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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 2010. [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.

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**Svrn Group**

**ASPECT****Shadow Over Venus**

*Women have won a number of big victories - and if the Women's Reservation Bill is passed, it could change the face of politics and gender discourse. But also consider: 200 million women who cannot read or write, the largest such number in any country; the sex ratio's a scandal; malnutrition is endemic a vast majority of women are locked into agriculture or low-paid jobs; and crime against them is soaring. Women have come a long way, but not nearly enough, says Subodh Varma...*

India cannot become a mighty superpower until half of its population - 600 million women - is brought on board. Nobody will dispute this. But few realise the extent of human potential currently being squandered by the way society still treats women - shackling them by limited opportunities of education and decent work, locking them up in customary 'duties' that are not far from slavery, and discriminating against them at home and outside. For most people, the fact that we have a woman president, that we have had a woman prime minister, that some of the most powerful CEOs are women, and that our girls have won international beauty crowns, seems to prove that women in India have come into their own, living and working shoulder to shoulder with men. But the reality, like all things Indian, is more complex.

The condition of Indian women has undoubtedly improved since Independence. They have been freed from some of the heinous social practices of the past, are better educated, healthier and getting more paying jobs outside their homes. But, is that enough? Take some of the basic parameters of progress and development, and one finds that lack of education, poor health conditions and discrimination in opportunities of work and incomes still haunt women. While modern thinking and global economic forces have dramatically changed the way women are perceived, they still wear the chains that drag them down. This slows down society as a whole. So deep-rooted are the attitudes, which treat women as second-rate citizens that just identifying them will be a big first step towards rooting them out. If India is to advance, that's the least we will have to do.

**Education & Health**

Though women's literacy has shot up from a shameful 8 per cent at the time of Independence to an estimated 63 per cent now, it still leaves over 200 million of them unable to read and write, the largest such number in any country. There are signs of a gradual breakdown of the traditional belief that there is no need for women to get educated as their objective in life is to remain housebound. Sample this: enrolment in elementary education is almost equal for boys and girls, dropout rates are also nearly the same at primary stages, and the proportion of girls passing Class V is fractionally higher than that of boys. Girls match boys in academic performance, to the extent it can be measured by our examination system.

Yet, a recent NSSO survey found that by the time they are 19 years old, 41 per cent of girls drop out of school. This is apart from the 19 per cent who never attended school, compared to just 9 per cent of boys in this unfortunate category. The survey further reports that the primary reasons given by girls for leaving their studies were, essentially, that education was not considered necessary by elders (14%) and that doing domestic duties (42%) was. The glass ceiling starts within the home itself, and right from childhood. Boys too drop out, but for different reasons and on a smaller scale. The main reason given by boys for dropping out was to supplement family incomes (68%). As a result of this wholesale abandonment of the education system, only about one in 10 girls manages to claw her way up to higher education. And the stamping out of the dream for better education among girls is clearly seen - there are just 62 girls for every 100 boys in colleges and universities, way down from the nearly 90 girls per 100 boys in primary school. The discrimination inflicted upon girls and females is chillingly evident also in the condition of women's health in India. Melodramatic as it may sound, for a vast number of women, their life hangs by a mere thread, and this threat begins before the girl child is born, continuing right through her life.

The plummeting sex ratio in India, especially for the 0-6 years age group, has now become an international scandal. In 1941, the child sex ratio (0-6 years) was 1,047 girls per 1,000 boys. In 2001, the last census, it had sunk to 927 girls for every 1,000 boys. Investigations revealed that female foeticide and infanticide were widely practiced, driven by the traditional desire for a son. Technology became a weapon of choice for this barbaric practice when ultrasound equipment used to study foetal health was transformed into a messenger of death - find out the sex of the baby you are carrying and, if it's a girl, get it aborted.

That this practice was prevalent not just in pockets with widespread poverty or backwardness, but even among families that had better incomes and education came as a sociological shocker. High-income cities like Delhi and Chandigarh or states like Punjab and Haryana had even lower sex ratios than the national average while Dalit and Adivasi communities and poorer regions showed a more humane attitude towards their girl children. Even within metros, it's the more affluent south Delhi, south Mumbai and south Chennai - with greater access to sex determination clinics - where girls were at a discount. Clearly, the preference for sons had taken on a whole new dimension in the context of dowry demands and other forms of greed.

Recent small-scale studies have shown that the declining child sex ratio has been arrested in some regions and cities, although for a complete picture one will have to wait for the 2011 census results. Subject to that caveat, it does seem that strong laws prohibiting sex determination and encouraging economic incentives for girl children, backed by sustained campaigns, have led to some check on foeticide and female infanticide.

However, countless girls as they grow up are often subjected to discrimination in nutrition and health care despite them shouldering an increasing burden of domestic responsibilities. This bias breeds on endemic poverty. Malnutrition rates have been found to be higher among girl children, and even among adolescent girls, prompting the government to launch a special programme for providing supplemental nutrition to them. Its reach, though, is very limited - just about 2 per cent of the estimated 84 million girls in the 11-18 years age group are covered. This sustained deprivation, coupled with excessive burden of work, leads to a shocking consequence - more than half of all married women are anaemic in India, according to the 3rd round of the National Family & Health Survey conducted in 2005-06.

It doesn't help that nearly a third of married women are below 18 years, the legal age for them to get married. This, in turn, leads to a disturbing result - over 54 per cent of pregnant women are anaemic, locking the child they are carrying into a health deficit in the womb itself. Just 23 per cent of pregnant mothers get iron and folic acid supplements, and only about half of them get any antenatal checkup from health workers. With the healthcare delivery system barely beginning to reach villages, weakened mothers give birth to children without trained attendants, triggering high mortality rates for both the mother and the newborn. Despite a huge programme for ensuring institutional deliveries, an abysmal 41 per cent of all deliveries even today are non-institutional.

### **The Workplace**

Breathtaking changes have taken place in the world of women's work, especially in urban areas. Women can now be seen in many more jobs than was imaginable a few decades ago. The ancient and entrenched belief that women are not capable of doing most of so-called men's work has been upturned. In fact, this partly explains the upsurge in girls' education as parents feel that their daughters will fare better in life if they are educated.

In rural India, nearly a third of women do paid work, while in urban areas, where the presence of women is most visible in workplaces, only about 14 per cent are working. Where do women usually go to work? Nearly three quarters of all working women are in agriculture in India, according to an NSSO survey of 2004-05.

What has changed in recent years is the enormous rise of women's employment in the services sector, reflecting a worldwide trend. More than half of all service sector employees are women, mainly concentrated in the 'personal, social and community services' category that includes most of the care-giving work always done by women. A recent analysis of NSSO data by N Neetha of the Centre for Women's Development Studies shows that there has been a massive increase in women working as cooks, governesses, babysitters and maids. Between 1999 and 2004, the number of such workers shot up by over 2 million. A similar increase has been seen in quasi-governmental health and nutrition services employees -

anganwadi employees, health workers, nurses and midwives, etc.

Why are women involved in low-paid care-giving work in such large numbers? This is the traditional role that women do at home - looking after the elderly, the sick and children - and the state has simply extended its ambit to rope women into the same tasks en masse, says Prof Rajni Palriwala, head of Delhi University's sociology department. "This work was unpaid and invisible inside the home. At the societal level, it is very low paid - many of such employees are, in fact, called 'voluntary workers' - and it serves to perpetuate the same old patriarchal system of subjugation," she says.

Going by the official data, women's employment in the organised sector too has grown. But the increase from 11 per cent in 1961 to over 17 per cent in 2007 as shown by the labour ministry data contains a sleight of hand - they are counting over 3.5 million bidi workers and the whole army of care service workers in this category. But even discounting this, women's employment has shown a rise in the manufacturing sector, as several factories prefer to have more pliant women employees. Studies have shown that women tend to be concentrated in the lower rungs of the organisational hierarchy, even in banks and financial institutions.

Tellingly, the unorganised sector has the biggest concentration of women, mostly doing low-paid work under harsh working conditions. According to the National Commission on Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS), there were about 362 million workers here, of which 117 million, that is about a third, were women. Recent years have shown a phenomenal increase in several categories of informal work, including home-based ones, mostly done by women. This is often represented as own-account work or self employment in government data, but actually consists of wage work contracted out by employers at abysmal rates.

Experts believe that the increasing participation of women in work is being driven by several intertwined factors. The biggest driver is economic necessity as families scramble to make ends meet. The dependence on one male breadwinner, with the woman looking after the home, does not appear to be enough to survive, especially in times of galloping inflation. Since women are generally less educated, less experienced and carry the double yoke of doing both domestic and remunerative work, they tend to take up jobs that fit in with their time constraints, even if it is low paying.

In recent decades, much research has been done to analyse the unpaid, invisible work they do across the globe, in all societies. While many countries have carried out extensive surveys to explore the world of unpaid work, there has been only one such Time Use Survey (TUS) in India, carried out by NSSO in 1999. Its results show that women do almost five to six times more of unpaid care work than men. This includes looking after children, sick family members and the elderly, managing the house,

cooking, cleaning, fetching fuel and water (in rural areas mainly) and other allied activities.

Surprisingly, the number of hours spent doing unpaid care work was found to be higher in urban areas. As basic facilities like energy and water supply are provided for, and there are no fields or cattle to look after, urban women, despite being more educated and advanced, tend to get more housebound - traditional thinking doesn't allow them to work outside. Some analysts refer to it as the curse of 'housewifism'.

It is often argued that there is a natural and fair division of labour between the sexes - men go out to work in the big bad world, while women handle the domestic front. TUS data shows that even when women are working in paid jobs outside their homes, they do most of the housework. A working woman does nearly 5 hours of care work at home compared to about 6 hours by an 'unemployed' housewife.

### **Crime against Women**

What truly exposes the ingrained, and unchanged nature of attitudes towards women is the accelerating violence against them even as society supposedly gets more enlightened. While violence was always an instrument used to suppress women, recent trends show a dramatic rise in crimes like rape, molestation, abduction and kidnapping. Data from roughly a decade since 1996 shows over 30-40 per cent increase in all these crimes. Compare this with the 16 per cent increase in all cognisable crimes under the Indian Penal Code.

While some of the more barbaric practices like sati have been stamped out by law (though not totally eliminated), the latter half of the 20th century brought in another shocking atrocity committed with increasing frequency against women - bride burning because of dowry demands. In just the last decade, deaths of young brides caused by husbands or their relatives have more than doubled, while reported cases of cruelty by husbands/relatives have shown a similar trend.

It is often argued that this rise in numbers is taking place not because of an actual increase, but simply because the reporting system is getting better. While this may indeed be contributing to some extent, the larger reality is that the police tend to always under-record cases, often actively discouraging women complainants. The available figures, therefore, may just be the tip of the iceberg.

### **Why this increase in crime and violence against women?**

Analysts believe that as tradition-bound practices and belief systems crack up under pressure from economic changes and women try to become less submissive and pliant, the entrenched ideology of male domination desperately fights against what it sees as a threat. And, the primary weapon for that is violence.

Empowerment of women is a work in progress. There are fundamental economic processes that are bringing it about, helped along, often reluctantly, by institutional or

legal measures. Women's movements and rights groups are often driving these changes in social-legal frameworks. But for the true potential of women to be unleashed in India a drastic change is needed in the attitudes of society.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Times of India/](#)6 March 2010

## NEWS

### **Higher education sector poised for quantum jump**

Orissa's higher education sector is poised for a quantum jump in the Eleventh Plan going by the latest UGC forecast.

It has projected that enrollment would clock a compounded annual growth rate of 7.5 per cent to touch over 6.5 lakh of an over 50 lakh population in the 18-23 year age group by the year 2012. The overall gross enrollment rate (GER) - the ratio of total enrollment to the total population in the age group of 18-23 years - would be 13 per cent. Consequently, additional enrollment in the 11th Plan period would be over 2.6 lakh. The forecast, however, has indicated that Orissa's GER would remain well below the national average of 15 per cent.

One of the reasons would be as high as 18 districts are still educationally backward districts. In Orissa's case, the EBDs have either a predominant tribal population or are forested regions. Fourteen of the EBDs have over 25 per cent rural tribal population with five of them having over 58-59 per cent forest cover. Another three districts have over 40 per cent forest cover.

Significantly, the State's chief industrial centres like Angul, Jharsuguda, Keonjar, Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur that, incidentally, have predominant tribal population are listed in the EBD category contrary to the national trend. This does not augur well for Government's industrial drive.

Inequitable growth is further evidenced by the fact that the college population index (C-PI) (colleges per lakh population) in Orissa is 17.6 against 12.4 nationally. But, nine districts have the index much below the 12 colleges per lakh population.

Two districts have C-PI even below four and two others have below eight. Thus, lower GER is on account of unavailability of qualitatively affordable higher education opportunities.

If statistics are any indication, the inequity is set to get accentuated in the 11th Plan. Because, as per the population norm of a University per two lakh population, Orissa would require a whopping 25 universities for its 50 lakh student population in the age-group of 18-23 years by 2012. There are nine at present.

Also, for the additional 2.6 lakh general enrolment by 2012, the State needs over 200 more general colleges.

Thus, to supply the manpower requirement of the industries in the State, the Government has to seek holistic solutions for the EBDs here.

**Source:** Bhubaneswar [/Express Buzz/](#)1 March 2010

### Central University set to go Global

Central University of Karnataka will soon have a curriculum of international standards, besides teachers from other countries.

University Grants Commission (UGC) has asked central universities to hire teachers from outside the country for a year or two. "In view of this, we visited three universities in Canada, from where we will take inputs for designing curriculum for courses like MBA, M Com, etc. In course of time, there'll be a faculty exchange programme," Central University vice-chancellor A M Pathan said on Monday.

To start with, faculty from the Central University will visit universities abroad. "We are working on developing the infrastructure. Once that is done, we will have faculty from abroad too. At a later stage, there will be a student exchange programme," he said.

Infrastructure will be upgraded by next July and the campus is expected to be ready by 2012. The university is also trying to provide hostel facilities for students within the campus, the V-C said.

Recruitment of non-teaching staff in the first phase has been completed. Teaching posts sanctioned by UGC have already been notified and the recruitment process is under way.

Five UG honours programmes and one PG course have been already launched. Four more PG programmes — MBA, M Com, MA (Kannada), Literature and culture, and MSc (geo-spatial application in regional development) — have been approved.

According to the V-C, there is continuous internal assessment and development of curricular contents and establishment of inter-disciplinary doctoral and post-doctoral programmes leading to PhD and post-doctoral research.

Students are also taken on trips to institutions of national importance and reputed universities both within and outside Karnataka. Students of MA English and M Phil were sent for training in the language labs of English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, British Council and University of Hyderabad.

**Source:** Bangalore /[Times of India](#)/2 March 2010

### After 3 years, IISER gets new campus in Mohali

The Knowledge City at Sector 81, Mohali, which was conceptualised by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here on September 27, 2006, has got ready with the partial campus of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER).

IISER is one of the six national premier institutes of higher education coming up in Knowledge City spread over 381 acres of land.

After working from the transit campus in Chandigarh for the last three years, IISER would open its Central Analytical Facility (CAF) at its permanent new campus coming up on 125 acres of land here on Wednesday.

Chairman, Board of Governors, IISER, Prof P Rama Rao, who is a renowned scientist and former Secretary to Union Department of Science and Technology, would inaugurate the facility, disclosed IISER Director N Sathyamurthy, who is also vice-president of the Indian National Science Academy.

The ongoing classes of IISER would, however, continue at its transit campus in Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration (MGSIPA), Sector 26, Chandigarh, till the next academic session begins in July next year, IISER Coordinator Dr Jagdeep Singh said.

He divulged that the hostels block at the new campus would be ready by June and residences for faculty by August this year while the entire campus building would be built by July next year.

To begin with, IISER's new campus is ready with the CAF building, which will host many sophisticated instrumentation and experimental facilities such as high-field, high-resolution Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectrometers, X-Ray diffractometers, Laser Raman, SNOM instrument, Ultra-Fast Laser lab and Cryogenics lab.

The NMR research facility will open up new horizons for interdisciplinary research ranging from Structural Biology to Quantum Computing. At present, the facility houses two state-of-the-art Ultra-High field NMR spectrometers (400MHz and 600MHz) with custom-designed sophisticated RF probes, provision for an auto-sampling facility and low-temperature facility. Both machines have been supplied by Bruker Biospin in Switzerland.

The 600MHz NMR spectrometer is custom-built for cutting-edge research. This machine is the first-of-its-kind in this region and IISER NMR research facility is poised to contribute significantly to research in this area and embark upon collaborative inter-disciplinary research with other institutions like IMTECH in the region. The CAF is housed in a specially-designed magnet hall building.

IISER was established by the Union Human Resource Development Ministry to carry out research in frontier areas of science and provide quality science education at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. IISER's primary mandate is to perform cutting-edge research in all areas of the basic sciences.

Besides an ultra-fast femto-second laser facility and a low-temperature cryogenics laboratory, a supercomputing Linux-based cluster is being planned as part of IISER's computing facility and is in the preliminary stages of implementation.

At present, IISER has facilities for human and animal tissue culture, climate controlled chambers, complete drosophila facility, state-of-the-art protein expression and purification system.

For 166 students of Masters in Science dual degree five-year integrated programme and 34 PhD scholars on rolls, a total of 32 faculty members were serving in IISER at present. The present total number of 100 seats in MS would be raised to 200 while the total number of PhD

scholars would be raised to 1,000, for whom 200 faculty members and 220 non-teaching staffers would be serving IISER.

**Source:** Mohali /[Indian Express](#)/3 March 2010

### **DFID's New Education Strategy: Tough on Ignorance but not Tough Enough on the Causes of Ignorance**

The Department for International Development (DFID) issues today its new education strategy, designed in particular to educate the 72 million children who currently don't go to primary school, and the 300-400 million who get inadequate schooling. There are welcome proposals to build at least 15,000 classrooms a year; train at least 130,000 teachers a year (although the world needs another 10.3 million teachers by 2015); and raise DFID spending on education to over £1 billion a year.

But the strategy is almost all about the supply of education places and the quality of teaching – and access and quality are simply not the reason so many children currently don't get an education. To tackle that would require a challenge to child labour: and as so often, DFID ignores the labour standards element of poverty reduction. The ILO estimates that there are 218 million children in work – over 100 million of them girls, as the strategy acknowledges in its only reference to the issue of child labour. They won't be lured into education by a newly built classroom or a new teacher. DFID needs a strategy for abolishing child labour in the countries where it works, in line with ILO conventions it says it supports, or it will fail to achieve its laudable goal of quality basic education for all.

There are, in its 53 pages, a lot of good proposals (not all about primary or secondary schooling, but skills training and higher education too) and a genuine commitment to attain the Millennium Development Goals for education. The level of detail (especially on funding) is impressive and will be helpful in keeping DFID to its commitments. But the gaps aren't all just minor elisions that couldn't be fitted in.

One other glaring omission is the role of teacher and other education unions. It's obviously welcome news that DFID understand the need for more teachers, although one of the case studies suggesting that contract teachers are cheaper than permanent employees won't go down well with the profession, and the scale of the challenge is daunting (and along with teachers, other staff are needed to make education for all a reality). DFID plan to train 650,000 new teachers by 2015 but the world needs 15 times that many, not all of whom can be trained up by other rich country development agencies. But to put DFID's strategy into action will require engaged allies, and education unions have a key part to play. There is a welcome reference to working with teacher unions to develop national teacher development plans, underpinned by teacher audits, but much more could be done.

Teacher unions will also be looking to ensure that the positive proposals on quality translate into proper training for the teachers supposed to deliver the strategy – you

can't give kids a quality education if the training standards don't match up. Unqualified, underqualified teachers or even 'pupil' teachers won't be good enough.

**Source:** [Touch Stone Blog](#)/ 3 March 2010

### **IIMs hike aid for students with dreams but no money**

The Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are taking their resolve to make education on their campuses more inclusive a step further by increasing the size of scholarship disbursements and financial aid to needy students even as tuition fees have gone up substantially over the past few years.

Currently, the institute charges Rs 11 lakh for the two-year programme in business management; three years ago, fees were at Rs 4-5 lakh. From 2004-05 to 2007-08, the size of financial aid each year was about Rs 20 lakh, but went up to Rs 1.8 crore in 2009-10," says professor Prashant Mishra, chairman, PGP, IIM Calcutta.

"Financial aid allows such students to go for higher studies or start their own ventures where remuneration might not be good. Thus, they won't have to worry about furnishing a loan," adds Mr Mishra.

The IIMs have increased their fees over the past few years in an attempt to accommodate the 27% increase in the other backward caste quota and a rise in general category students on campus.

However, the number of students securing financial aid has also gone up to 126 last year from 21 in 2007.

The aim, as the institutes see it, is to make management education available to more people. "A large section of our population faces not just economic deprivation but also social deprivation because they don't get to bond with the best minds," says Debashish Chatterjee, director, IIM Kozhikode.

At IIM Ahmedabad, the disbursement figure between 2008 and 2010 has crossed Rs 7.61 crore from Rs 5 crore in the previous two years. The institute has over 250 students in the two-year post graduate programme who are being given financial aid.

IIM Bangalore, too, increased its disbursement from Rs 1.9 crore in 2008 to Rs 4.4 crore. "One of the reasons why it was crucial for me to get financial aid was because I had already taken a loan to pursue my engineering degree. This made me ineligible for obtaining another loan for management studies. Luckily, my education at IIMB was not compromised due to financial reasons," says a first year student at IIM Bangalore.

The younger IIMs, like IIM Kozhikode, too are not far behind. The institute increased its allocation from Rs 1.06 crore for the 2010 batch to Rs 1.21 crore for the 2011 batch.

The institute has also started a centre called Crest, which trains engineers and graduates who come from less privileged backgrounds, to enter IIMs. IIM Indore is planning to spend about 8-10% of its earnings as

scholarship for students in the coming school year. IIM Lucknow spent more than Rs 40 lakh on financial aid in 2009.

**Source:** Mumbai [/Economic Times/](#)3 March 2010

### University body opposed to NCHER

The state government on Wednesday opposed the Centre's decision to set up the National Commission for Higher Education and Research, describing it as an attempt to curb the autonomy of universities.

A state government representative told visiting officials of the human resource development ministry — touring the country to collect feedback on the plan — that formation of the higher education regulator would lead to “over centralisation” of powers.

According to the central plan, the commission would replace the University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

Members of the national taskforce that is advising the Centre on the move tried to allay the state government's fears.

“The proposed bill is aimed at giving more freedom.... It aims to provide more autonomy by removing the centralised powers vested on agencies like the UGC, AICTE and the NCTE,” said M. Miri, a member of the taskforce.

The taskforce members held met senior state government officials, vice-chancellors, university teachers and academicians on Wednesday to discuss the issue.

“We have visited many states, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and those in the Northeast. But we faced maximum resistance in Bengal,” said Begum Sahida Hameed, a Planning Commission member who is part of the taskforce.

“Provisions in the bill make it mandatory for universities to get the authorisation of the commission on various academic issues like granting of a degree. The ambiguities need to be removed,” said Subimal Sen, the Chairman of the West Bengal State Higher Education Council.

**Source:** Kolkata [/Telegraph India/](#)4 March 2010

### Govt. to set up finance corporation for education loans

The government on Friday said it proposes to set up a National Education Finance Corporation (NEFC) to finance entities interested in setting up educational institutions on easier terms and conditions.

Replying to questions in the Rajya Sabha, Human Resources Development Minister Kapil Sibal said NEFC will provide loans for infrastructure development and expansion of education institutions as well as for refinance facility for student loans.

“We are talking to the Planning Commission as it is just a proposal as of now. If NEFC is established, private, aided and government institutions will have access to it for finance on the pattern of soft loans or at priority sector lending rate, that are not available to the sector at present,” Mr. Sibal said.

“At the moment under the present policy framework, if you want to set up new educational institutions, banks lend at commercial rates as HRD is not considered under infrastructure by the Supreme Court,” Mr. Sibal said adding, it comes under “charity” giving State governments the right to control fees.

Once it is set up, loans would be made available to interested entities, and students will not have to “sell family silver for education” he said, adding, “My ministry is extremely keen on that proposal as presently only 12 children reach college out of 100 enrolled in schools.”

Replying to another query, he said the NEFC would have no role in recognition of educational institutions which is done by the University Grants Commission and the AICTE.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Beta. The Hindu/](#)5 March 2010

### Buses to carry computer education to village school

The Pune zilla parishad (ZP) will introduce a novel pilot project that involves buses carrying computers visiting ZP-run schools in rural areas to impart computer education.

The project, dubbed computers on wheels', will be launched in Purandar tehsil from the next academic session. Based on the experience here, the initiative will be extended to the rest of the district.

As part of the effort, five buses equipped with 16 computers and generator back-up will visit the schools. Two teachers will also accompany the vehicles.

In a single day, each bus will call on two schools and will wait at each school for at least four hours. Students from classes V to VIII will be taught during the trips.

Pune ZP chief executive officer Sanjiv Kumar said: "The proposal for this project received the Union government's in-principle approval recently. We expect the final approval soon. However, the project will begin only from the next academic year as we need time for preparations."

Kumar said although computer education is currently a part of the curriculum, there no trained teachers. "Besides, the computers at the schools are insufficient. Power cuts are also a major concern also. This initiative, however, will help overcome these constraints," he stated.

Funds of Rs 60 lakh have been approved for the project. The pilot project will run for 6 to 8 months, the official added.

The buses will be acquired from PMPML and will be modified to house the computers. Plans are also on to carry advertisements on the vehicles to earn revenue.

**Source:** Pune [/Times of India/](#)6 March 2010

**Highest ever allocation for higher education sector**

The budget presented by Finance Minister Thomas Isaac on Friday augurs well for the higher education sector. The allocation given to the higher education sector is the highest ever in the state's history.

This marked a clear deviation from the prevailing trend. The withdrawal of the state from the higher education sector has been the 'fashion' since the 1990's. The Finance Minister set apart Rs 121 crore for higher education sector.

This amount is in addition to the funds earmarked for Kerala Agriculture University and technical education. This is an increase of 112 percent. Last year, it was only Rs 57 crore. This should be viewed in the context of the average annual expenditure for higher education during the period 2001-02 to 2005-06, which was Rs 23 crore per year.

The normal annual increase in non-plan grant earlier was 10 percent.

However, no substantial increase was there during the period 2001-02 to 2005-06. As against the expenditure of Rs 479 crore in 2001-02, the expenditure in 2005-06 was only Rs 486 crore. This was the root cause of the financial crisis in the higher education sector.

However, the situation changed recently. An amount of Rs 796 crore was given to the higher education under non-plan in 2009-10.

One of the major announcements in the budget for the higher education sector was the implementation of UGC scales in the State. All the conditions in the UGC scheme, except raising the pension age, will be implemented as a package.

The Finance Minister also announced that no relaxation will be allowed in academic norms. The issue of granting retrospective effect for the implementation of the UGC scale will be decided later depending on the availability of Central funds.

**Source:** Trivendram [/Express Buzz/](#)6 March 2010

**Delhi Govt. faces SC ire for vacant principals' posts**

The Delhi government on Tuesday came under severe criticism for failing to fill up 19 posts of principals that fell vacant in 2007.

The Supreme Court lashed out at the government's education department and ordered an inquiry into the lapses, saying the delay amounted to destruction of fundamental right to education under Article 21.

A bench headed by Justice Dalveer Bhandari directed the Delhi Chief Secretary to submit a report within four weeks. The detailed report has to identify the officers responsible for not filling up the posts and indicate the action proposed against them.

As the government admitted its fault in not responding to Union Public Services Commission's (UPSC) letter in August 2007 seeking clarification for over two years, the

court directed the inquiry report must indicate each erring officers' role, along with name and designation. "Nobody should be spared. Not even the senior officers," the bench warned the government counsel while hearing a public interest litigation filed by advocate Ravinder Bana.

It noted down with anguish the large number of vacancies in teaching staff — 251 principals, 529 PGTs, 5,485 TGTs, 72 domestic science teachers and 392 laboratory assistants — in government-run schools in Delhi.

**Swift action on other front**

Within days of a court reprimand, the Delhi Government swung into action and filled up 50 per cent of the teachers' vacancies in its schools. Subsequent to a Supreme Court order on February 17, *the state administration convened several meetings to fill up 355 of the 529 vacancies of senior teachers.*

*Of the 5,485 vacancies in the trained graduate category, the promotion committee filled up 3,008 vacancies.* It promoted assistant teachers of the MCD, directorate of education (DoE) and its lab assistants to the posts.

*With regard to the 251 vacancies of principals, the government has already met UPSC, which has promised to complete the process within a time bound framework, preferably by June 2010.*

**Source:** Hindustan Times; Wed, Mar 10 01:30 PM

**9 Pvt. varsities face charges of violating UGC norms**

Nine private universities are facing complaints of violating the regulations of University Grants Commission (UGC), the Lok Sabha was told today.

They are functioning outside their territorial jurisdiction or within the territorial jurisdiction without the approval of UGC, Minister of State for HRD D Purandeswari said in a written reply.

These institutions are Amity University, Uttar Pradesh, ICFAI University, Dehradun, Global Open University, Nagaland, Eastern Institute for Integrated Learning in Management University, Sikkim, Sikkim Manipal University of Health Medical and Technological Sciences, Gangtok, Singhanian University, Jhunjhunu, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun, Himgiri Nabh Vishwavidyalaya, Dehradun and Integral University, Lucknow.

Private universities established by state legislatures are governed by the UGC (Establishment of and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities) Regulations, 2003.

Himgiri Nabh Vishwavidyalaya, Dehradun has closed down its off campus centre outside its territorial jurisdiction, Purandeswari said.

**Source:** New Delhi [/ptinews.com/](#)10 March 2010

**Erosion of federal space in education**

The Central government is implementing reforms unilaterally, as though education is in the Union List. This

infringes the federal spirit of the Constitution and the objective of promoting harmony in variety.

A spate of reforms in the field of education, some of them already implemented and some awaiting implementation, have brought the subject of education into the focus of public debate. These include the abolition of examinations at the Class X level, the unification of syllabi of higher secondary courses and the introduction of a national common entrance examination. Moves towards public-private-partnership in education, the legislation on the Right to Education, the proposal to create a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), and steps towards compulsory accreditation, foreign direct investment and prevention of unfair practices also come in the same genre.

To be fair, education is getting the attention that is due for it from the Central government for the first time since the great initiatives in institution-building in the post-Independence period. There is some recognition of the role that education plays in national development. There is a significant national consensus on the three broad objectives of enhancing access, equity and excellence. An increased awareness of the pivotal role of education in national development finds reflection in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The overall financial allocation for education is five times that of the Tenth Plan. The Prime Minister is justified in calling the Eleventh Plan an education plan.

While there are no two views on the need for changes in the system of education with a view to increasing access, equity and quality, the nation is divided on the direction of the changes and the modalities for their implementation. Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal was on record as having said that he would do for the educational sector in 2009 what Manmohan Singh did for the financial sector in 1991. The Minister does not conceal his neo-liberal agenda. While Manmohan Singh had introduced the policies of liberalisation in the 1990s almost stealthily and apologetically, Mr. Sibal is brimming with confidence, giving the impression of an honest and well-meaning reformer.

But honesty is not enough in the determination of educational policies. Education concerns all the people. Different individuals and groups have different concerns in education, which have to be reconciled in policy planning and implementation. It is the primary responsibility of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to provide a common platform to contest ideas and aspirations, on the basis of which a consensual agenda of action could be evolved and implemented. It appears that Mr. Sibal continues to act more as an attorney than a judge in these matters.

The confusion between the neo-liberal commitments of the Minister and the inclusive aspirations of the people was nowhere more apparent than in the conflicting statements made by Mr. Sibal on the question of the fee structure of students and the salaries of private school teachers. At a meeting of school Principals in Delhi, he declared that

private schools in Delhi would be free to charge fees and pay teachers as they liked, once the Right to Education Act came into force. The Delhi State Act that regulates the fee structure and salaries would be rendered inoperative by the Central legislation. But following a volley of protests from the people, he had to clarify the next day that the Delhi State Act would continue to be in force. What the incident brought out was the Minister's divided loyalties. He had a fleeting realisation that his personal and party loyalties to the ideology of liberalisation are at odds with the aspirations of the large majority of the people, to whom he is ultimately answerable.

The sad part is that such instances where the voice of the people is recognised are few and far between. In this instance, the response to public opinion was instantaneous, as protests emanated in Delhi itself. But India is a vast country and all the people cannot come to Delhi to impress upon the MHRD about their reservations on decisions that adversely affect them. Hence, a healthy solution to the problem lies in decentralising the process of policy making and implementation. Unfortunately, the MHRD is moving in the opposite direction, at a very fast pace.

Take, for instance, the decision to enforce a common syllabus, textbooks and examination for Plus-Two courses. The National Curriculum Framework 2005, drafted under the chairmanship of Professor Yash Pal, observed that the "*pluralistic and diverse nature of Indian society*" demanded the preparation of "*a variety of textbooks and other materials*" to "*cater to the diverse needs of different groups of students*" so as to "*promote children's creativity, participation and interest and thereby enhancing their learning.*" In pursuance of the objective, the States were encouraged to develop their own curriculum framework in a participative manner. The lead that Kerala took in framing the Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF) through large-scale people's participation extending to the panchayat level received acclaim. Now Mr. Sibal wants to do a *volte face*, that too without the sanction of a new curriculum framework. This will amount to undermining the structural and curricular reforms initiated during the term of the first United Progressive Alliance government. The administrative convenience that a centralised common entrance examination will provide is touted as the excuse. The objective of education is reduced to coaching students for competitive examinations, conducted in a rigid framework. The idea of education as an inclusive process of unleashing the creative potential of diverse groups and individuals, leading to the creation of harmony in variety, which Professor Yash Pal dreamt of, is lost in the process.

The story of the legislation to set up the NCHER is no different. While the broad administrative objective of bringing all educational activities within a single central regulatory framework as suggested by the National Knowledge Commission and the Yash Pal Committee have only been partially met (as medical and agricultural education are kept out of the Commission's purview), the academic objective of giving greater autonomy to universities, colleges, teachers and students have been

ignored. The heart of the problem lies in the failure to define autonomy and accountability as the academics' freedom to do what society expects them to do. Such an understanding would necessitate appropriate Central and State regulations, leaving room for academic initiatives and administrative flexibility at the institutional and individual level. The proposed NCHER Bill unfortunately tends to centralise powers in the hands of a few experts, who would be invisibly but effectively controlled by the Central government, leaving little role for States in higher education.

The framers of the Constitution, exposed to the trauma of Partition and divisive domestic demands posing challenges to the unity and integrity of the nation, conceived a constitutional framework with a unitary slant. Still, they left education in the State List, obviously in appreciation of India's cultural, geographical and religious plurality. Education was moved to the Concurrent List during the Emergency through strong-arm tactics. Nevertheless, it was done constitutionally, at least in form, through an amendment to the Constitution.

Now decisions are being taken by the Central government unilaterally, as though education is in the Union List. In the process it is usurping some of the powers for policy making and regulation that the States enjoyed. The federal spirit of the Constitution is infringed upon in the process. The objective of promoting harmony in variety through a pluralistic educational system is also defeated.

**Source:** [/Beta. The Hindu/](#)10 March 2010

### **Cabinet to discuss five education reform bills today**

Education is likely to dominate Thursday's meeting of the Union Cabinet as it may take up five Bills -- four new and one amendment Bill -- by HRD ministry, all related to higher education. All the new Bills are part of HRD minister Kapil Sibal's plan to revamp higher education.

If cleared, HRD wants to introduce all the new Bills next week. Likely to be referred to Parliament's Standing Committee, the ministry expects them to be passed in the monsoon session.

The four new Bills are foreign education providers Bill, educational tribunal Bill, accreditation Bill and prohibition of educational malpractices Bill. The one to be amended is the Architects Act. Though the educational malpractices Bill was not on the Cabinet agenda, sources said the ministry is working to ensure that it finds place in the Cabinet's supplementary agenda.

Of the four new Bills, three related to accreditation, the Cabinet to an eight-member Group of Ministers, which has cleared all of them, earlier referred malpractices and tribunal.

The foreign education providers Bill that has been in the offing for more than three years will be back in the Cabinet with some basic changes. HRD ministry has left it for the Cabinet to decide issues like status of foreign universities. Since the term 'deemed university' will soon cease to

exist, it is likely that any foreign education provider interested in setting up a campus in India will have to approach the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research.

The malpractices Bill has a list of 25 educational malpractices and any institute found indulging in them can attract a hefty fine and sentence of up to three years. The malpractices include demanding capitation fee, giving wrong information about faculty and facilities, overcharging students through information brochure, non-transparent admission procedure and other such related activities.

The amendment in the Architects Act seeks to take away academic functions from the Council of Architecture and limits it only to controlling the profession.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Times of India/](#)11 March 2010

### **NAAC approval**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) will not provide financial aid to the government-aided degree colleges and universities which have not undergone assessment by the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC). The new rule of the UGC will be enforced from the next year. Hence, it is important for all the state universities, government-aided colleges and government colleges to get NAAC assessment as early as possible within this year.

This information was given by Prof M K Mishra, vice-chancellor, Lucknow University, on Friday, while addressing principals of 183 government-aided colleges who were invited to take part in a day-long workshop organised jointly by the state higher education commission and the NAAC. The workshop was meant to explain the principal importance of the NAAC assessment and how to apply for it. So far, 12 state universities, 17 government colleges out of total 125 in the state and 103 government-aided colleges out of total 345 have completed NAAC assessment.

Clearly, the state higher education council has a huge task ahead to motivate remaining 108 government colleges and 242 government-aided colleges to apply and get NAAC assessment in 2010. If it fails to do so, these colleges will not get any financial assistance from the UGC for development. However, the state government had directed colleges in 2008 itself to prepare themselves for NAAC assessment. Thereafter, UGC's e Academic Staff College situated in the Lucknow University held series of workshops to help colleges get NAAC assessment.

Now seeing the urgency of the matter, the state higher education council has expedited the process. While a workshop was held for the principals of the government colleges on Thursday, it was the turn of government-aided colleges on Friday. The principals were told about the importance of NAAC assessment and how to prepare self study reports for NAAC evaluation. Principals of the government-aided cited lack of funds, teachers and infrastructure as the three main reasons for not being able to deliver quality education to the students.

Nearly, 3000 posts of total 14,000 sanctioned for government-aided colleges are said to be vacant. Over 14 lakh students are enrolled in these colleges. The teacher-taught ratio is 1:100, whereas it should ideally be 1:60. Also, principals complained about lack of infrastructure and funds. However, the state government has assured principals that vacant teaching seats will be filled as early as possible. Further, principals have been asked to utilise various development schemes launched for improving higher education in the state.

**Source:** Lucknow /[Times of India](#)/13 March 2010

### Foreign university bill gets Cabinet nod

Government on Monday approved a bill to allow foreign education providers set up campuses in India and offer degrees.

The Foreign Educational Institution (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010, was cleared by the Union Cabinet presided by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. This paves way for its introduction in Parliament.

"This is a milestone which will enhance choices, increase competition and benchmark quality," HRD minister Kapil Sibal said after the approval of the bill by the cabinet.

The bill seeks to regulate the entry and operation of foreign institutions, which will set up centre and offer degrees in India.

This bill was hanging fire for over last four years owing to opposition from various quarters, including the Left parties, over certain provisions. Last year, it was referred to a Committee of Secretaries which brought modifications to certain provisions earlier existed.

The bill was approved by the Cabinet without any change on Monday.

The proposed law prescribes eight-month time bound format for granting approval to foreign educational institutions to set up campuses. They will go through different levels of registration process during this period and will be finally registered with UGC or any other regulatory body in place.

The regulatory body in higher education, either UGC or any other body that would replace UGC, will scrutinise the proposals of aspiring institution as per India's priorities and advice government whether to allow the institute operate in India.

Sibal has already said that quota laws will not be applicable to foreign universities setting up campuses in India.

Though 100 per cent foreign direct investment through automatic route is permitted in the education sector since 2000, the present legal structure in India does not allow granting of degrees by foreign educational institutions here.

The proposed law would facilitate the globally- renowned institutes to participate in India's higher education sector. It

will bring in foreign education providers for vocational education training also.

The foreign education providers bill is one of the major reforms bills of the HRD ministry.

A revolution larger than the one in the telecom sector awaits the education sector, Sibal said.

Three other reforms bills, which were slated to be taken up in the Cabinet, were deferred to the next meeting. These are -- Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, Educational Tribunal Bill and Accreditation Bill.

A Group of Ministers (GoM) has already cleared these three reforms bills.

**Source:** New Delhi /[Times of India](#)/15 March 2010

## ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

### Educational Reforms: Issues of Quality and Equity

'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009', that has come into force after the relevant Bill was passed by Parliament, and the recommendations of the Bansal Committee appointed by the Government of Maharashtra for the regulation of fees charged by non-aided schools are two important measures for educational reforms discussed in this article.

#### Fee Fixation by Unaided Institutions

Recent measures to introduce educational reforms have put into sharp focus issues of quality versus equity.

Taking cognisance of commercialisation of education and profiteering by unaided schools, the Education Department of Maharashtra set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Smt Kumud Bansal, the former Education Secretary, to suggest norms for fixing fees. The Committee was set up as per the interim orders of the Bombay High Court in a writ petition in the case of Students Welfare Association versus Maharashtra Government.

The unaided schools constitute only 10 per cent of the schools in Maharashtra the remaining 90 per cent are either run by local bodies or are aided. In these latter categories of schools, no fees are charged.

The Committee has conceded at the very outset that the unaided schools, many of them affiliated to the National Board like the CBSE, have as their objective excellence in learning. They aim at holistic development of the students through curricular and co-curricular activities. The Committee took the view that the institutions should continue to have autonomy in matters like admission of students, recruitment of teachers and other staff, and determination of fees. However, in the name of autonomy, the schools should not indulge in profiteering for the purpose of personal gain or business enterprise. Some guidelines regarding norms for determination of fees have, therefore, to be laid down.

In prescribing these norms, the Committee was guided by the Supreme Court judgement governing the fees of unaided educational institutions, namely, T.M.A. Pai Foundation versus State of Karnataka (2002), Islamic Academy of Education versus State of India (2004) and P.A. Inamdar versus State of Maharashtra (2005).

The Committee recommended that the fees could be so fixed as to allow generation of reasonable surplus up to 15 per cent of total revenues. Surplus is defined as the difference between total revenue of the institution and total admissible expense. Total revenue include fees and other income, if any, while admissible expenses are defined as those contributing to the imparting of quality education to students.

The most important point that arises in this context is that while some parents complain about high fees charged by unaided schools, they nevertheless do not avail of free education offered by the government-run or aided schools but instead flock to unaided schools because of their perception that while the quality of government-run or aided schools is poor, it is high in unaided schools.

I had a recent experience of seeing how desperate the parents are in getting a seat for their child in an unaided school. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Pune Kendra runs two nurseries, two elementary schools, and a secondary school. These schools have won a high reputation for quality education. Yet compared to other unaided schools, the fees are much lower. No wonder the 'under-pricing', according to the market conditions, invites retribution. For a small number of less than hundred seats, some 1000 parents stood in the queue to seek admission forms. Such was the desperation amongst the parents for getting this much-coveted form for admission in the nursery school that some parents came on the previous evening spending the whole night out sleeping in shivering cold all through the night. Since the forms to be issued had to be limited in view of the limited number of seats, hundreds of parents had to go disappointed. In their desperation they blamed the school for not issuing the forms and the local Shiv Sena unit even issued a threat. But if forms had been distributed to all, the same people would have blamed the school authorities for profiteering from the sale of forms (even here our charge for a form is less than what is charged by other schools). It is distressing that even parents who cannot afford to pay the fees of unaided schools shun the free education offered in government schools and flock to unaided schools.

It is high time the Education Department of government concentrates on improving the quality of their own schools rather than seeking to regulate unaided schools and harass them in the name of regulation. The government does not even disburse grants in a timely manner. The proposal to set up an Apex Committee at the State level to fix fees for each school is palpably impractical and would do more harm than good.

The idea that fixation of fees should have the approval of the Parent Teachers Association cannot also be stretched

too far. The idea that each item of expenditure should be open to PTA scrutiny and that the management should explain and be answerable for each item in the balance-sheet of the profit-and-loss account is not workable. It would throttle the working of the institution and render it non-functional. All that can be done is to take parents into confidence through the PTA and give reasonable thought to the suggestions made by the PTA. After all, the PTA is not responsible for the running of the school. This is the work of the school authorities and management.

The Bansal Committee has frankly stated that excellence is the key objective of unaided schools (not all should be labelled as 'private' – schools of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan are run by a public institution of high standards with high ethical and moral values) and has provided an illustrative list of curricular and co-curricular activities and the relevant heads of expenses which contribute to excellence in education.

### **Universal Primary Education**

After the attainment of independence, illiteracy was rightly considered as the first item of educational reform. No country with a high level of illiteracy as in India, especially amongst women, could hope to develop socially and economically. All countries in Europe, the USA and Japan could start the process of development only after universalisation of primary education. India had the largest reservoir of illiterate population in the world. This had to end. Even after two decades of the National Policy on Education (1986) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan the state has not been able to provide universal elementary education. Universalisation of secondary education is a distant dream.

The Constitution adopted on November 26, 1949, enshrined a Directive Principle in Article 45 which stated: "The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." The constitutional directive was categorical and what was required was resolute implementation. But the state failed to live up to the expectation of the Constitution. The objective was not only not achieved in ten years but even after fifty years the objective is yet to be reached. As usual, we thought that more legislation would be a substitute for action! We argued that the goal was not reached because a Directive Principle is not justiciable and therefore remained a pious hope! The remedy was to make it a fundamental right! The NDA Government, therefore got the 86th Constitutional Amendment passed in December 2002 and thus gave every child between six to 14 years the right to free and compulsory education. It remained for the UPA Government to get enacted the "Right to Education Bill, 2009". This ensures for every child the right to education and the obligation of the government to impart it. The Act also provided that the state shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for children until they complete the age of six years. The Act prescribed that it shall be the fundamental duty of every citizen of India, who is a parent or guardian, to provide opportunity for education

to his child / ward between age of six and 14 years. If a parent/ guardian fails to perform the duty, the State Management Committee may direct him to perform compulsory community service by way of child care.

The Act envisages the concept of “neighbour-hood” schools where free and compulsory education will be provided. Such schools will be made available within a period of three years from the commencement of the Act. A child suffering from severe disability and not able to attend a neighbourhood school will be provided appropriate alternative environment.

If for any reason a young person has been unable to complete elementary education by the age of 14 years but is continuing education in a school, he shall continue to be provided with free education in such a school till the person completes elementary education or until the attainment of 18 years.

Providing free and compulsory education will be the government’s responsibility, that is, of the Central and appropriate governments. The Central Government will provide (1) financial assistance to State Government schools on a sharing basis; (2) educational curriculum framework and standard of qualifications and training of teachers; (3) appropriate technical support to the State governments.

The appropriate government shall provide financial assistance to local authorities for implementation of the Act. It will establish additional schools, as required, after determining the requirement of schools for providing free and compulsory education and deploy teachers, as required. A School Development Council will prepare the School Development Plan for provision of free and compulsory education for every local area (that is, Block, District and Metropolitan region). The duties of teachers are prescribed in the Act. The vacancies in State schools or fully aided schools shall not exceed 10 per cent of the total strength. No teacher of a State or fully aided school shall be deployed for non-educational purpose except for decadal population census, election work and disaster relief.

A School Management Committee shall be constituted for every State school and aided school with representation of parents, teachers and representation of local community.

There will be a National Commission for Elementary Education for monitoring the implementation of the Act.

The idea mooted in the Act is that universalisation would be facilitated by making the curriculum less rigorous. There will be no screening procedure for admission to an elementary school. As it is the standards are very low. Research has shown the student even in the Fourth Standard cannot read and right and make sums. How much more can the quality be diluted and standard brought down in the name of equity?

The Act has tried to pass on the State responsibility to private (that is, non-government) schools by stipulating that 25 per cent seats in private schools would be

allocated to children from disadvantaged groups including differently enabled children in every school. The State would provide needed resources to cover their fees. But State authorities seldom keep their word in fulfilling the obligation in a timely manner. Delay in release of funds would bring the private schools in financial difficulties. Moreover 25 per cent of such students might bring down the general standard of excellence of the school which has been acknowledged by the Bansal Committee and other reports.

The schools are prohibited from charging capitation fees. If these are charged, the management shall be liable to pay a fine which may extend 10 times the capitation fees.

There is a provision for establishing Recognition Authority in every State under which the school will be required to provide the needed infrastructure in three years. Here is a case of organisational proliferation which often does more harm than good. Cannot Zilla Parishads and Panchayats take care of this?

The affluent sections who have prospered in the era of liberalisation must be made to provide resources needed for universalisation of primary education through schools with the required infrastructure. A midday meal programme is also a way of pursuing children of poor families to attend to schools. The Constitutional Amendment and the enabling Act can hardly be called an improvement over the original Directive Principles of the Constitution. What was required was a resolve and commitment on the part of the executive that seems to be lacking. To be sure, a citizen can now go to court if a child is denied the right. But litigation and court pronouncement are no substitute for administrative action. The State of Maharashtra has no full time Minister in charge of Education. This is an indication of the priority accorded to education. For long we have been hearing that six per cent of the GDP share be made available for education. But this has not materialised and remains elusive. To fulfil its obligation the State has to open more schools and persuade the parents to send their children to school. But such is the condition of the poor families, specially of the disadvantaged sections, that they want their children to work rather than go to school. So here is a dilemma. Development cannot take place without universalisation of education; but universalisation is not possible without improvement of economic conditions.

Dr Dubhashi, IAS (retired), is a former Secretary to the Government of India and erstwhile Vice-Chancellor, Goa University; he is currently the Chairman, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Pune Kendra. He can be contacted at

**Source:** [/Mainstream Weekly/](#)1 March 2010

### Higher education needs new approach: Kolaskar

“It is not just the owners of educational institutions... parents and students too are responsible for the diminishing standards of higher education in the country. The situation can be improved only if the approach to higher education is changed,” said Dr Ashok Kolaskar,

newly appointed vice-chancellor of Bhuvaneshwar's Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) and adviser of the National Knowledge Commission.

Speaking at the 21st convocation ceremony of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (TMV) on Sunday, Kolaskar said, "We are looking at higher education as a means of getting jobs. In such circumstances, what quality are we looking for? We have ignored the original motive of higher education, which is to mould a good citizen." He added that more and more youngsters are becoming incapable of handling stress and are suffer from illnesses such as diabetes and heart problems. Despite this, we have not included physical education and yoga in out mainstream higher education, he said.

Kolaskar, Dr V N Rajashekharan Pillai, vice chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University and Pandit Shankar Abhyankar were presented with D.Litt as part of the convocation ceremony. Deepak Tilak, vice chancellor of TMV said the university is coming up with a nine-storey building in Pune and also has expansion plans in Solapur and Mumbai.

**Source:** Pune [/Indian Express/](#)1 March 2010

### **No specific review of AICTE: Sibal**

There has been no specific review of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) by the Government recently; the Lok Sabha was informed today.

In a written reply, Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal said however the Yashpal Committee was set up to review the functioning of the AICTE and other institutions and to critically assess their preparedness to provide institutional leadership to the emerging demands of access, equity an quality of technical education.

He said the AICTE had introduced e-governance in its approval process through a web portal, which was placed in the public domain on January 10 this year, adding the council had also revised the norms and standards for granting various kinds of approvals to the technical institutions.

**Source:** New Delhi [/My News/](#)3 March 3, 2010

### **Quality Foreign Institutes will be Allowed in India: Kapil Sibal**

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal today said only quality institutions from abroad will be allowed to offer education in India once a bill to regulate the entry of foreign education providers into the sector is passed.

The issue came up for discussion during a meeting between Sibal and Australian foreign minister Stephen Smith. Sibal asserted the government's stand that no fly-by-night operators will be allowed to set up campuses in India.

"We discussed a whole range of issues, including the entry of foreign education providers. We want that quality education providers should come here," Sibal told reporters after the meeting.

He said 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through automatic route is permitted in the education sector since 2000. But, the present legal structure in our country does not allow granting of degrees by foreign educational institutions on Indian soil.

The proposed Foreign Education Providers Bill would regulate the entry of foreign education providers as per India's priorities. Sibal also discussed about the initiatives taken by the Australian government to ensure safety and security of Indian students there.

Replying to a question in Parliament on the issue of Foreign Education Providers Bill, Sibal said the proposed law would facilitate the globally renowned institutes to participate in India's higher education sector. It will bring in foreign education providers for vocational education training.

During the meeting with Sibal, Smith highlighted the need to regulate education agents sending Indian students for study abroad. Sibal requested the Australian side to provide to a list of education agents affiliated by Australian institutions.

Sibal, who will visit Australia from April seven, also emphasised the need for institution to institution linkages and collaboration for vocational education and training.

He stressed on making suitable arrangements for Indian students who have been affected by closure of dubious institutes of vocational education in Australia.

**Source:** New Delhi [/DNA India/](#)3 March 2010

### **Revised norms to make teachers more accountable: UGC Vice-Chairman**

Accountability is an integral part of the revised University Grants Commission (UGC) grades. To get promoted from one step to another, a lecturer will have to clear the Academic Performance Indicator Scores (APIS) as given in the UGC regulations, 2009, said Professor Ved Parkash, Vice-Chairman of the UGC.

Professor Parkash was in the city to attend a college function on Sunday. Talking to The Indian Express, the UGC Vice-Chairman said, "The APIS is based on many points, including teaching experience, research work and examination evaluation. For instance, a lecturer with 6,000 Academic Grade Pay (AGP) will be promoted to 7,000 AGP if he has four years of teaching experience. His performance in teaching, training, exam evaluation and research will be evaluated."

Many lecturers, especially those in academic degree colleges, do not conduct any research and hardly get any training.

About this, Professor Parkash said, "The lecturers are supposed to conduct research and undergo training. They should keep updating their knowledge from time to time."

As per the revised UGC grades, there has been a 50 to 55 per cent hike in the salaries of lecturers and principals, but they also enjoy many holidays.

Professor Parkash, however, said, "As per the UGC guidelines, a college should have a minimum of 180 working days. It is for the college to decide how many holidays it wishes to allow its staff members."

Commenting on the fee hike, he said, "The UGC has given instructions about the fee-structure of each and every course."

Keeping in view the problems being faced by unaided colleges in implementing the revised pay scales, he said, "The UGC contributes 80 per cent of funds to the colleges, through the state government. The state government is supposed to contribute 15 per cent. However, the state government, very often, does not release funds from the UGC to these colleges on time, nor does it give them its own share. So most of these unaided colleges are compelled to generate their own resources."

Source: Ludhiana /[Indian Express](#)/3 March 2010

### An utopian edifice in the making

V. C. Kulandaiswamy,

The National Commission on Higher Education and Research Bill, 2010, is a testimony to much sincerity of purpose and major investments in time, and the quality of the intellectual approach it represents is notable. Yet, a reading of the Bill gives the **prima-facie** impression that it has been prepared for a country that so far has had no system of higher education in place.

The conclusion drawn by many that the National Commission would subsume the University Grants Commission, the All India Council for Technical Education and the National Council for Teacher Education is not correct. All three of them will stand abolished and an entirely new body will be established.

Unfortunately, the Bill has so fatal a flaw that the Commission cannot be established without an amendment being made to the Bill before it is introduced in Parliament.

The process of its establishment is to begin with the nomination of the core Fellows, the election of co-opted Fellows by the core Fellows, the formation of a Collegium, and the Collegium sending on a panel of three names for the chairperson and each of the members, to the selection committee. Ultimately, the chairperson and members are to be appointed by the President of India.

But the Bill neither specifies the number of core Fellows nor lays down the procedure for their nomination. The soul of the institution is missing. It is such a fatal flaw as to render the Bill unimplementable. The provision for the choice of core Fellows is a formidable task since it is difficult to find a method of nomination that will ensure the independence of this really core component of the structure.

The Collegium is to meet once a year. Its major functions are limited to the choice of a panel for the position of

chairperson and each of the positions of members and the preparation of a National Registry for posts of Vice-Chancellors. The strength of the Collegium will depend on the number of core Fellows, but this number is not specified in the draft Bill. If the number is around 10, the strength of the Collegium will be 40. Scholars they may be, but they are some 40 strangers among themselves who meet once a year under a chair elected at the particular meeting or in an earlier one. It is doubtful whether such an assembly could be guided to scan the academic horizon for talent and choose appropriate persons for the preparation of a panel for the vital positions of the chairperson and members of the Commission. The entire exercise involves a great amount of responsibility and perhaps some risk. All the executive powers are vested in a single body, that is, the Commission, which is not directly answerable to any authority and is not bound by the advice of any larger representative body.

A body comparable to the Commission that is now envisaged does not seem to exist in the field of education in any advanced country. What we have before the nation really is a totally new experimental design for the management of higher education. Any experiment, when it covers a whole nation, needs consultations on a much wider scale: the exercise that is now being carried out by the Task Force is a very limited one.

The Commission recognises only two providers in higher education: the State and Central governments. Central institutions are very few in number and the State universities are what really count. The long-winding procedures that have been proposed in granting authorisation to establish a university are amazing, even when the applicant is a mighty State government. Eight steps are contemplated. First will come the decision of a State government to establish a university. For this it will have to obtain an assessment report from an accreditation agency, and apply to the Commission with the assessment report. The Commission, after examination, will decide to grant authorisation or return the application seeking more information. The Commission, when it is satisfied about the case, will issue a public notice calling for views and any objections. The next two steps involve referring the views back to the State government and examining the replies received. Thereafter, permission is granted or rejected. If permission is granted, the institution will remain on probation for 10 years. During this period the permission granted could be revoked.

For a State government, the running of a university is tantamount to providing social service. For it to go through the hurdles of a bureaucracy as though it is an applicant for a licence to run a business is totally unacceptable. If this is not centralisation, then what could be so called? Again, it is not as though State governments are anxious to establish more universities and are rushing in with proposals. Many of them are, for want of funds, quietly trying to transfer their responsibility for higher education to private providers. By 2006, as much as 63.2 per cent of all educational

institutions and 51.5 per cent of the total enrolment were already in the private sector. The authors of the 11th Five-Year Plan have recorded that out of the additional student enrolment of seven million that is contemplated between 2007 and 2012, the share of the private sector is expected to be 3.5 million.

The Task Force does not seem to recognise what is happening in the country and seems to be sitting in a world of its own. It seems to be drafting rules and regulations to ensure academic quality as a theoretical exercise. While the overwhelming need is for the promotion of avenues of higher education, the inherent characteristic of the Bill is restrictive at every step.

Having thus got the requisite authorisation, the State government has to appoint a Vice-Chancellor. Here again, the Commission will maintain a national registry of persons eligible and qualified to be Vice-Chancellors. From the registry the Commission will recommend a panel of five names for the State to choose from, perhaps based on the biodata, or maybe again through a committee of its own. It is amazing that anyone could think of a registry that would contain the names of, and do justice to, all the academics in this vast country who are qualified to be Vice-Chancellors. The preparation of such a list, which will be a really exhaustive exercise, is not practicable even at the State level. The list is to be prepared by the Collegium from among names received from the Central and State universities and governments. One can imagine the degree of lobbying that will ensue at the levels from where the list would emanate, and the part played by prejudices, malpractices and manipulation for patronage. How will anyone ensure fairness and exhaustiveness in the lists received for the preparation of the registry?

Why should one assume that this procedure would be superior, and preferable to, the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor at the State level by means of a search committee? The seeming disbelief in the honesty of all the instruments that are closer to the scene of action and are answerable to the people around, and unconditionally trusting an authority that is far removed from the field of occurrence and is not answerable to the stakeholders, is basically a negation of the principle of autonomy. It devalues the credibility of elected governments, the university authorities, and even the Chancellor.

From the time of Plato to Thomas More to Francis Bacon, there have been many efforts to design an ideal society. But it is a grievous error to believe that we will ever be able to create a system anywhere by means of rules and regulations that would ensure virtuous conduct far above the level of the people who ultimately go to make the system. The reasonable path to relatively honest behaviour is decentralisation and making every authority answerable to the immediate stakeholders.

The reference in the Bill only to the existing deemed-to-be universities indicate that there will be no new deemed universities. Misuse of the power to grant such status by

the regulatory authority in some cases, and abuse of the privilege so acquired by certain institutions, cannot be considered adequate reasons to abolish the system itself. Remediable ills do not demand drastic solutions. The prevailing mood seems to be in favour of closing all new channels and opportunities for higher education rather than opening the gates for new providers — which today is the pressing need.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 2 March 2010

### An 'excellent' turnaround

After much negative publicity for various reasons, the MG College here has, finally, reasons to celebrate. It has become the only college under the Kerala University that has been selected by the University Grants Commission (UGC) as a college with potential for excellence. There are a total of 149 colleges from the country in the list.

In this list, seven colleges are from Kerala. The other colleges from Kerala are St Thomas College, Pala, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, Marian College, Kuttikanam, Mar Athanasius College, Kothamangalam, St Teresa's College, Ernakulam (from MG University) and St Joseph's College, Devagiri (from Calicut University).

The MG College was in the news recently for all the wrong reasons like the violent agitations launched by the ABVP and their threats to the principal.

The credit for the present achievement goes to MG College Principal G. Madhukumar. "Gone are the days when politics dictated terms in the college", Madhukumar told 'Expresso'. He said that some brave steps taken by the management had proven right. All those who were a hindrance to the decorum of the college have no place inside the college now, he said, recalling the unfortunate incidents that resulted in the expulsion of some students with low attendance.

Madhukumar said the college management could take a brave stand and reinstate law and order on the college campus. The majority of the students, most of them coming from economically poor families, responded positively to the new steps taken by the college. He also said that student politics still exists on the campus, but under the strict supervision of the teachers.

Several commendable initiatives like computer awareness classes, personality development classes and a film society have been started in the college with the full participation of the students.

The track record of MG College in the last one year is sure to wash away the memories of the dark past it has had. The college has the most number of working days this academic year until the month of February. While 237 students could not write the exams during the previous year due to attendance shortage, the number was reduced to just 13 students this academic year.

The class-wise PTA meetings were a huge success, with over 90 percent participation of the parents, a feat that few colleges can boast of.

The UGC accreditation was given after the proposal submitted by the college underwent dual evaluation, one at the university-level by a team of experts from other universities, and the other by the experts nominated by the UGC.

Source: Trivandrum [/Express Buzz/](#) 4 March 2010

### **It was a remarkable experience protecting academic integrity from political attacks**

*Professor Krishna Kumar took over as director of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in September 2004 at a time when a lot of concern was being voiced about certain curricular trends. He not only brought in a fresh, child-centred perspective to the Council, but also initiated a series of reforms that sought to make learning more meaningful to children. After over five years, Prof. Krishna Kumar, who completes his term on March 5, reflects on his tenure at the Council and shares his views with The Hindu.*

#### **When you look back now, what is it that seems most fulfilling?**

It has been a momentous experience, witnessing strong collective aspiration and cooperative energy to achieve institutional health, growth and autonomy. Freedom from political interference enabled us to commit ourselves to the task of providing academic leadership for the challenge of radical reforms in school education.

The agenda was set by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), which acquired a historic approval from the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in September 2005. That was undoubtedly a moment of great fulfillment. The circumstances under which the CABE's approval came were riddled with political controversy.

NCF-2005 succeeded in building national consensus because of the process through which the document was developed. For the first time, as many as 21 National Focus Groups were set up, apart from a National Steering Committee chaired by Professor Yash Pal.

These groups and the steering committee held open and thorough debates on all social, systemic and philosophical matters relating to curriculum. The reports of these groups and the NCF-2005 document offered a rich and positive discourse for syllabus and textbook development.

NCERT completed this exercise over three years, following the approval of NCF-2005. For NCERT, it was a remarkable experience of protecting its academic integrity from political attacks from every side.

#### **You mentioned institutional health and growth. Can you explain?**

It was a matter of creating a culture of consultation and participation. We utilised all the statutory structures we had

for decision making. The Programme Advisory Committee started meeting twice instead of just once in a year. Quarterly monitoring of financial expenditure was put in place. The process of submitting annual reports to Parliament was streamlined. New structures were created according to need.

For example, during the CABE meeting in 2005, the late Sudeep Bannerjee, who was Education Secretary in the Ministry of Human Resource Development at that time, noticed the scale of acrimony we were coping with and decided to set up a National Monitoring Committee to oversee the execution of NCF in the shape of textbooks. Never before in the history of textbook publishing in India, which is more than 150 years old— were draft texts reviewed with meticulous scholarly attention of the kind this new committee has provided over the last four years.

#### **Are there any specific tasks initiated in your term that would have to be completed over time?**

Yes, of course, there are many such tasks, which have evolved out of NCF-2005. The five-part sourcebook for assessment in primary classes is a breakthrough and now its daily use in schools needs to be promoted.

In curricular reforms initiated by NCF-2005, the States now expect close cooperation between their SCERTs and NCERT. In teacher training, collaboration between NCERT and NCTE has begun and needs to be taken forward.

Training of teachers is now the greatest priority in the execution of the Right To Education (RTE) Act, but training itself has to undergo radical reform, given the new perspective of our syllabi and textbooks. They provide reflective spaces and demand critical pedagogy, which only a thoughtful teacher can handle. NCERT used EDUSAT to reach out to thousands of teachers for orienting them toward the new textbooks. This process needs to be sustained and broadened.

We are now working on B.Ed. textbooks for the first time, and this too needs to be expanded. Our peace education initiative needs expansion. We have also brought out a series of project books for environment education.

#### **What about examination reforms?**

As you are aware, NCERT is not the key player in this area. We have done our best to promote the recommendations of NCF-2005 on examination reforms, but the progress of actual reforms has been limited, and the direction is not clear.

The Kerala and Goa Boards have taken some good measures, and so has CBSE, but some of the basic reforms are yet to occur. There are some systemic tendencies on which greater dialogue and clarity are overdue.

For instance, there is no reason why CBSE should assign specific marks to each topic and sub-topic given in our syllabus. This is among the many entrenched practices, which discourage the pedagogic reforms advocated in NCF-2005. Both children and teachers feel so stressed and scared because the examination system is so mark-

oriented and rigid. Many private schools now feel so frustrated with the examination system that they are shifting to the International Baccalaureate.

NCERT is worried about some of the steps CBSE is now taking, such as awarding grades for moral values and the so-called co-scholastic areas. NCF recommends a holistic approach in which aesthetic development is not 'co-curricular' or 'co-scholastic' but just as curricular as mathematics or science.

There are systemic issues as well. The relationship between SCERTs and examination boards in many States is neither direct nor smooth. The same is true at the national level. We have tried very hard to develop a cooperative relationship with CBSE over the last few years, but the progress has been very limited. And this is one reason why there has been so little change in the typology of question papers. NCF proposes a system, which denies rote learning the legitimacy it presently has, and it demands a flexible mechanism to assess the potential of every child. That is the spirit of RTE.

**NCERT's involvement with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has been very significant. How do you envisage NCERT's role in the implementation of the RTE?**

NCERT has greatly expanded its contribution to SSA. We were mainly a quality monitoring institution, but over the years we have initiated several programmes which involved direct participation in SSA. Let us first look at our national achievement surveys. Speed and efficiency have been injected in them, and an innovative step is being taken by using item response theory to bring this exercise up to global academic standards.

Learning how to read is a foundational skill. Our 40-part graded reading series called Barkha has become extremely popular with the States and it is being translated into their languages. It also marks a departure in the prevailing concept of children's literature, especially in how it handles cultural diversity and gender stereotypes. We have started another project under SSA on early mathematics, which aims to improve teachers' understanding of how children learn mathematics.

NCERT is also trying to enrich the curriculum of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) set up under SSA. The rural girls who study in these schools come from the most deprived sections of society. Our teacher-training course and textual material aim at giving them a headstart.

Now that SSA is moving towards RTE, NCERT's role will be very central. It must work with every State to revamp its syllabus and teacher training.

**How have the different States responded to the NCF?**

The response has been phenomenal. From NCF-2005 perspective we can classify the States into three categories. In the first we have Kerala and Bihar which have developed their own frameworks through the same kind of social deliberation that NCERT had mobilised. These two states offer the best examples of progress along the lines of NCF. Some others like Mizoram, Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Orissa have made sincere

efforts to revamp their syllabus in the light of NCF. Most recently, Tamil Nadu has started this process.

In the second category we can place nearly 15 States like Himachal, Jharkhand, Goa, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, etc. which have sought copyright permission to reprint NCERT textbooks for different levels. In the third category we can place Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh where the curriculum reform process has yet to begin.

**One of the main objectives of the NCF was to reduce the stress that children are made to undergo.**

This agenda had three parts. The first part was to change the syllabus and make it more child-centred and teachable. We tried to revamp the syllabus of all subjects from the perspective of the child and we ensured that only age-appropriate concepts are included. We also made a major effort to ensure that the treatment of these concepts will encourage children to relate classroom teaching to their own experience outside the school.

The second part of the agenda had to do with changing the examination system. Not much has happened in this direction in a systemic sense. At the school level too, there are very few cases of stopping pre-boards. I cannot say how long CBSE will take to involve NCERT more deeply in its attempt to reform the examination system.

The third part of NCF's vision for a stress-free system was about changes in teacher training. In this respect, there is the good news that NCTE has finalised its NCF for teacher education. NCERT has revamped its own B.Ed. syllabus, and MHRD is about to unroll its plans for strengthening SCERTs and DIETs. Undoubtedly, teacher-training reforms are going to take a while to show impact.

**What are your immediate responses to the recent announcements regarding a core curriculum for maths and science at higher secondary level?**

The Council of Boards of School Education (COBSE) has raised this issue. COBSE seems to have forgotten that NCF-2005 fulfils the mandate NCERT was given under the National Policy on Education in 1986 to develop a core curriculum, which would enable India to move towards a national system of education with comparable standards and quality. Such a system cannot be uniform in as diverse a country as ours. India is not just diverse but stratified too. The education system must develop the potential of every child, irrespective of background or circumstances.

In a federal set-up, State governments have the primary responsibility in education, and they must have autonomy to fulfill this responsibility. NCERT syllabus in mathematics and science already represents the core curriculum. The priority now should be to train teachers to contextualise it in the child's setting. This will inspire children to apply their knowledge to solve real problems and thereby develop logical thinking and reasoning.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Beta. The Hindu/](#)4 March 2010

**First, write a code**

The affidavit filed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in the Supreme Court, for the withdrawal of deemed-to-be university status to 44 universities, has created uncertainties that need to be addressed. Apart from immediate uncertainties on students' future and institutional affiliation with the state university, there is a deeper issue relating to the smooth expansion of private higher education. If the uncertainty on regulating private universities established by a state legislation, and the liberal manner in which private colleges are approved and affiliated to the university continues, quality might continue to be compromised. Private investment in education will be restricted or it will continue in a form no less severe than practices adopted by some deemed-to-be universities.

The deemed universities provision was recommended by the Radhakrishnan Commission in 1949 for a provisional period, to an established institution, through a charter granted by the President, upon the recommendation of University Grants Commission. It was also recommended that UGC be constituted as the agency for determining the merit of requests for recognition as universities. The UGC Act, 1956 subsequently incorporated the provision of deemed universities. The provision was used with caution until 1990. The falling per capita public spending in higher education and the rising demand for higher education encouraged privatisation in Indian higher education. Private institutions in the last six to seven years responded to it in many ways. They wanted to move from a mere affiliating college status to the status of a university. The rise of private universities approved under by state legislation, and the growth of deemed universities mainly under private management, was the result of hurried expansion through privatisation.

The irregularities pointed out by the task force of the HRD Ministry are serious and call for action. Withdrawal of deemed-to-be university status may be harsh, considering the fact that approval was accorded by the same ministry few years ago. The granting of a specified time for correction might have been another alternative, which, however, did not find favour with the government. In this case government's own procedure is under scrutiny.

Withdrawal of deemed-to-be university status of 44 universities sends a signal that an expansion of private higher education should not compromise on quality at the cost of commercialisation. However, at present there does not exist an institutional mechanism to regulate private universities on issues relating to admission, fees, governance and quality. There is a proliferation of engineering, teacher education and management colleges under private management and universities have failed to check unnecessary expansion and ensure academic standards. The disease continues to infect the system with or without deemed-to-be universities. This begs the question — why should the axe fall on these universities alone? It needs to be clarified if the deemed-to-be university route of expansion will be used only as an interim arrangement in the transition of an

institution/college to a full fledged university as envisaged originally by the Radhakrishnan Commission. On this criteria, existing deemed universities need to present their plans to make a transition to the "ideal university" conceptualised by the Yashpal Committee report. On the other hand, if the deemed-to-be university is allowed to exist side by side with the affiliating, multi-disciplinary university then it would be desirable to have all deemed universities — including the 44 universities — acquire accreditation status by the NAAC. This would be a fairer arrangement, as the accreditation report and grading obtained by the deemed university will place all the facts in the public domain. The government should begin by establishing a code of conduct of Indian universities. It should provide guidelines and include all the functions expected from a university. Unfair practices should be clearly defined, rather than be subject to interpretations. All public or private universities — deemed or not — should be expected to follow the code of conduct. The government should also decide the agency responsible for regulation and refrain from directly acting upon higher education system. This would send a correct signal to all universities. No university whether central, state or private should be spared from action.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Indian Express/4 March 2010](#)

**Top foreign universities eye presence in India**

Harvard Business School is keen to find permanent premises for its executive education programmes instead of conducting classes at five-star hotels in prominent Indian cities.

Columbia University has announced plans to set up a centre in New Delhi for its United States-based faculty and students to host workshops and undertake research in India.

British universities - Imperial College London, University of Glasgow, Keele University and University of Surrey - signed agreements with their Indian counterparts recently to set up institutes in the country.

Top-notch foreign universities want to have a presence in India as the growing Asian power moves to further liberalise and reform the higher education sector.

More than 150 foreign education providers already have tie-ups in the country, according to a report in the Business Standard newspaper.

This is set to grow as foreign institutions evaluate options to set up campuses and research centres and enter into twinning arrangements to promote teacher and student exchange.

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal has promised change soon to ensure that the nation's needs are met.

Experts have said that nearly US\$400 billion (S\$564 billion) worth of investment will be needed to build about 30,000 colleges and 800 to 900 universities within the next few years.

Most of the investment will come from the state and private sector, but there is growing significance being attached to the role of foreign universities as well.

Guidelines to let them enter the country were introduced a few years ago, but the statutory provisions were not put in place. Another concern for those who were reluctant to step in was the non-recognition of foreign degrees awarded in the country.

Speaking to The Straits Times in a phone interview from New Delhi, Mr. Sibal said these and other issues will be addressed when the Foreign Education Providers Bill is tabled this year.

'Once it is approved, the way will be cleared for foreign educational institutions to enter any field of education, vocational training and skill development,' he said.

'Degrees awarded by the foreign universities in the country will be recognised as well.'

These changes are part of a major revamp of the education system to improve India's manpower capabilities and standards.

Two other Bills in the works are aimed at setting up a National Council for Higher Education that will oversee the educational reforms and an independent authority for accreditation, Mr Sibal said.

'The time has come for a paradigm shift in the structure of education in India,' the minister said.

'We have more than 500 million people who are below the age of 25. Many of them will soon be finishing school and entering college. We need quality education for them.'

Indian education observers welcome the overhaul, but do not think that simply letting in more foreign institutions will necessarily raise quality and standards.

Dr Partha Mukhopadhyay of the Centre for Policy Research, a think-tank in New Delhi, said a critical bottleneck will be the availability of teaching talent.

'We simply don't have enough faculty. Even IIMs and IITs find it difficult to fill existing slots,' he said, referring to two groups of premier institutes - the Indian Institutes of Management and the Indian Institutes of Technology.

'Today, non-resident Indians who can teach are willing to come back,' said Dr Gitanjali Sen, a research fellow with the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi, 'but mindsets need to change'.

For master's programmes, she said, the emphasis is still on clearing examinations for certain courses. In the West, the focus is on nurturing independent thinking.

Still, the prospect of getting a good foreign degree without leaving the country and at possibly a fraction of the cost must be an attractive one for young Indians - and their parents.

Some also wonder what impact the entry of more foreign universities in future may have on local premium institutions.

One of these is the Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, which was established in 1999 and ranked 12th in the latest list of Top 20 global business schools by the Financial Times.

Asked to comment by local media on likely competition from Harvard, ISB deputy dean Deepak Chandra maintained that there would be enough opportunities for all.

'It's not about demand,' he said. 'It's about quality.'

**Source:** [/Asia One/](#)5 March 2010

#### **Most Indian varsities delivering poor education: Pitroda**

At least 90 percent of Indian universities are providing below-par education and the time has come when action is required to improve it, Sam Pitroda, advisor to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, said here Thursday.

Speaking at an educational conference titled Edge 2010, Pitroda expressed concerns over the declining quality and said in 90 percent of our universities the quality of education was "not up to the mark" and "needed to be improved substantially".

He said expansion of higher educational institutes was also a key issue and the government was committed to opening 14 universities of innovation and 400 new colleges. Pitroda said diversity was critical to innovation.

Speaking at the same event, Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal cautioned that in 2010 people are standing between "a collapsed past and an uncertain future" in the field of education. He was, however, optimistic that this was changing for the better.

**Source:** New Delhi [/Silicon India/](#)5 March 2010

#### **Pitroda asks law makers to pass the Higher Education Bill**

Chairman of National Knowledge Commission (NKC) Sam Pitroda today asked the law makers to get the Bill for Higher Education passed in the Parliament to enable quicker implementation of its provisions.

"Enough discussion has taken place on reforms in Higher Education. Two major committee reports like NKC and Yashpal commission have dealt with it. It is now time for action," Pitroda said, inaugurating via V-sat the Higher Education Forum's first annual convention held at Welingkar Institute of Management here.

The Higher Education Bill seeks to free the education system, will offer more autonomy to universities and do away with regulatory agencies like University Grants Commission.

Pitroda said India has to create a right kind of framework to implement three fundamental challenges of expansion, excellence and equity in the Higher education system.

"We need low-cost sustainable models in Indian education system.

**Source:** Mumbai [/ptinews/](#)6 March 2010

#### **India needs to take R&D lessons from MIT, says Geek**

By the time Vinay Gidwaney was 19, he co-founded around two software companies. He sold one of them (Control-F 1) to Computer Associates when he turned 25, three years ago.

Now a researcher at MIT's Media Labs, Gidwaney is working on several brain-related solutions and is busy inventing devices to control neuronal circuits for the treatment of neurological disorders.

In an interview with ET, Gidwaney, who is in Bangalore attending the EmTech conference, talks about MIT's India-centric initiative and says our country, needs to learn from MIT when it comes to developing a research ecosystem. Excerpts

**Tell us about some of the India-centric inventions MIT's Media Labs is currently working on. How far are these solutions solving the real world challenges of India?**

The India Initiatives Group at MIT develops low-cost innovative solutions for solving the challenges in India. Several NGOs visit us to explore how they can solve challenges using technology.

The MIT's Smart Cities group developed City Car and some of the researchers studied traffic patterns in Bangalore while working on the idea. It is an electric car, which is ideal for car sharing kind. The prototype is ready. It does not have a central engine. Each wheel is independently run by electric motors.

**Are you doing any specific project around education?**

We are experimenting with a learning solution with an NGO, Agastya. An MIT researcher and Agastya founder Ramji Raghavan, spent time at the Lifelong Kindergarten Group of MIT and came up with a solution called Scratch, which helps children solve problems through animation, programming and design. It is a software tool.

**What lessons can India derive from MIT's success with research and innovation?**

At MIT, research is a component of everything, and that is important even for economic development of any country. US is good at higher education and research. In India, there is definitely a need to do more research at the IITs, and there is a lot to learn from MIT in this regard. IITs need to find more ways to collaborate with the industry.

The Media Labs at MIT is completely corporate-funded with companies such as Microsoft putting their money to participate. There are around 200 researchers in 20 labs, which is quite an investment. Also, leadership is equally important. The professors and lecturers at MIT are researchers and innovators as well — everything starts from the leadership.

**What is with being a 'dropout' and a successful innovator? How did you reconnect with education after high school and what have been the experiences?**

I was born and raised in Canada, went to school in Edmonton, Alberta and my parents are from Calcutta. After

finishing high school, I founded a company, grew to 50 people and sold it to CA. I am not taking any classes at MIT but I am doing research in an academic lab. I decided a couple of years ago that I wanted to learn neuroscience and the scientific process in innovation. What better place than MIT?

Source: Bangalore [/Economic Times/8 March 2010](#)

**Shortage of skilled manpower, a drag on growth**

*Shortage of skilled manpower is fast emerging as a serious obstacle to the Union government's efforts to expedite the pace of power generation capacity addition in the country. If not tackled in time, it could derail the Union power ministry's ambitious capacity addition programme for the 12th Five-Year Plan.*

The Indian power sector is increasingly feeling the shortage of skilled manpower. While the government has taken policy initiatives in recent years to ease bottlenecks in areas like equipment supply, domestic coal supply and timely regulatory approval for power projects, not much has been done to improve availability of human resources.

Power projects worth 78,000 mw have been taken up for implementation under the current 11th Plan and another 1,00,000 mw capacity addition is envisaged under the next plan. However, there are not enough skilled manpower like engineers, supervisors and technicians in India to build and run power generation capacity of this scale.

India added a total of 1, 32,329 mw capacity upto the Tenth plan. But it has envisaged adding as much as 180,000 mw capacity during 2007-17. So, the enormity of the challenge is obvious.

*The man/mw ratio for the power generation and transmission in the country was 9.42 at the end of the Ninth Plan. It declined to 7 by the end of the Tenth Plan. Meanwhile, it is projected that man/mw ratio would fall to 5.82 by the end of the current plan.*

In power generation category, man/mw ratio at the end of 11th Plan for thermal generation is projected at 1.16, hydro 1.76 and nuclear 2.22.

The total manpower in the power sector was pegged at 9.5 lakh at the end of the Tenth Plan. Meanwhile, additional manpower requirement for the power sector by the end of current plan is projected at 3.44 lakh.

*What further complicates the manpower shortage situations is the fact that different skillsets are required skills required for handling various types of power projects. For example, an engineer with experience of handling coal-based power projects may not be suitable for hydropower projects.*

There is a marked shift from previous Plans not only in terms of scale of capacity addition, but also from the view point of private sector's participation in the capacity addition programme. While the share of private sector in power generation capacity addition programme is expected at

19% in the current Plan, it is projected to go up to 69% in the 12th Plan.

Since most of the private power project developers are new entrants into the sector, they lack in-house expertise in critical areas like project planning and management. So, there is no option for them but to poach on the established public sector companies for experienced engineers to independently plan and manage project implementation.

*Experienced technical personnel from these public sector companies have been joining private companies for better pay packages. The result is that these public sector players are running short of staff especially technical to build and run envisaged power generation capacity.*

*While the role of engineers is critical in the power sector, significance of other skilled labour like welders and fitters cannot be overemphasised. What is more, the shortage of experienced engineers can still be addressed through training programmes, but bridging the demand-supply gap for welders and fitters is a serious challenge. It is simply because there are not many institutes and colleges to produce high-pressure welders. These welders need to meet stringent standards of Indian Boiler Regulations for securing certification.*

While there is not much that the government can do at this late stage to improve the availability of skilled manpower, companies like Bhel are responding to the growing shortage of experienced engineers by introducing intensive training programmes. For example, a fresh engineering graduate needs at least five years of hands-on experience to be able to independently manage projects. However, Bhel has recently introduced an accelerated training programme for freshers that would turn them into project managers in just two years' time.

*As per findings of a recent report by Institute of Energy Management and Research (IEMR), one of the key bottlenecks for ensuring adequate manpower for the power sector is the lack of training infrastructure. While training infrastructure for thermal power projects is sufficient, it is grossly inadequate for hydropower projects as also for power transmission projects.*

*Infrastructure for refresher training required for updating skills and knowledge is just 3% of the required capacity and is a key reason for inadequate manpower with right skills and competencies. What is more, there is a huge deficit in infrastructure for managerial training, which currently meets only 4% of the requirement. This has a significant impact in decision-making capabilities, efficiency and effectiveness of organisations.*

At a time when the sector is growing at a rapid pace amid a changing environment, the lack of managerial competencies would hamper the ability of organisations to adapt and grow, the IEMR report warns.

**Source:** *The Financial Express: Mar 08, 2010*

### Education ballast ahead

Four key reform legislation that could fundamentally transform India's higher education sector may this week receive the Union cabinet's approval, paving the way for their introduction and passage in Parliament.

The legislation, borne out of the Prime Minister's vision for higher education, are scheduled for discussion by the cabinet at its meeting later this week, top government sources told *The Telegraph*.

These legislation seek to allow foreign varsities to come to India, punish all colleges that mislead or cheat students, set up dedicated tribunals to settle education disputes and create a new rating mechanism for higher educational institutions.

The bills, if approved by the cabinet, may be tabled in Parliament during the ongoing budget session itself, sources said.

While Human Resource Development Ministry Officials are jittery about the cabinet's decision on the foreign educational institutions (regulation of entry and operations) bill, the other bills are expected to receive a nod without much fuss.

A committee of secretaries representing several ministries has vetted the Foreign Educational Institutions (FEI) bill. The HRD ministry has altered the bill based on the panel's recommendations.

But the legislation allowing and regulating foreign universities has over the years earned the reputation of a "jinxed" bill within the HRD ministry — because of the Opposition that has repeatedly sent it into cold storage.

While the FEI bill, if enforced could open up unprecedented access to foreign universities for Indian students, the other three legislation aim to ensure that students and teachers are no longer cheated by institutions.

The prohibition of unfair practices in education bill for the first time punishes administrators at higher educational institutions that cheat or mislead students with false promises, or charge capitation fees.

The bill follows thousands of complaints about institutions misleading students through inaccurate claims in advertisements and in their prospectus. It seeks to punish the guilty with a jail term and a hefty fine.

The education tribunals bill aims to set up special tribunals empowered to settle all disputes pertaining to the education sector — a teacher's complaints against her employers or a student's allegation against a cheat college, for instance.

The national authority for regulation in accreditation of higher educational institutions bill plans to restructure the country's mechanism for rating the quality of its universities and colleges.

The bill plans to set up a watchdog along the lines of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India that will award licences to rating agencies that can accredit higher educational institutions.

The three bills have been cleared by a group of ministers that was set up by the cabinet towards the end of 2009. and which has cleared the legislation.

But the FEI bill, opposed by the Left when it was supporting the UPA, continues to contain sections on which the government itself is divided.

The HRD ministry had raised the amount foreign institutions need to set aside as a corpus, from Rs 10 crore till now to Rs 50 crore.

But the hike, demanded by the HRD ministry may not be supported by the Prime Minister, known to be keen on retaining few fetters for aspiring foreign institutions as possible in the bill.

**Source:** New Delhi /[Telegraph India](#)/10 March 2010

### **Need more universities**

Refuting the arguments that there is no need for establishing new universities, former vice-chancellor of Kuvempu University S P Hiremath said the country needs more universities to ensure students are given more opportunity to pursue their higher education.

Speaking at a function organized at Karnatak University's Academic Staff College he said: "Only 6% students in the age group of 18-23 were registering for higher education in India, where as the world average is 23%. India should aim for 15% by 2015."

"There is scope for improvement in higher education segment though the country already has 400 universities, 20,000 colleges, half-a-million teachers and 12 million students," he added.

Hiremath praised Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee and HRD minister Kapil Sibal for increasing allocation in higher education from 9% to 20%.

"National Knowledge Commission has recommended for establishing Central Universities in the country. Soon we will have IIMs, IITs and four regional universities with modern facilities in all the states," he said.

Gururaj Karajgi, director of academy of creative teaching said: "Universities should be process-oriented and not person-oriented."

**Source:** Dharwad /[Times of India](#)/10 March 2010

### **NCHE will be apex body: Purandeswari**

*Bill may be placed before Parliament in May or June*

The regulatory bodies of higher education such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) will not be dismantled after the constitution of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and they will be made subservient to it, Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development D. Purandeswari said on Sunday.

Ms .Purandeswari, who was here to address the 20th annual convocation of Kuvempu University, was talking to journalists.

### **Commission's advice**

The NCHE was being constituted at the recommendation of the National Knowledge Commission and a suggestion made in the Yashpal Committee report. The Bill for NCHE formation might be placed before Parliament in May or June.

Ms. Purandeswari said another important recommendation of the National Knowledge Commission was that universities have a limited number of colleges affiliated to them — ranging from 70 to 100 — so that they could coordinate with them in a better way to ensure quality education.

### **Grant for varsities**

The Union government was setting aside 6 per cent of the GDP as grant for the Central universities, and a substantial grant for State universities. "What is important is that the State governments should extend the matching grant to their universities."

### **A major step**

The Union government was according priority to higher education in the globalised scenario.

A major step in this direction was to allow the Central universities to adopt some of the State universities to improve the quality of teaching and overcome teacher shortage, which she put at 30 per cent.

It was proposed to beam seamlessly lectures by expert teachers of the Central universities to State universities.

With the introduction of the credit of marks and the semester systems, the mobility of students from one university to another was made easy. Study of sciences would be made equal across the country with the introduction of the core curriculum precise.

The States were not opposing the constitution of the NCHE; in fact, the collegium of the Central universities was happy over it, she said.

While there are nearly 500 universities, the National Knowledge Commission recommended that there be at least 1,500 new universities to meet the demands of higher education.

### **Quality teachers**

Asked about some States, including Karnataka, laying more emphasis on primary education than on higher education, Ms. Purandeswari said: "We need quality teachers trained by quality colleges to bring in quality teaching at primary education."

As for primary education, she said it was decided to ensure that no child, aged 6-10, was denied education under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Ms. Purandeswari said the Board examinations for Std. X in the CBSE-affiliated schools were made optional to bring

students under a constant evaluation in scholastic as well as non-scholastic activities.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University was planning to introduce community colleges to offer students passing out Std. XII a two- year skill development course.

“If they want, they can pursue the traditional courses through distance education,” she said.

**Source:** Shimoga [/Beta. The Hindu/](#)15 March 2010

## RESOURCE

### Education for Disabled

The Centrally sponsored Scheme of Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) has been approved by the Government and is being implementing since 01.04.2009. There is an allocation of Rs.1000 crore for the Scheme during the 11th Five Year Plan. This Centrally Sponsored Scheme aims to enable students with disabilities, who have completed eight years of elementary schooling, to pursue four years of secondary schooling (class IX to XII) in an inclusive and enabling environment. The components of the scheme include: i) assessment of educational needs, ii) provisions of students specific facilities, iii) development of learning material, iv) support service like special educators, v) provision of resource rooms, vi) training of general school teachers to improve their capacity to teach children with special needs in an inclusive environment, and vii) making secondary schools barrier free. The Scheme covers children with one or more disabilities as defined under the Persons with Disabilities Act (1995) and the National Trust Act (1999) namely, i) Blindness, ii) Low vision, iii) Leprosy cured, iv) Hearing impairment, v) Locomotor disabilities, vi) Mental retardation, vii) Mental Illness, viii) Autism, and ix) Cerebral Palsy. The scheme is being implemented by the State Governments.

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 Lok Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](#)3 March 2010

### Non-availability of qualified teachers

Several States in the country, particularly Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and some of the North Eastern States have shortage of qualified persons for appointment as teachers in schools. The shortage is because of inadequate capacity in the existing recognized teacher education institutions in these States to prepare qualified persons in relation to the annual demand for teachers.

The Government takes several steps, in partnership with the States, for increasing the availability of qualified teachers. Towards this end, the Government provides

resource support to the States/UTs for establishment and functioning of Districts Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes for Advance Studies in Education (IASEs) under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) grants recognition to teacher education institutions for conducting various teacher education courses and for expanding annual capacity of existing institutions.

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 Lok Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](#)3 March 2010

### Round-the-clock anti-Ragging Helpline

A toll free “anti-Ragging Helpline” has been launched on 20th June, 2009 with Call Centre facilities in English, Hindi and some regional languages (Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjabi, Marathi, Oriya, Assamese, Gujarathi and Bengali) to begin with, for helping victims of ragging, besides facilitating effective action in respect of such incidents. Anti-Ragging has been made operational by University Grants Commission (UGC) with toll free number 1800 180 5522 on 24 x 7 basis. Toll free number 155222 will be operational after all the TSPs shall make this number operational through BSNL.

The report received from Ed CIL on the reported incidents of ragging through Anti-Ragging Helpline from the period of 20th June 2009 to 5th February, 2010 indicates that over the said period, 1,59,414 calls were received out of which 350 complaints have been registered, which have been forwarded to the concerned institutions. A total number of 18 complaints communicated to the institutions have been responded by the concerned institutions and accordingly closed by the helpline.

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 Lok Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](#)3 March 2010

### Education in rural areas

As per an independent study commissioned by the Government of India, the number of out of schoolchildren has decreased from 1.35 crore in 2005 to 81 lakh in 2009. The improvement in gender parity index at elementary level from 0.80 in 2000-01 to 0.93 in 2006-07, indicates the improvement in participation of girls at elementary level.

The Saakshar Bharat scheme also focuses on women’s literacy, especially in rural areas. 80 per cent overall literacy is targeted by the end of the 11th Plan period. The States/UT Governments have been informed that under Saakshar Bharat 70 million non-literates are to be made literate, of which 60 million will be women.

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 (as modified in 1992) provides for a National System of Education, which implies that up to a given level, all students, irrespective of

caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality. It also accord priority for improvement of the standard of education at all levels for children living in rural and urban areas.

The NPE recognized that the rural areas, with poor infrastructure services, will not get the benefits of trained and educated youth, unless rural-urban disparities are reduced and determined measures are taken to promote diversification of employment opportunities. Pursuant to this, a large number of schemes/programmes are under various stages of implementation, which predominantly address the educational needs of rural areas including technical education. The scheme/programmes include Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-day Meal scheme (MDM), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme, Mahila Samakhyia and the scheme of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas have been opened in rural areas specifically in order to provide quality education to rural children. There are other institutions such as Gandhigram Rural Institute and the National Council of Rural Institute, which address issues of reducing disparities in education.

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/)5 March 2010

Opening of Model Colleges and Universities

### Opening of Model Colleges

The Government has approved the introduction of a new scheme to provide central assistance for setting up of a model degree college in each of the identified 374 educationally backward districts where Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education is less than the national GER.

During the remaining period of the 11th Five Year Plan, provision exists for establishing 200 model colleges in identified districts, with priority being given to special category states and districts having concentration of weaker sectors and minorities as well as other districts in Schedule V and Schedule VI areas. An outlay of Rs.782 crores was made for the scheme in the XI Plan.

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/)5 March 2010

### Opening of Colleges and Universities

The Eleventh Plan proposes to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 15 per cent by 2011-12, which would require an annual increase in enrolment of 8.9 per cent and an appropriate increase in number of institutions of higher learning to meet the target.

During the Eleventh Plan establishment of Central Universities in hitherto uncovered States has been

envisaged. 15 New Central Universities have been notified on 15.1.2009 and a second Central University has been established in Jammu Division of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU) has been established for facilitating and promoting studies in areas concerned with the tribal population in the country.

A new Regional Centre of the IGNTU has been inaugurated in Manipur. 374 model degree colleges in the districts having GER lower than the national level with the Centre-State funding in the ratio of 1:1 for Special Category States and 1:2 for the other States has also been approved for which the University Grants Commission (UGC) has invited detailed project proposals from State Governments.

Other scheme in the Eleventh Plan include incentivizing State Governments for setting up of new institutions or expansion of existing institutions with Central assistance, strengthening 6000 colleges and 150 State Universities with focus on underserved areas to enable these institutions to fulfill the criteria for UGC assistance and additional assistance to 160 State Universities and about 5500 colleges which are already declared fit to receive grants under Section 12B of the UGC Act.

Eight new Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research (IISERs) have also been set up during this Plan period. Seven new Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are also proposed to be established. The All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has permitted second shift in certain engineering colleges and polytechnics. Expansion of intake in Central Educational Institutions by 54 per cent has been undertaken consequent to the implementation of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006.

**Source:** New Delhi [pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)5 March 2010

### Resources PIB, Govt. of India

#### Inclusion of agriculture in curriculum

The National Curriculum Framework – 2005 for school education proposes interdisciplinary approach for syllabi and textbooks integrating components of agriculture across subjects at all the levels up to class X. The syllabi developed by National council of Educational Research and Training in Environmental Studies from Classes III to V include themes such as 'Growing plants', 'Growing Food', 'Who produces the food we eat?' etc. in Classes VI to X, the syllabi for Science include themes related to agriculture such as crop production, plant and animal breeding, selection for quality improvement, use of fertilizers and manures; protection from pests and diseases; organic farming, plant hormones, etc. Further, syllabi of Classes VI to X of Geography include the themes such as types of farming, major crops, cropping pattern etc.

Central Board of Secondary Education offers Agriculture as one of the elective subjects for Classes XI and XII.

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 Lok Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)10 March 2010

### Education for Women

Education of girls especially those belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities is one of the principle concerns in education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) provides support *inter-alia* for free textbooks up to Class VIII, organizes back to school camps for out of school girls, as well as bridge courses for older girls. In addition, the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and the Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalaya (KGBV) reach out to girls from marginalized social groups in educationally backwards blocks in the country.

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) envisages several measures for girls education including *inter-alia*, appointment of female teachers and provision of separate toilets for girls. The scheme of girls hostel was launched in November 2008 to facilitate girls to pursue secondary education. The scheme envisages setting up hostels in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs). The State wise details of hostels sanctioned and funds released under the Girls' Hostel scheme are given in the table below:

S.No.	Name of the State	No. of Hostel Sanctioned	Amount released (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	Himachal Pradesh	5	95.62
2	Madhya Pradesh	30	574
3	Mizoram	1	19.12
4	Punjab	21	402
5	Rajasthan	27	516
6	Tamilnadu	44	842
7	Arunchal Pradesh	5	95.62
8	Chhattisgarh	74	1414
9	Karnataka	62	1056.38
<b>Total</b>		<b>269</b>	<b>5014.74</b>

The enrollment of girls in schools has shown a steady increase over the years and progress has been made towards reducing the gender gap. At the national level the gender parity index is 0.98 at the primary level and 0.92 at the upper primary level, as per SES (2007-08).

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 Lok Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)10 March 2010

### PPP in higher technical education

To address the increasing skill challenges of the Indian IT industry and growth of the domestic IT market, this HRD Ministry intends to establish 20 Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) during the XIth Plan. Although, the proposal is for setting up all twenty IIITs in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode, since industry participation may not be forthcoming in some States like in the North East, it is proposed that IIITs in the North East may be set up by the Central Government with contributions from Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER).

Besides this, 300 polytechnics are to be set up through PPP by the State Government/Union Territories with roughly 1/4th of the cost of capital assets being provided by the Government of India with a ceiling of Rs.3 crore. These 300 Polytechnics will be selected in consultation with State Government/Union Territories, various industrial organizations such as CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and PHD Chamber of Commerce, 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 Lok Sabha today

**Source:** New Delhi [pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)10 March 2010

### Revamping Education

A number of vocational courses have been introduced in CBSE affiliated schools to focus on employment. At present 32 vocational packages in CBSE schools are being offered. Of late new vocational courses 'Financial Market Management (FMM)' and the 'Health Care Sciences (HCS)' have been introduced in select schools. Corrective measures taken by the Government include (i) Joint collaboration with concerned industry for better job opportunities and (ii) Exposure of the students to practical training from such institutes. These initiatives have considerably enhanced employment opportunities.

It is the constant endeavor of the Government to promote qualitative improvement of technical education to make such education employment oriented. The Government has established various Board of Studies which advices on academic matter falling in its area of concern including norms, standards, model curricula, model facilities and structure of courses.

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 Lok Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/)10 March 2010

### Sanskrit Pathshalas

The Central Plan Scheme for development of Sanskrit Education is now being implemented by the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (RSKS), a Deemed University under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Under this Scheme, there is also provision for grant of financial assistance for appointment of a maximum of three teachers in modern subjects in Traditional Sanskrit

Pathshalas/Mahavidyalayas. Besides this, RSKS also performs activities, which include imparting periodical training, conducting Workshop/Seminars etc. for the benefit of Traditional Sanskrit Teachers etc.

All the campuses of RSKS and Adarsh Sankrit Mahavidyalayas/Shodh Sansthans funded by RSKS have computer training facilities. The RSKS also has a Scheme for providing grants for purchase of computer and honorarium for a part-time computer teacher @ Rs.3,000/- per month. A one-time financial assistance up to Rs.1.00 lakh towards the cost of two computers and peripherals, installation and purchase of books is extended.

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 Lok Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/) 10 March 2010

### Enhancing skills of unemployed youths

Government is aware of the unemployment problem of youth. In order to improve the employability of the youth, Ministry of Labour & Employment is implementing the following major schemes for skill enhancement:

- Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS)
- Apprenticeship Training Scheme (ATS)
- Skill Development Initiative through Modular Employable Skills.

Aforesaid schemes have training capacity of about 1.87 million persons per annum. Besides, 17 other ministries are also providing skill training in the areas of skill concerning their jurisdictions.

For enhancing employability & capacity building of youth, Sub-Committee of National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) on 'Norms & Courses' has recommended to introduce a subject titled "Life Skills" in all Industrial Training Institutes / Centres (ITIs/ITCs). The course on Life Skills includes the following modules: Communication Skills, English Proficiency, Basic Computer literacy, Entrepreneurial Development Skills, Quality Management Tools and Occupational Safety and Health.

The Union Cabinet approved "National Policy on Skill Development" on 23rd February 2009. The policy is a guiding document for implementation of various skill development programmes in the country.

The National Skill Development Policy seeks to:

- increase capacity and capability of the existing system to ensure equitable access to all,
- promote lifelong learning, maintain quality and relevance according to the changing requirements,
- create effective convergence between school education, various skill development efforts of Government and between Government and private sector,
- enhance capacity of institutions for planning, quality assurance and involvement of stakeholders,

- create institutional mechanisms for research development, quality assurance, etc. and
- finally to increase participation of all stakeholders to mobilise adequate financial, physical and intellectual resources.

Shri Harish Rawat Minister of State for Labour And Employment gave this information in reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha today.

**Source:** New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/](http://pib.nic.in/) 10 March 2010

### Infrastructural Facilities for Secondary Education

The centrally sponsored scheme Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) launched in March, 2009, inter-alia, envisages setting up of new secondary schools in deficit areas and strengthening of infrastructure in existing Government secondary schools. Rs.20.120 crore has been allocated for the scheme during 11th Plan. The budget provision (revised estimate) for 2009-10 is Rs. 550 crore. No predetermined state wise allocation is made, and central assistance to State Governments is based on appraisal of their annual plan proposals.

The scheme is implemented by the State Governments. The school level interventions are monitored by School Management & Development Committees (SMDC) having representations from parents, local bodies and officials of the Education Department of the State Government.

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/) 12 March 2010

### Attracting Talent to Teaching

The Eleventh Five Year Plan envisages increase in the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 15 per cent of the population in the age cohort group of 18-24 years by 2011-12. This requires a substantial increase in the number of institutions and consequently would require an adequate number of teachers for imparting education. Failure to redress the faculty shortage would hamper the achievement of the targets for increase in GER set out by Government. The Government has taken measures to attract talent into the academic profession by liberalizing pay and other incentives at levels higher than that provided to the All India Civil Services (Group 'A') at the entry stage. The age of superannuation has been increased to 65 years for persons engaged in teaching in higher education institutions. The Government has constituted a Task Force under Prof. Sanjay Dhande, Director, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur to assess the existing faculty shortage and the requirement of quality faculty in technical, professional and University education considering the need to achieve the targeted GER in the remaining period of the Eleventh Plan and the Twelfth Plan and to suggest

remedial policies and other measures to meet the estimated shortfalls in quality faculty.

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/) 12 March 2010

## 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)

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