi [/hindu.com/](http://hindu.com/)18<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### **Sibal puts forth his case for scrapping Class 10th boards**

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal Wednesday made a forceful case for private investments including from foreign universities in education, and said there would be a law to regulate these institutions.

Replying to a debate in the Lok Sabha on demands for budgetary grants for his ministry, Sibal delineated his vision for development of the education sector, arguing that 'all kinds of new experiments' would have to be made.

The minister reiterated that he would bring the Right to Education bill and get it passed in this session of parliament that concludes Aug 7.

He said there would have to be public-private partnerships, private institutions managing government schools and private investments, besides the government efforts.

The minister told the house: 'We all have become slaves to our convictions. If you want to free our education, free yourself from these convictions.'

Sibal, a practising lawyer, also tactfully argued in favour of scrapping the 10th board examinations.

He said: 'When I spoke of this, I said in the context of the Central Board of Secondary Education schools where, if a student wished to go to the 11th standard, there should not be a need to appear for the 10th board exams.'

He said: 'Some members feel that foreign universities would enslave India. No power in the world can enslave India.'

Sibal argued that the government alone could not finance the educational needs of the country, and said: 'There is an allocation of Rs.85,000 crore for education in the 11th Five-Year Plan but this is not enough.'

'The private sector has to come. But we will have to regulate it and there will be a law soon for it,' he said, adding that such regulations would be done by experts and academics and 'there would be no political interference at all.'

He said 1.6 lakh Indian students go abroad every year and spend millions of dollars besides the heavy cost to the exchequer. Sibal wondered: 'A student in India may be denied admission in IIT but he gets it in MIT.'

Sibal reiterated that he was working towards setting up an overarching regulatory authority in higher education in which 'there would be no political interference. It will only have academics'.

The minister has earlier argued for an authority that would subsume the University Grants Commission, the All India Council of Technical Education and the Medical Council of India.

**Source:** New Delhi [/news.in.msn.com/](http://news.in.msn.com/)16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### **We need more higher education institutes: Tharoor**

Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor Thursday said India needs to have more institutions of higher education.

"Union Minister Kapil Sibal made a spirited speech defending higher education in the country in the parliament. But we have not yet got to the place where we should have been. What the US offers in terms of education is an extraordinary opportunity to broaden our horizon and expand our mind," Tharoor told IANS.

The minister, clad in a black bandhgala (formal Indian jacket), addressed a select gathering of educationists, publishers and bureaucrats at the launch of Renuka Raja Rao's book, "Yes! You Can Study in America: A Definitive Guide for Aspiring Students" at the WWF auditorium here.

"We need to have both – more institutions of higher learning and a wider range of subjects. The gamut of subjects that we offer our students is not wide enough. I want to see more higher education opportunities open up for students from all over the country. The vision that has been laid out in parliament – vis-à-vis higher education – must bear fruit," Tharoor said.

He justified his demand citing a personal example. "When I left for US in 1975, there were just five IITs in the country. After more than three decades, there

are about only seven or eight IITs in the country. By now, India should have had more than 30 IITs," he said.

Tharoor's new book is ready to hit the bookstores. "It is a book on which I was working last year with the envoy from Pakistan Shahryar Khan. The book is titled, 'Shadows across the Playing Field'. It is about cricket in India and Pakistan and its impact on the relationship between both the countries," Tharoor, who looked smug in his new avatar, said with a laugh.

Source: New Delhi [sindhtoday.net/](http://sindhtoday.net/) 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### RESOURCE

#### GER in Higher Education

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Indian higher education is estimated to be about 12.4%, as compared to estimated world average of 26%. In order to achieve the targeted GER of an additional five per cent by the end of the XI Plan, a substantial increase in Plan allocation has been made for the expansion of higher education, by way of setting up of institutions such as Central Universities in uncovered States, Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, Indian Institute of Information Technology, and Schools of Planning and Architecture. Expansion of capacity of the existing institutions, incentivizing state Governments for increasing state outlays on higher education and setting up of new colleges in 374 educationally backward district with GER below the national level through partnership with State Governments are also some of the steps for achieving higher GER. Expansion of Central Educational Institutions covered under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006 has also been undertaken which aims to increase intake capacity of these institutions by 54%.

Source: [PIB/](http://PIB/) Rajya Sabha Tuesday, July 28, 2009

#### More girls than boys in higher education

The number of students enrolled in higher education globally has risen five-fold, from 28.6 million in 1970 to 152.5 million in 2007. In the process, girls have overtaken boys. While male students went from 18 million to 75 million, female students rose from 10.8 million to 77.4 million.

The number of students pursuing higher education has doubled every 15 years. Globally, the gross enrolment ratio — the percentage of the relevant age group enrolled in higher education — has almost tripled from 9% to 26% in these 37 years.

Almost 51.7 million new students, or one-third of the total, have enrolled in just seven years since 2000. These facts emerge from a UNESCO report titled 'Global Education Digest 2009'.

In the South and West Asia region, which includes India, the student population grew six-fold from 2.8 million to 18.5 million. In comparison, in the East Asia and Pacific region, which includes China, it increased 12-fold from 3.9 million to 46.7 million.

In the South and West Asia region, which includes India, tertiary student population grew six-fold from 2.8 million to 18.5 million. In 1970, India's region was actually somewhat ahead of China's. However, while the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in South & West Asia has grown from 4% to 11%, in East Asia & the Pacific it has risen from 3% in 1970 to 7% in 1990 and then jumped to 26% by 2007. The spike is mostly due to China, where the number of higher education students has grown on average by almost 19% each year since 2000.

As a result, since 2005, this region has had the largest global share of higher education students, over 30% of global enrolment in 2007 (up from 14% in 1970). All regions outside North America, Europe and Central Asia have seen their shares grow. The share of Latin America and the Caribbean doubled from 6% to 12% and that of South & West Asia from 10% to just 12%. In 1970, almost every second tertiary student in the world studied in North America or Western Europe. But today, it is just one out of four students.

Another interesting result of the different rates of expansion of higher education in various countries is that a majority of tertiary students now live in low- and middle-income countries, while in 1970 the majority of such students lived in the small group of high-income countries. In 1970, 57% of such students were from high-income countries even though they accounted for only one-fifth of the relevant global population. The shift, the report says, was apparent by the 1990s when the pace of enrolment accelerated in lower middle-income countries.

Source: New Delhi [timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/) 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

#### 88 ragging cases, 12 deaths in last one year: Study

Despite sustained campaigns by the media and government, ragging appears to be going on unabated in India with 88 cases and 12 deaths being reported in the last one year, according to a new study.

Andhra Pradesh topped the list with 12 ragging cases, followed by West Bengal (10), Uttar Pradesh (10) and Punjab (8), the report on Monday released by anti-

ragging NGO Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education claimed.

"The number of ragging cases reported in the media from July 2008 to June 2009 are 88, number of ragging deaths are 12 and number of attempted suicides are five," the study said.

During the same period last year, 89 ragging cases were reported, out of which 11 resulted in deaths. There were five attempted suicides too, said the group which regularly records and tabulates reports of ragging cases from the media.

"This clearly indicates that despite the tall claims made by the Human Resources and Development Ministry, the Union Grant Commission and various regulatory bodies, the situation has not improved," Harsh Aggarwal of CURE said.

"In the last academic session, Andhra Pradesh reported 12 incidents of ragging, including four cases of death and a case of attempted suicide. Punjab, even though a small state, has consistently reported high number of such incidents," he said.

Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, which did not report any ragging cases in the past, recorded high number of incidents this year (6 and 7 respectively).

Among the cases in HP was the death of medical student Aman Kachroo, which caused widespread outrage and prompted the Central and state governments to take a number of anti-ragging measures.

Source: [PTI](#)/ July 21, 2009

### FDI in education can save country billions of dollars

Around **160,000 students** from India are studying abroad

#### **Rs2.5 trillion gap.**

We are spending **\$20 billion (Rs94,800 crore)** by sending your children out

If the Cabinet allows for 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in higher education, it will not only help in providing cheaper yet better quality education but also save India billions of dollars by way of foreign exchange (forex) outgo.

Union Minister for Education Kapil Sibal who, sources close to the development say, is all set to present the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialisation) Bill to the Cabinet for clearance has pointed out that the country's education sector needs **Rs 4 lakh crore**. Thus, he made a strong pitch for greater private investment and

allowing foreign universities with necessary regulatory mechanisms in the sector.

If the Bill is passed, not only will the move bring in the much-needed investment but it will also entice more foreign students to come to India for higher education. Even 50,000 foreign students charged fees at an average rate of \$10,000 per annum would yield **\$500 million (around Rs 2,800 crore)** per annum, according to the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) report.

Moreover, it's estimated that around 160,000 students from India are studying abroad. If their average expenditure on fees and maintenance is \$25,000 per student per year, Indian students are spending around **\$4 billion per annum**, not academics. Many of these students may want to study in India since the costs would be lower.

Besides, Minister of State for Finance Namo Narain Meena admitted in the Rajya Sabha recently that nearly **100,000 Indians held student visa in Australia at the start of the financial year**, and the total global outflow of education-related foreign exchange was more than \$2 billion last year.

On the total forex outflow in terms of overseas students' tuition fees and expenses to Australia, he added that the government does not maintain a detailed country-wise break up of the forex outflow. "Remittance towards tuition fees is a current account transaction and RBI have delegated the powers to authorise dealers to allow remittances towards tuition fees without the prior approval of RBI," he said.

The total forex outflow in terms of education related payments from India to all foreign countries stood at **\$2,247 million in FY'09 (provisional amount)**. The partially revised figures for FY'08 stood at **\$2,827 million**. While, the two fiscal years FY'06 and FY'07 saw an outflow of \$1.1 billion each and the same was \$642 million in fiscal 2004-05.

The HRD ministry admits to not having up-to-date numbers "due to the absence of regulation of foreign education providers." However, in 2004 (the latest data available), there were 131 Indian institutions that collaborated with foreign institutions with Tamil Nadu having the maximum of them — almost 23.

Currently, there are around 31 foreign universities operating in India of which 11 are based in the UK and 13 in the US. Others like the International Management Institute, Europe and National University of Singapore, Merit Swiss Asian School of Hotel Management are also there.

However, there also exist 11 foreign institutions operating under 'twinning' programmes like UK's Glasgow College of Nautical Studies, Queen Margaret University College and Newcastle Business School

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and US' University of South Florida, Ohio University and Western International University, among others.

'Twinning' allows a foreign partner institution to offer the first half of their university degree programmes by replicating segments of the curricula. Through Twinning, students may earn about 60 credit hours in the beginning courses (and general education requirements) of selected majors — example: Business administration, communications, computer science and engineering. In effect, students can complete their freshman and sophomore years without leaving their home country. Students who successfully complete such a twinning program are guaranteed transfer of their credits to the foreign university.

**Source:** [Business standard](#), July 21, 2009

### Deemed Universities

As on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009, One hundred twenty-nine institutions have been declared by the Central Government, under section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act 1956, as institutions 'Deemed-to-be-Universities'. The State wise details are given below:

Sr. No	State States / Union Territory	'Deemed to be University' under section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956
1	Andra Pradesh	7
2	Arunachal Pradesh	1
3	Bihar	2
4	Gujarat	2
5	Haryana	5
6	Jharkhand	2
7	Karnataka	15
8	Kerala	2
9	Madhya Pradesh	3
10	Maharashtra	21
11	Orissa	2
12	Puduchery	1
13	Punjab	3
14	Rajasthan	8

15	Tamil Nadu	29
16	Uttarkhand	4
17	Uttar Pradesh	10
18	West Bengal	1
19	New Delhi	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>129</b>

Institutions 'Deemed to be Universities' are only teaching institutions, and they are not permitted to affiliate any college or institution.

Institutions 'deemed-to-be-universities' have expanded the base of higher education in the country and are offering education and research facilities in various disciplines such as Medical Education, Physical Education, Fisheries Education, Languages, Social Sciences, Population Sciences, Dairy Research, Forest Research, Armament Technology, Maritime Education, Yoga, Music and Information Technology, etc

This information was given by the Minister of State for Human Resource Development Smt. D. Purandeswari, in a written reply to a question, in the Rajya Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/21<sup>st</sup> July, 2009](#)

### Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme Central Government provides:

(1) 100% cost of the following components:

- i. Food grains: Supply of free food grants (wheat/rice) @ 100 grams per child per School Day at Primary classes (I-V) and 150 grams per child per School day at upper primary classes (VI-VIII).
- ii. Transportation: Actual cost of transportation of food grains from nearest FCI godown to the Primary School subject to the ceiling of Rs.125 per Quintal for 11 special category States viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Mianipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal and Rs.75 per quintal for all other States and UTs.
- iii. Management, Monitoring & Evaluation (MME): At the rate of 1.8% of total assistance on (a) free food grains, (b) transport cost and (c) cooking cost. Another 0.2% of the above amount is utilized at the Central Government level for management, monitoring and evaluation.



- iv. One time Central Assistance is provided to States for construction of Kitchen Sheds @ Rs.60,000 per unit and Rs.5000 for procurement/replacement of Kitchen Devices for each school covered under MDM Scheme.

(2) Central Assistance for Cooking Cost on sharing basis. At Primary stage the Central Assistance towards cooking cost per child/school day is Rs.1.89 for NER States provided the States contribute minimum 20 paise and Rs. 1.58 for other States/UTs provided the State/UT contribute minimum 50 paise. At Upper Primary stage the Central Assistance towards cooking cost per child/school day is Rs.2.42 for NER States provided the States contribute minimum 20 paise and Rs.2.10 for other States/UTs.

It is provided in the guidelines that the food prepared is tasted by 2-3 adults including at least one teacher before it is served to children. As and when, any complaint is brought to the notice of the Government, the concerned State Government/UT Administration is asked to conduct suitable enquiry and to take appropriate action against the responsible person(s) and initiate corrective measures to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Human Resource Development Smt. D. Purandeswari, in a written reply to a question, in the Rajya Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)21<sup>st</sup> July, 2009

### UN platform to share knowledge

Today, knowledge knows no boundaries and taking advantage of this, UN agencies in India launched Solution Exchange (SE) to promote knowledge-sharing and collaboration among development practitioners in India. The SE, launched in 2005, is a free service of the UN.

“Development practitioners bring in their knowledge in public domain and connect with peers in government, NGOs, donor agencies, private sector, research institutes and academia. The idea is to leverage India’s knowledge pool so that no one has to reinvent the wheel,” explains Shubhangi Sharma, resource person, Education Community, UN Solution Exchange.

From a pilot initiative in India, the idea of SE has now picked up to spread its outreach in other countries like Thailand, Bhutan and Indonesia.

It is gradually becoming a global initiative under the guidance of UN agencies. As Anand Kumar, coordinator of Solution Exchange, puts it, “the quest

for knowledge is the only qualification for engagement with SE communities.”

Facilitated by different UN agencies as per their mandate in India, the UN SE comprises 13 Communities of Practice (CoPs) based on thematic lines which include education, AIDS, climate change, decentralisation, disaster management, environment, food and nutrition security, gender, maternal and child health, ICT for development, microfinance, water, work and employment. The philosophy behind SE is to help the CoPs attain India’s Development objectives and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The 13 communities under SE currently have a combined membership of over 17,000 members and 31,000 subscriptions. “A two-member resource team manages each community and in addition, each community has an advisory board comprising experts known in the field to guide and help them perform better for the benefit of the larger community focusing on relevant themes,” adds Malika Basu, resource person and moderator, Gender Community.

SE functions in two ways — as a virtual forum, through which members raise issues, share problems and seek answers. In addition to using the electronic platform to encourage a culture of knowledge sharing, various communities of SE also facilitate other interactive (face-to-face) forums such as regional workshops, consultative meetings and thematic seminars. Sharing on various issues among practitioners goes as inputs and guidelines to inform government policies, programme interventions/strategies and advocacy/campaigns.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia.](http://timesofindia.)27<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

### World Class Universities

The Government is considering a proposal to set up 14 Universities aiming at world class standards at the following locations:-

Sl. No.	Location
1	Amritsar(Punjab)
2	Greater Noida (Uttar Pradesh)
3	Jaipur ( Rajasthan)
4	Gandhinagar (Gujarat)
5	Patna (Bihar)

6	Guwahati (Assam)
7	Kolkata (West Bengal)
8	Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)
9	Kochi (Kerala)
10	Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu)
11	Mysore (Karnataka)
12	Pune (Maharashtra)
13	Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh)
14	Bhubhaneshwar (Orissa)

Universities aiming at world class standards would act as exemplars for other universities including Central Universities, in benchmarking standards of teaching and research to those prevailing in the best universities in the world.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Human Resource Development Smt. D. Purandeswari, in a written reply to a question, in the Rajya Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)21<sup>st</sup> July, 2009

### New Research from the Center on Reinventing Public Education

A new study by the Center on Reinventing Public Education finds that many low-income parents would choose to send their children to a better school outside their neighborhood if not for transportation problems.

Over one-third of parents surveyed for the study “considered another school but, facing some transportation challenges, decided to enroll their child in the closest school,” say the authors of [Drivers of Choice: Parents, Transportation, and School Choice](#). These parents are significantly less satisfied with their current school than are parents for whom transportation was not a barrier.

Researchers surveyed 600 parents in two urban school districts (Washington, D.C., and Denver, Colorado), in households with incomes up to \$75,000 a year. The survey tracks choices made by families in light of policies enabling them to choose a school other than the one closest in their neighborhood.

Parents said they chose their child’s school based on academic quality (37%), location and convenience (26%), “environment or feeling” (17%), and special programs (10%).

Overall, 61 percent said they were very satisfied with their child’s school. The higher a family’s income, the more transportation options it has and the higher these parents’ satisfaction, whether their child attends a standard public school, public charter school, or private school.

According to the report:

Most children who attend out-of-neighborhood schools are driven by their parents.

Children attending charter or private schools travel much farther than children going to neighborhood schools.

Many low-income parents say they would let their child travel farther to a better school, if they could.

Furthermore, the study found that few school districts offer innovative transportation programs beyond the standard school bus routes.

To create practical choices for low-income families who favor a school outside their neighborhood, the report suggests better information outreach efforts by school districts, as well as new initiatives such as transportation vouchers, ride-sharing programs, and more flexible use of minivans and taxis.

Paul Teske, Jody Fitzpatrick, and Tracey O’Brien of the University of Colorado Denver conducted the study as part of CRPE’s “Doing School Choice Right” project. Funding was provided by the Lynde and Harry Bradley, Annie E. Casey, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations.

**Source:** [Centre for Reinventing Public Education](#), July 2009

### India No. 2 in sending students abroad

More students than ever before are leaving their homeland to pursue higher studies abroad. The number of these mobile students increased two-and-a-half times between 1975 and 2007, to reach 2.8 million. Two-thirds of these foreign students make a beeline for six countries - the US, UK, France, Australia, Germany and Japan in that order.

Interestingly, Germany and Japan also figure among the top countries of origin of such students. China sends the largest number of students outside (about 421,000 in 2007) followed by India (153,300), Republic of Korea (105,300), Germany (77,500) and Japan (54,500).

The number of female mobile students is increasing at a slightly faster rate, as a result raising their share of the total from 46% to 49%, according to UNESCO’s recent report, ‘Global Education Digest, 2009’. Despite

increasing numbers, the proportion of students going abroad for higher education has remained the same since 1999, approximately 2 out of every 100 students.

Among regions, Western Europe hosts the largest proportion of mobile students, over 41%, followed by North America with 24% and East Asia and Pacific with over 18%. In terms of individual countries, the US hosts the largest proportion, 21%.

A new trend in the flow of mobile students is the preference to stay within their regions of origin. For instance, 77% of students going abroad from West European countries stay within that region, while the corresponding figure for North America is 39%.

Mobile students from South and West Asia are understandably much less likely to stay within their own region - just 1.3%. What seems surprising initially is that this is much lower than even in sub-Saharan Africa, where 23% stay within the region. But that's because most of these students would be concentrated in South Africa, which hosts one out of five mobile students of the region.

Mobile students also now have a wider choice of destinations. For instance, earlier, 71% of mobile Indian students went to the US, 8% to the UK and 7.6% to Australia. Now, the US share of Indian students going abroad is down to 56%. Many more are now going to Australia, Germany, New Zealand and the UK.

Globally too, the US's share has declined. One out of every four mobile students went to the US in 1999. Now, it is down to one out of every five, though in absolute numbers, it has increased from over 450,000 mobile students to nearly 600,000.

Other historically popular destinations like Australia, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand and South Africa now get a larger share of mobile students. Also, countries like China, South Korea and New Zealand have emerged as new popular destinations.

You might be surprised to know that India has a low rate of students going abroad compared to the global average. Just one in every 100 Indian tertiary students studies abroad against the world average of 1.8%.

Source: [The Economic Times](#), 24 July 2009

### Contribute

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If you are an academician, a researcher, an investigator or a thinker then, Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation invites you to send your inputs by way of your opinion, information, suggestions and experiences in the field of education.

Researchers are also invited to send in their published documents so that they can be hosted on this site.

Please email your contributions to [aserf@apeejay.edu](mailto:aserf@apeejay.edu)

**Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation (ASERF)** is guided by the vision of eminent educationist, industrialist and philanthropist Dr. Stya Paul's vision of value-based holistic education for a responsive and responsible citizenship with a finely ingrained attitude of service-before-self. It is supported by Apeejay Stya Group, a leading Industrial & Investment House of India with interests in diverse fields. It will attempt to shoulder the efforts in serving the broader issues of Access, Quality, Equity & Relevance of Education and gear up to face the challenges of the new world order using collaborative and multidisciplinary approach. The foundation will become the repository of information on education and conduct research in new educational methodologies while collaborating with premier educational institutions globally.

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#### **Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation**

**Apeejay Stya House**  
14 Commercial Complex, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, Part - II  
New Delhi - 110048

Tel. No. (91 – 11) 29228296 / 97 / 98  
Fax No. (91 – 11) 29223326

E-mail: [aserf@apeejay.edu](mailto:aserf@apeejay.edu)  
Website: <http://aserf.org.in>