



Announcements

ASERF has instituted **Dr Stya Paul Young Educationist Award** for honouring Young Educationists who have demonstrated their potential by making an impact on Indian education.

Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2010. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Education Society announces the opening of Apeejay Stya University

The Apeejay Education Society, with over 40 years of Excellence in education, announces the initial opening of Apeejay Stya University at Sohna, Gurgaon. Sponsored by the Apeejay Stya Education Foundation, the University is currently located in a sprawling picturesque campus with the state-of-the-art infrastructure.

Apeejay Stya University offers a diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the academic session 2010-11. Applicants for admission accepted on the basis of comprehensive merit, judged by their academic excellence, their extracurricular achievements, and their utilization of the resources they have had available. As part of the application, the University recognize a number of examination scores to establish academic excellence, including AIEEE, GMAT, SAT, and SAT II.

For more, visit: www.apeejay.edu/asu

Partnership

Dear Partners,

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

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

Editor

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh

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ASPECT**Entrepreneurs profiting from business of Schools**

Earlier this month, Career Point Infosystems, a Kota-based tutorial service provider, had a dream debut on the bourses. Its shares more than doubled on listing, and the company raised 115 crore from its initial public offer (IPO). The overwhelming investor response was as much a comment on Career Point's old business, tutorials, as it was on its new business, schools.

The concept of schools as a business is at odds with the government's stated position on the issue. Saying schools shouldn't be run like a business, the government mandated a 'trust' structure for all schools from kindergarten till class 12, or K-12 schools. So, only non-profit trusts can operate schools; and if a trust has a surplus, it has to reinvest it in the school it runs. At least on paper.

In reality, there are ways and ways to take money out of a school. The surplus of a trust can't flow out, but money can flow out on the pretext of payments — real or fictitious — for services provided to the school. "It's been happening all these years," says Madhav Chavan, CEO and president of Pratham Education Foundation, a voluntary organisation focused on educating underprivileged children in India.

Increasingly, it's getting organised. Companies and investor are hooking up to devise business models that are legal, but are morally ambivalent in the present construct of the law. The essence of these business models is companies providing services to schools — for example, leasing a building or managing its operations — in return for a fee. That fee is negotiated between the trust and the company; in dealings that are not at arm's length, this arrangement makes a mockery of the trust structure.

For companies and investors, it is making available an increasing chunk of the schools segment — \$20 billion, and growing at 14% a year, according to Kaizen private equity's education report. Suddenly, schools have become big business. In 2010, till August, private equity funds had invested \$168 million into the sector through 14 deals, according to VC Circle, an investment research firm tracking private equity, M&A and venture capital (See table: Going to School).

It's a stable business, as children tend to continue in one school till they graduate. And it offer terrific growth. "Only 40% to 50% of the 360 million population below the age of 20 is enrolled in a primary or secondary school. In higher education, just 10% are," says Rashi Prasad, associate director — strategic and commercial intelligence, transaction services at KPMG India. Sorting out the farce of trusts or allowing for-profit schools is another debate, one that is unlikely to be resolved soon given its sensitive nature (See box: An Erosion of Trust).

Meanwhile, companies are nudging their way past the regulatory network using two business models. They are

also tapping two other business models in which there is no ambiguity on their presence.

The Manage Model

In what is the most common model, companies provide services related to the day-to-day running of schools to those that don't have the capabilities or resources. So, companies train and supply teacher to schools, manage transportation, supply textbooks and uniforms, and design curricula, among other things. They call themselves 'school management companies'.

Most school management companies provide one or a few of these services to a school. Then, there are some that provide end-to-end services like K-12 Techno Services in Andhra Pradesh. K-12 earns a management fee, which is a proportion of revenues the school earns from students. In just eight months of operations, K-12 Techno has earned 22% on its investment. When 32-year-old Maguluri Srikanth started the company, he struck gold without even taking off. Mr Srikanth placed a small advertisement in a local newspaper asking schools to contact him if they needed help running their institutions.

The response was stunning. "Within three days, 190 private schools in Andhra called us," says Mr Srikanth. Today, K-12 manages 64 institutions — 53 schools (till class X) under the brand name Gowtham Model Schools, and 10 junior colleges (grades 11 and 12) and one international school under the brand name Orchids. "In two months, we will engage with 20 more institutions," says a proud Mr Srikanth. It took Mr Srikanth and his family two year to build their business model. They got help, strategic and financial, from two venture capital (VC) funds, Sequoia Capital and Song Investment Advisors. The two VCs invested 68.5 crore in K-12 in January. "It took us two year to get Sequoia and Song on board," says Mr Srikanth.

KP Balaraj, managing director of Sequoia, refuses to elaborate on the business model. "We have spent a lot of time on this and want our competitor to come up with their own model," is all he says. Another company that has got into the school management business is TutorVista.com, which began as an online-education company four year ago. It's a highly profitable business, says founder and CEO K Ganesh. "After the initial years, once the classrooms get filled up, schools give a profit margin of 50%," says Mr Ganesh.

TutorVista conducts its schools business through the brand name Manipal K-12 Education, in which the holding company of the Manipal Education and Medical Group is an investor. Manipal K-12 taps schools in two ways. One, it provides computers, projectoand technical equipment to 3,000 schools, including four in Nepal. Two, it manages schools — currently, 13 in Hyderabad, Pune, Manesar (in Haryana), Mangalore, Bangalore and Manipal.

In the past four years, TutorVista has raised \$37.25 million, in three rounds, from Sequoia, Lightspeed Venture Partners , the Pearson Group, and the Manipal Education and

Medical Group. The company is in the process of raising another \$50 million, says Ganesh, most of which will go into its schools business.

The Build Model

Then, there's the lease model: construct a school building, lease it out to a non-profit trust, and collect the rentals. Take Career Point. While it manages schools, its fully-owned subsidiary, Career Point Infra, provides construction services for building schools. Since it builds and manages, Career Point is effectively running schools. Had it done so under the trust structure, it wouldn't have been able to take out profits.

But by becoming a service provider, while retaining the trust format, it is able to capitalise on the growth and profitability the K-12 segment offers. And the 115 crore raised through the IPO give it funds to scale up. "We raised funds to get into formal education and increase our pan-India presence," says Pramod Maheshwari, managing director of Career Point.

Like TutorVista, Career Point started off as a tutorial services provider in 1993. It provides coaching for entrance exams. The company has 33 study centres across 12 states in northern, central and eastern India. It has covered about 200,000 students through its tutorial and school-management services. In 2007, Career Point raised external funds for the first time, with Volrado Ventures, an Indian venture capital Fund managed by the Enam Group, investing 5 crore.

In 2009, Franklin Templeton Private Equity invested 50 crore. This January, NS Raghavan, one of the seven founders of [Infosys Technologies](#), put in 10 crore. "There's a huge demand-supply gap in education," says Maheshwari. "It's a huge opportunity for companies."

Career Point, which posted revenues of 68 crore in 2009-10, is positioning itself as a one-stop shop for both schools and colleges. So, the company can be an architect: help clients with concept planning and location survey. It can be a consultant: conduct a project feasibility study and advise clients on getting government approvals. It can be a builder: construct the building. And it can be a manager: manage the educational institution.

The lease model needs capital. It's a bit like a real estate company building an office complex, leasing it out, and recovering the investment over seven to 10 years. Another listed company taking a similar route as Career Point is [Everonn Education](#). Three months ago, Everonn sold 23% stake to Nikhil Gandhi, group chairman of SKIL Infrastructure, for 225 crore. "We are looking to enter the K-12 schools segment and are looking for partner who will put in money," says P Kishore, managing director of Everonn.

On his part, Gandhi had been waiting for a launching pad into education for the past 15 years. His attempts at starting an education knowledge park around 1992, in

Mumbai's outskirts, were thwarted by the government, which didn't give him regulatory approvals. A few months ago, Gandhi spotted his opportunity. "Everonn has domain knowledge and has reached scale," says Gandhi. "We wanted to leverage their strength with our infrastructure company to build schools."

SKIL will provide Everonn infrastructure support to build schools, while Everonn will manage them for the non-profit trusts. "Over the next four years, I will have the opportunity to invest \$4 billion more," says Gandhi. He has plans to tie up with premier foreign universities and to scale up the Everonn schools business.

The For-profit Model

Education is a state subject. So, though the central government advocates a non-profit and trust model, the final call rests with the states. Haryana, for instance, allows for-profit schools that follow the 'international baccalaureate' curriculum. That led Prashant Jain to diversify from exporting marble to running a school in Gurgaon, Haryana. Through his holding company, Sarla Holdings, Mr Jain floated Pathways World School, a for-profit IB curriculum school. And he found takers. Pathways has received an investment of \$30 million from the \$225-million Reliance Private Equity, fund. "We liked this sector very much as its growth is far higher than that of the economy," says Reliance PE CEO Ramesh Venkat.

Mr Jain, who is a director in the school, says Pathways earns an operating margin of about 55%. Adds Mr Venkat: "We expect a return on investment of 25-30%. We see a waiting period of four to five year for an exit opportunity."

The public-private partnership Model

Some states are inviting private companies to bid for tend to run public schools on the PPP model. The state government asks private companies to bid for a project on the premise that any viability gap funding — the period between setting up the school and starting operations, till it can break even — will be borne by the government. The organisation that quotes the lowest viability gap wins the bid. The government provides the land, and the private player builds and runs the school on a 25-to-30-year lease.

In July 2010, the Rajasthan government invited bids for 50 schools. One of the shortlisted candidates is IL&FS Education and Technology Services (IETS), the education arm of IL&FS, the infrastructure and financial services company. IETS provides content and teacher training, and upgrades school infrastructure. RCM Reddy, managing director of IETS, defines his business as one that will cater to the needs of students, from pre-primary to graduate levels and everything in between. "Next year, we will enter into managing schools," says Mr Reddy. But unlike the others, Mr Reddy is playing safe, choosing the PPP model. "This is the only way to get out of any uncertainty in this area," he says.

This January, India Equity Partner invested 170 crore for a 28% equity stake in IETS. "We are introducing them to other companies to form alliances or go in for acquisitions," says KK Iyer, managing director of IEP. Both the investor and IETS are very clear about where they're going, though. "Education companies command an attractive valuation in the market," says Mr Reddy. Iyer feels an IPO is the most obvious exit in this sector. "In three to four years' time, the company should be large enough for an IPO."

Opportunities aside, the regulatory risks in the schools business are real. Admits Balaraj of Sequoia: "There is significant regulatory risk and business-model risk." He feels a lot of capital will be invested in the education sector in the hope that regulatory risks will get sorted out. "This may not happen in the near future," adds KPMG's Prasad. Not all avenues of investment in the education space are unsafe. In verticals like pre-schools, vocational training, coaching classes, e-learning and test preparatory classes, regulations allow education companies to run as commercial entities. SAIF Partners, a foreign private equity firm, takes this distinction seriously.

"As foreign investors, we want to subscribe to the letter and spirit of the law, and our focus is vocational training," says Vibhor Mehra, principal, SAIF Partners. But elsewhere, companies, private equity player and, increasingly, small investor are laughing their way to the bank by going to school.

Source: 21 Oct, 2010/[The Economic Times](#)

NEWS

'Bills on higher education unconstitutional'

A newly-formed body of universities today termed as "unconstitutional" a series of bills aimed at reforming higher education in the country and demanded that they be referred to a committee headed by a Supreme Court judge.

The Indian Council of Universities, which held its first meeting here, discussed the Educational Tribunal Bill, 2010, the Prohibition of Unfair Practices in technical educational institutions, medical educational institutions and Universities Bill, 2010 and the Higher Education and Research Bill, 2010 which is yet to be introduced in Parliament.

The opposition from the body comes close on the heels of a similar resistance HRD Minister Kapil Sibal faced in the Rajya Sabha with the Educational Tribunal Bill passed by the Lok Sabha.

The meeting, attended by senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Oscar Fernandes as head of a parliamentary standing committee on HRD, felt that the bills were "unconstitutional and their constitutional validity needs to be checked", ICU president S S Pabla, also the

Vice Chancellor of Sikkim Manipal University, told reporters here.

He claimed that Fernandes suggested that the ICU representatives should place its views before the parliamentary committee. The Congress leader, however, was not present at the press briefing.

The ICU at present has 60 members, which include chancellors, vice-chancellors of private, central, state and deemed universities and institutions of national importance.

The body demanded that all the bills on higher education be referred to the top law officers or a committee be set up under a Supreme Court judge to check their validity in view of constitutional provisions distributing the legislative powers related to higher education among states and the Centre.

In a statement, ICU claimed that Parliament can only be empowered to enact laws on higher education only after the Constitution is amended.

"Constitution of India categorically prohibits Parliament to regulate higher education while empowering states to do so....," the body said in the statement.

The members also alleged that they were against "over regulation" and believed in evolving a mechanism of self regulation on the lines of TV broadcasters.

Source: 16 Oct, 2010/[Economic Times](#)

India doesn't figure in world top-100 universities

India is nowhere in the recently released world university rankings. The three rankings — Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Academic Ranking of World Universities compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and QS World University Rankings — are just out, but none of the Indian varsities have made it to the top 100.

While overall the US dominates all the three rankings, the QS rankings have China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Israel, Taiwan and even Thailand ahead of India with IIT-Bombay in the 187th position. In the other two rankings, (Times Higher Education World University Rankings and Academic Ranking of World Universities) India finds no place in the top 200, but Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Turkey bag decent places in between the two rankings.

B K Mathur, dean, planning and co-ordination, IIT Kharagpur, however, dismisses the world university rankings as a subject for "coffee table discussions". But at a time when India is being hyped as a future knowledge economy and the country is emerging as the new academic destination globally, isn't international benchmarking in education important for India? Mathur stresses, "It is not ranking but word of mouth that conveys our academic excellence to students. We have 50,000 alumni across the world, they are our ambassadors."

However, agreeing that the world is watching us, Narendra Jadhav, member, Planning Commission, says, "Though the international ranking methodology is erroneous, Indian universities need to be open to international benchmarking. What they lack is a proper 'management of information system'. Also, there needs to be greater awareness among universities to at least give out accurate information so that it reflects their true academic status."

S K Barua, director, IIM-A, stresses that international benchmarking is becoming important and with the world becoming smaller and global student mobility increasing, "we need to realise that if we go up the ranking as a nation, education is going to give us inflow of foreign exchange. Besides, I believe that we have the potential to excel and if we are keen India can become the Mecca of higher education."

Despite India's skepticism, rankings are becoming an important determinant. As Jonathan Adams, director of research evaluation, Thomson Reuters (Times Higher Education has tied up with Thomson Reuters this year), points out, "Well developed and information-rich rankings can be a helpful guide to students about relative standing of universities worldwide."

Source: New Delhi/17 Oct, 2010/ [The Times of India](#)

Microsoft, AICTE team up to provide free software access to students

Software giant Microsoft has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for allowing students to access all the latest Microsoft tools free of cost.

Taking its DreamSpark initiative which was launched to provide free technological access to students a step ahead, Microsoft India has entered into this pact to benefit over five million students across 12,000 colleges affiliated to and under the governance of AICTE.

According to the agreement, Microsoft will share through the AICTE portal its DreamSpark software suite, which offers free software tools to students engaged in developing web-enabled technologies.

Moorthy Uppaluri, General Manager, Developer & Platform Evangelism, Microsoft India, told TOI, In India, 90 per cent of the education disseminated in colleges is curriculum or knowledge-based and only 10 per cent is practical. Due to this, it is the innovation that suffers the most. By offering these tools to the students, we are giving them an opportunity to be creative.

Uppaluri added, Through DreamSpark, we aim to inspire students to explore technology. We are really grateful to the HRD ministry for giving us this opportunity to partner with them and make technology accessible to the students.

S S Mantha, Chairman, AICTE, said, It has become almost a necessity these days that students get acquainted with

the latest tools and techniques. Microsofts DreamSpark programme provides them with the competitive edge.

Yogesh Kochhar, Director Strategic Engagement, Microsoft India, said, The government has earmarked Rs 2,00,000 crore under several mission mode projects. This program will provide students with the right opportunity.

Source: Oct18, 2010/ [The Times of India](#)

Columbia University, GMAT coming to India soon

MUMBAI: While India opens its doors to foreign education, the world too seems to be taking notice of the opportunity for higher education in the country. The New-York based Columbia University has announced it will set up an international centre for research and regional collaboration in Mumbai later this month focusing on sustainable rural development and architecture.

Moreover, the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), which conducts the GMAT (Graduate Management Aptitude Test) entrance test, has also announced plans to set up an office in India, its third in the world after the US and UK.

GMAC is waiting for the necessary approvals, its president and CEO David Wilson said adding, "I feel there's great potential for growth in the country."

More than 2.65 lakh management aspirants appeared for GMAT across the world in 2009, over 8% of them from India. There has been a steady rise in the number of Indian MBA aspirants taking the test, tripling in five years from 13,463 in 2005 to 30,633 in 2006. And with GMAC setting up base in India, it will mean GMAT aspirants can expect better facilities.

The demand for GMAT is set to rise even further once foreign universities set shop on Indian soil.

However, Columbia University is currently not looking at a full-fledged campus in Mumbai. In Mumbai, Columbia's Earth Institute will share with other scientists, development economists, policy makers, and community development practitioners, best practices and lessons learned from earlier successful project and initiatives.

Source: Oct18, 2010/ [The Times of India](#)

Framework for job training in schools

New Delhi, Oct. 18: The government will have to invest around Rs 5 lakh crore to achieve its target of increasing the higher education enrolment rate from the current 14 per cent to 30 per cent by 2020, a think tank has estimated.

The National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) has prepared a concept paper projecting the expected number of youths to be enrolled in higher and technical education by 2020 and the investment required to increase facilities.

The concept paper says there has to be a continuous and steady rise in the enrolment rate in the 18-24 age group over the 11th and 12th plan periods and the first four years

of the 13th Plan to achieve the 30 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 2020.

Nearly 2.06 crore students now pursue higher education in the country, accounting for 14 per cent enrolment of youths in the 18-24 age group.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal has already announced that the enrolment rate has to be increased to 30 per cent by 2020 to help the country continue its economic growth. An estimated 4.15 crore youths in the 18-24 age group have to be enrolled in higher educational institutions by 2020 to achieve the 30 per cent GER target, the NUEPA estimate says.

“We have made a projection in terms of enrolment that has to happen from 2007 to 2020 to achieve the 30 per cent GER. The enrolment of youths in higher education should reach 2.92 crore in 2015 and 4.15 crore in 2020,” NUEPA vice-chancellor R. Govinda told The Telegraph.

Of the estimated 4.15 crore, 1.45 crore would be in technical and professional education while 2.7 crore would be in general higher education. An expansion of 20 per cent in technical education and 50 per cent in general higher education have been projected to happen in the government sector.

Given the trend of involvement of the private sector in education, the remaining 80 per cent expansion in technical education and 50 per cent expansion in general education could be done by private players, NUEPA sources said.

According to the concept paper, the cost of creating facilities in technical education for every student is estimated to be Rs 2 lakh a year, while expenses towards salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff and maintenance of facilities have been pegged at Rs 1 lakh.

On this projection, the government will have to mobilise Rs 1.7 lakh crore for expansion of technical education over a period of 14 years (from 2007 to 2020).

The corresponding yearly capital cost per student in general education is estimated to be Rs 60,000 and the revenue cost Rs 75,000. Going by this estimate, the government will have to spend Rs 3.3 lakh crore for expansion of the general education system by 2020.

The estimated investment in technical and general education thus works out to over Rs 5 lakh crore over the 14-year period. This period includes four years of the 11th Plan for which the government has allocated about Rs 40,000 crore for higher and technical education.

“Now we will work out details on the expansion of institutions in terms of how many would be required in technical education, how many should be set up for skill development and how many general educational facilities like colleges and universities would be needed by 2020,” Govinda said.

The majority of students, he added, preferred university education to courses on skill development.

Related news

Delhi is set to constitute a “national vocational education framework” within a year to equip students from Class VIII onwards with job skills, Union human resource development minister Kapil Sibal announced in the city on Wednesday.

Sibal was speaking at the Higher Education Conclave 2010 organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce on “Industry Academe Partnership — Dynamic Alliance to Facilitate Change”.

He said once the new framework was in place the Central Board of Secondary Education would introduce subjects such as carpentry and refrigeration and offer degrees. “For instance, Bengal can focus on a course in leather technology to provide skilled manpower for the tanneries around the city just as Assam can introduce tea cultivation as a subject.”

Students will be able to study these subjects from Class VIII onwards along with the conventional curriculum. The vocational subjects will be offered at 10 levels with a certificate each for completing every level.

After completing the first four levels, students will be offered a degree in that subject equivalent to a Class XII pass certificate. The tenth level certificate will be equivalent to a postgraduate degree.

Explaining the need for the framework, the minister said Delhi had set itself a target to increase the gross enrolment ratio in higher education from 12.4 to 30 per cent within 2020.

Even after the ratio increases there will be nearly 150 million children who might not be able to pursue conventional or professional courses in higher education. “We need to evolve a national policy on vocational education for these students who will not be able to go for higher education,” said Sibal.

The minister rued the lack of initiative to strengthen the industry-university partnership. He called for more private participation in higher education, saying that once the gross enrolment ratio in higher education was raised to 30 per cent, the country would need nearly 800 more universities and 40,000 additional colleges.

“How many of you have gone to the universities and given them suggestions?” Sibal asked the industry representatives present at the conclave. Nobody raised a hand.

Source: Oct 19, 2010/[The Telegraph](#)

India: Science school leads global trend in higher education

In this sleepy town on the outskirts of Mangalore sits a university campus that looks unlike most others in India.

The modern central administration building is made of red brick and glass. Buildings are air-conditioned. And the ground floor of the health sciences library houses an Indian version of Starbucks. Upon arrival, most of the 23,000 students are handed laptops through which they can get access to the internet almost anywhere on the campus.

Welcome to Manipal University, a private school known for its medical and engineering programs, that has made a name for itself in a country where the private sector is typically associated with shoestring operations of dubious quality.

From a small teaching hospital with 100 students in 1953, Manipal has grown today into a network of 20 professional schools on its main campus. Another campus, in the northeastern state of Sikkim, offers seven programs, including online education.

The Manipal Group, the university's parent company, has developed a network of campuses abroad too, in Nepal, Dubai and Malaysia. Manipal is investing about \$30 million on a new campus in Dubai and \$10 million to enhance its Malaysia campus. Last October, Manipal began developing a new campus in Antigua, with an investment of \$35 million.

"We want to become a leading provider of English-language higher education in the developing world," said Anand Sudarshan, chief executive of Manipal's education division.

With sights on global expansion, Manipal represents a trend in higher education. Other universities in India, the Persian Gulf and even Iran are branching out to other parts of the developing world as well.

"Globalization has been unipolar, mainly by the U.S. and U.K., and if Manipal does this, it creates a much broader base for globalization," said Philip G. Altbach, director of the Center for International Higher Education, at Boston College. "It's good to have an array of choices, and it's good to know that developing and middle-income countries have the capacity and ideas to be players in the global education marketplace."

Manipal's domestic expansion plans were limited by tight rules governing the private higher-education sector, and Sudarshan says they almost went international by default.

"We were growing and expanding in India, and then it became impossible to expand further in India," said Sudarshan. "When we got invited by Nepal and Malaysia to set up medical colleges."

Manipal studies potential markets carefully. Sudarshan says he is focusing now on emerging markets in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Africa, where there is a [growing, aspirational middle class](#).

Finally, Manipal's officials look for places where there is a demand for Manipal's core expertise: medicine and engineering.

"It is not risky for us; it is taking advantage of our capability," said Sudarshan, who became the head of Manipal in 2006.

But Manipal also has expansion plans in India. The Manipal Group is planning to invest more than \$100 million over the next two years on additional campuses in India.

Manipal, which hasn't always had a stellar reputation, has benefited over the years from the weak and underfinanced public higher-education system in India. Students who could not get into a public school turned to the mushrooming private sector. T.M.A. Pai, who established Manipal and many other schools, believed the private sector should step in where the government could not.

Premchand Palety, founder of the Centre for Forecasting and Research, which ranks universities in India, said that when he was a university student in the mid-1980s, Manipal "wasn't thought of as a good place" to study. It was known as a haven for wealthy students who couldn't get into the top schools.

"If you didn't get in anywhere good, private was the option, and private meant only Manipal. They charged huge fees and benefited because there was no competition in that space," Palety said.

But "over time [manipal] has become an established brand and created a place for itself," he said.

The private sector has expanded rapidly: There are almost 2,500 engineering schools, most of them private, in India. In the face of competition, Manipal has improved in quality.

"Now Manipal's character has changed and it has systems in place, like good infrastructure and a decent number of faculty," Palety said.

At Manipal students shell out about \$4,100 a year, and medical students pay \$9,100 a year in tuition. By comparison, students at the prestigious public Indian Institutes of Technology pay \$1,600 to \$2,000, including housing. Students at India's premier teaching hospital, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, pay \$80 a year.

"I had no other good choice left," said a Manipal civil-engineering student who goes by the name Arhcana. "I applied in several colleges, didn't get into many, and was on the wait list on one."

Manipal administrators freely acknowledge that their students aren't among the academically elite but argue that it makes their institutions stronger.

"Our undergraduate students have to work much harder than an IIT student," said Somnath Mishra, director of the Manipal Institute of Technology. Student quality "in IIT is higher than here, so here we also have to be very strong in

teaching abilities. In IIT a teacher doesn't have to make so much effort."

Sudarshan, the chief executive, says he wants to improve the quality of Manipal's academic programs and the credentials of its faculty members. Only about 25 percent of its faculty members hold doctorates, which is typical of an institution of its academic caliber in India.

But professors in Manipal's engineering and medical programs without Ph.D.s must now work toward earning advanced degrees at Manipal while they continue teaching at the institution, says H.S. Ballal, pro chancellor of the university.

Sudarshan says he wants the university to become an "elite applied-research institution," in part by trying to get more corporate- and government-sponsored research projects.

The Manipal Life Sciences Centre has been recognized by India's former president as a center of excellence in pharmacogenomics.

"We want to put Manipal on global research map," said the center's dean, K. Satyamoorthy.

At its engineering school, 89 percent of students who will graduate this year already have jobs, many with top companies such as Microsoft India, Nokia and Cisco Systems.

As its quality and visibility have increased, so have the number of student applications. In 2009, according to G.K. Prabhu, Manipal University's registrar, the university received nearly 100,000 applications for 7,000 seats.

Source: MANIPAL/October 19, 2010/ Globalpost.com

Unicef's online campaign to demand education for kids

Unicef launched an online campaign to mobilise the Indian society to speak up for illiterate children and to spread awareness that one can demand elementary education under the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

The campaign, called 'Awaaz Do' or 'Speak Up', aims to have at least 500,000 people sign up by Jan 24, which is observed as the Girl Child Day.

'India is home to a growing urban population that can be mobilised into demanding that the goals set forth in the RTE become reality,' United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) India Representative Karin Hulshof said in a statement.

'We must continue the momentum to achieve this objective and the middle class can help raise their voices to keep the RTE firmly in the national spotlight,' she added.

According to Unicef, an estimated eight million children between six and 14 years were out of school in India in 2009. The RTE Act, which came into effect April 1,

promises free and compulsory education to children in that age group.

The online campaign will use technology and social networking amply, allowing people to get actively involved and demand the rights for marginalised children.

'Those who sign up serve as champions for the cause and help build awareness through social media forums, including e-mail, Facebook, SMS and a photography contest,' Hulshof said.

Bollywood actress and Unicef ambassador Priyanka Chopra and Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal have signed up for the campaign that is in association with the Indian government.

'Creative and sustained initiatives are crucial to train more than one million new and untrained teachers within the next three to five years and reinforce the skills of in-service teachers to ensure child-friendly education,' the Unicef statement said.

Source: 19 October 2010/Sify.Com

Maharashtra first state to come up with PPP school

Maharashtra will be the first state to use PPP model for education, since the Congress-led Democratic Front government has drafted an ambitious public-private partnership plan to set up a network of English-medium 'model schools' for providing 'world-class education" across the state. There was a steady deterioration detected in the quality of education traced to a resource crunch, lack of availability of competent manpower and inadequate technology. It is now being aimed that with shared capital, professional skills and availability of modern technology ideal schools will be set up under PPP model to bring good quality changes in the K12 education system.

Source: 21 October 2010/Times of India

Recruiters in ICT industry face skills shortage

One of the ICT recruitment firms reported that the Australian ICT industry is facing an acute shortage of 2700 computing professionals, adding to a looming skills shortage. In line with the data gathered from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Department Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), national workforce supply fell by 7200 employees in the July to September quarter. Companies were demanding 5200 less workers in the quarter, but a shortfall of 2700 professionals remained in the sector.

According to the findings given in the latest Clarius Skills Index (PDF), it became apparent that a possible oversupply of skills in the previous two quarters had caused the shortfall while Candle executive general manager, Linda Trevor, described that the shortage could have taken place due to the lead up and delays of the Federal Election on 21 August. As a result of the forecast skills shortage, IT managers have been warned not to be complacent about their staff, and advised to respond to staff needs in order to

keep them in a competitive environment where loyalty is faltering. Additionally, employers are making efforts in direction to convert their contractual staff into permanent employees to safeguard their business, with a recent survey from Hudson ICT finding hiring confidence in the IT industry has grown to net 44 %, indicating employer's intentions to increase permanent staff levels in the coming quarter.

Source: Australia/21 October 2010/Computer World

Gujarat slips to 13th rank in providing basic education

Gujarat Congress spokesperson Dr Manish Doshi made some serious allegations against the Modi government today. As per the figures of the year 2007-2008, Gujarat has slipped from 9th spot to 13th in providing primary education in India. He claimed that the government is not serious about the prevailing education scenario in the state.

Even after the announcement of several educational schemes by the government, enrollment in public schools has fallen by 8% during the years 2005-2008. Dr Doshi, who is also a senate member of Gujarat University, claimed that many smaller states are ahead of Gujarat in providing primary education.

The scene in secondary education is pitiable too. Right now 40.99% girls are studying in secondary education, which is 5% less than the national average.

Gujarat government has failed in encouraging students of all age groups to get education. The state ranked 12th among 20 states in the age group of 5 to 14, while it was 18th in the age group of 15 to 19.

Dr Doshi maintained that the state government turned out to be unsuccessful in building model colleges across 20 districts of Gujarat.

The colleges were identified by the central government, in order to increase the gross enrollment ratio. He claimed that the government at the centre has already fixed funds to build these model colleges, but the state administration hasn't bothered to build a single college till date.

Source: Thursday, Oct 21, 2010/[DNA](#)

Shri Kapil Sibal holds Interaction with New IITs

The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal had an interaction with the Directors of the eight new IITs here today. The meeting was taken to discuss issues specific to new IITs, especially with regard to the constraints they are facing in infrastructure and faculty development. All the IITs made separate presentations, consequent to which discussions were held and the following decisions were taken.

A number of IITs are facing problems of clearances with Central/State Government Departments for acquisition of the land allotted to them. In this regard, the Minister has asked for a meeting to be taken next month with the concerned State Government officials, Central

Government officials and IIT Directors to facilitate the process of land acquisition.

The issue of providing salary that will attract good faculty was discussed at length. In this regard it was decided with the Minister's approval that topping up of government approved salary can be done by the IITs from their own funds.

At present, in the IITs, the HAG scale(Rs.67,000-Rs.79,000) is applicable for 40% of the Professors in position. The new IITs expressed that they have been unable to implement this grade since it has been possible for them to recruit few faculty so far. The Minister stated, here, that the ministry would seek approval from the Finance Ministry/Cabinet to provide for a new proviso for the new IITs to be able to implement this salary grade.

The new IITs felt that that a revision in fund allocation would be required in view of the escalation of construction costs. The minister directed the officials to examine the matter and come up with a proposal in this regard.

Source: 21 October 2010/[PIB](#)

ASCI's Educational Sector Guidelines to come into force from Dec 1

The new advertising code for the education sector will come into force from December 1st this year. Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), the apex self-regulatory body for the advertising content of the Indian advertising industry, which had introduced the draft code two months back, has announced that the final set of guidelines is ready to be implemented across the country.

Notably, four sub-clauses introduced into the code are based on the feedback and inputs received from general public and educational institutions themselves. With the new code coming into force in less than two month's time, advertisements of educational institutes, coaching classes and educational programs will now be governed by specific guidelines. The new guidelines can be accessed on ASCI's website.

Some of the suggestions from masses are indicative of real life situations of misleading advertisements. Most of these include ads claiming a high ranking, impressive buildings and infrastructure, students' testimonials and job placements.

Rajiv Dube, ASCI's newly elected Chairman, said, "Education is a sector that is critical to the country's future. We received a number of suggestions and inputs on the draft guidelines, largely from the citizens and institutes. Such a response reinforced the importance we placed on the education sector and the need to treat it as a special case. We now know that our belief is a major public concern as well, and sincerely hope that the code will reduce incidences of wrongful advertising in the education sector."

Incorporating specific suggestions, the final code prohibits advertisements claiming comparative ranking of institutes without giving details of the ranking organisation and the date the ranking was published. Similarly, a new clause prohibits display of building or infrastructure from models and computer graphics, requiring institutions to show actual and existing facilities, if the facilities are shown in the ads.

ASCI's new code also attempts to clamp down on misleading testimonials of students that may not even have been part of the educational programme, exam or subject. A new clause makes it mandatory for advertisements to give exact details of students giving testimonials. Similarly, the new code takes another technicality into consideration by asking advertisers to mention total number of students who passed out from the class, whenever they claim an absolute number of students placed in jobs.

In addition to the above, the final set of advertising guidelines for educational institutions, among other things, prohibit institutions and programs from claiming recognition, authorization, accreditation, or affiliations without providing proper evidence. The guidelines also require that the name and place of the affiliated institution which provides degrees and diplomas on behalf of the advertiser and which may not be accredited by a mandatory authority, to be prominently displayed in the ad.

With the new guidelines, educational institutions will not be able to promise jobs, admissions, job promotions, salary increase, etc. without substantiating such claims and also assuming full responsibility in the same advertisement. The proposed guidelines discourage institutions from claiming success in placements, student compensations, admission to renowned institutes, marks and rankings, and topper student testimonials unless every such claim is substantiated with evidence.

The education sector guidelines take note of the fact that a significant amount of advertising activity is currently happening in the education sector, reflecting the vast variety of educational programs being offered in the country. According to the recent ADEX report, advertising by educational institutions has gone up by leaps and bounds. Last year's figures show that 8 per cent of all advertising expenses in print media came from the educational sector. This is a significant increase compared to just a few years ago.

In the recent past ASCI has put out specific guidelines for advertisements in the automobile and food and beverage sectors.

Source: October 22, 2010/[exchange4media Mumbai Bureau](#)

Indian universities draw Chinese

Cheaper tuition fees, chance to hone English skills main attraction; Indian experience a chance to dispel myths

Before Wu Shunmian arrived to study at Delhi University, he was under the impression that India was a part of Africa, and that every Indian was a Buddhist. But the ignorance ran both ways. Many "Indians have no idea Hong Kong is a part of China", says 23-year-old Wu.

Sixty years after India and China normalized ties, such odd presumptions persist—and though an exchange of students like Wu is a good way of removing these misconceptions, red tape and diplomatic barriers can stand in the way.

Once a Chinese student arrives in India, the myths are easy enough to dispel. Wu, who hails from China's southern province of Guangdong, is a young man with an easy smile and dark, bushy eyebrows. When he reached Delhi two years ago, to start an undergraduate degree in philosophy, he admits he was surprised to discover how little crime there was.

"Things are much better than I'd expected," he says, sitting in the small Outram Lines flat near Delhi University that he shares with three other students. "I found the city's easy-going atmosphere liberating and very friendly."

Wu chose India for his university studies after hearing favourable reviews from a Chinese friend who had graduated from an Indian university. While Chinese students have typically focused on studying finance and engineering, Wu represents a small, but growing group that's branching out, as the country's economy becomes wealthier and more diverse.

Wu is now hoping to stay on to finish a master's degree in philosophy, to explore the notion of "the self"—something he found he wasn't able to do in China.

When Wu returns to China, presumably, he will inform his friends of India's non-African, non-Buddhist nature. "Every Chinese student studying here could be a potential ambassador promoting better understanding of India," says Alka Acharya, a professor of Chinese studies in the Centre for East Asian Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). That the Indian government hasn't managed to attract more students from China and beyond is, she says, "a missed opportunity".

Roughly 1,600 Chinese students are studying in India, according to the Chinese Students' Union (India), a Chinese government-supported organization established this March. Beijing-based Sino-India Education and Technology Alliance (Sieta) believes the real number to be closer to 2,500. "Not every student from China registers with the Chinese embassy," says Sieta chairman Sathya Moorthy.

Moorthy, a Malaysian of Indian origin who has spent over 20 years in China, says the number of Chinese students in India remained small until 2007. That year, at least 1,000 students enrolled, most attracted by the new joint degree programmes, by lower costs and by the chance to hone their English skills.

Over the last five years, Sieta has worked to place Chinese students into higher institutions in south India, with a special focus on Tamil Nadu's Vellore Institute of Technology, which admitted at least 360 Chinese students this year alone. The college has gained a good reputation for its facilities and welcoming attitude, Moorthy says, allowing it to quickly become a hub for Chinese students.

Even Sieta's figure of 2,500 is a fraction of the 9,000 Indian students who are studying medicine or engineering in China, attracted by lower admission thresholds, reasonable tuition costs and world-class facilities subsidized by the government.

This represents more than a twofold jump from the estimated 4,000 Indian students in 2007, says Moorthy, and those figures are this high, he adds, because China usually provides great infrastructure and living conditions to its foreign students.

By comparison, Moorthy notes, "less than 10% of India's higher education institutions have an international students office".

Still, as the numbers of Chinese students in India increase, word spreads. An estimated 100 Chinese now study in Delhi, roughly 70% of them in Delhi University. Earlier waves of students tended to comprise the children of families doing businesses in India; more recent arrivals, though, have chosen India with a clear idea of what they want. Seven out of every 10 Chinese students in India come on Chinese government and university scholarships, with most enrolled in one- or two-year joint degree programmes. The most popular areas of study are computer science, e-commerce, finance and English.

For most students, costs loom large. Richard Tang, a Hunan native who recently graduated from Delhi University with a master's degree in computer science, considered the US, the UK, the Netherlands and Finland for his higher education. Realizing that the cost of most Indian universities was one-tenth their US counterparts for a science or business degree, or one-fifth the cost in other English-speaking countries, Tang made a beeline for India.

The yearly tuition fee of roughly \$200 (around Rs.9,000) for a liberal arts degree at Delhi University is even lower than at many Chinese universities, says Fu Yang, a 22-year-old who came to India to study Arabic. Given that he and many other Chinese students here hail from humbler backgrounds, he says, the decision makes financial sense. But students also pointed to more reasons than just cost. Wu, who admits that his English is far from perfect, says that one of the biggest advantages to an Indian education is the chance to improve his English. "Now I'm finally able to spit out all the English words I learnt at school," he says.

Sun Bing, a 21-year-old Beijing native studying business commerce, sees great value in India's Commonwealth status. "I know my diploma here will be fully recognized among other Commonwealth countries when I'm ready to pursue my master's degree," she says.

Fu, who was inspired by meeting Indian students progressing from second-tier Chinese colleges into top-tier Beijing universities, realized that "as a foreigner, you are pitted in a smaller pool than the locals because of different requirements". He adds, "And...the same thing could happen to me if I go to India." Getting into Delhi University was relatively easy. He didn't need to pass a mandatory entrance exam; he only needed to prove he'd finished high school.

In a way, students have perhaps benefited from India's lack of a regulated admission system for its small number of foreign students. According to the Association of Indian Universities, fewer than 22,000 foreign students enrolled in Indian universities in 2007-08, compared with the 230,000 foreign students in China in 2009.

Moorthy says he doesn't expect the number of Chinese students to spike any time soon, unless the government adopts a "top-down approach" and encourages private initiatives for better foreign student facilities.

Another hurdle is the lack of progress both nations have made in recognizing each other's academic degrees, despite years of negotiations. "There's a lack of focus from both governments on bilateral educational exchange," says Neyas Mohammed, director of educational consulting firm Asian Educational Consultancy. Mohammed adds that until policies are implemented, future exchanges cannot be propelled.

Indeed, even this policy gap is a symptom of the political ups and downs between the two nations. In just one of several points of bilateral tension, China recently refused a visa to a high-ranking Indian military commander because he came from the sensitive Jammu and Kashmir region.

At present, Chinese students in one- or two-year study programmes in India must renew their visas every three months, but rare cases of renewal have been known to last even two years. "Why can't they be given a one-year visa?" asks JNU's Acharya. The Indian government's visa policies are hampered by "irrationality and too much suspicion and fear", she says.

Fu at Delhi University says he's not too worried about visa renewal—at least not yet. "By being in India, I've already expanded my horizon so much," he says. "I feel so lucky to be here."

Source: 22 Oct, 2010/Live.Mint.com

Foreign boarding schools set to woo Indian students

India is arriving as a lucrative destination for American and European boarding schools. This is a shift from the past, wherein these schools were confined to South Asian nations like China. To pull students into these schools, The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS), comprising 300 schools from North America, Canada and Europe, will begin conducting promotional activities in Mumbai.

The idea is to make Indian students 'Harvard-ready'. Accordingly, representatives of around 292 such boarding schools will host workshops at a boarding schools' fair to be held in November here. They hope to use these workshops to enhance the enrolment of Indian students into these schools from the current low of 2%. Another objective is to promote diversity amongst the student body and inculcate a holistic perspective among them.

"In the age of globalisation, education should be a platform for students from diverse cultural backgrounds to come together and learn to appreciate one another," said Steve Banks, director operations, TABS.

The schools are using 'college preparation' as one of the major selling points. They claim that the instruction given in these schools will enable students to internalise the right attitude, analytical skills and discipline qualities that will easily make them accepted into universities abroad.

The association also hopes to break the stereotype that only rich children can afford these schools.

Meanwhile, the schools are using their 'lush green campuses' and 'serene learning environment' as the biggest hook. "Right at the first sight, I fell in love with the campus, when I had gone to visit a cousin in the US. The entire learning experience was different at the school. The faculty was readily available to take our call 24X7 and we got a truly global exposure," said Shabnam Pancha, alumni of Northfield Mount Hermon School, Massachusetts.

Source: 22 Oct, 2010/[DNA](#)

UK plans to send students to India for better skills

British students could soon sit and study alongside Indians in lecture halls at universities in India as part of plans to make UK students more employable by giving them international experience of living in other countries.

There is much hand-wringing among Britain's education leaders and employers who seek to expand abroad but find that students here do not know the language and other life skills to live and function outside UK.

There are several student exchange programmes allowing British students to spend a period of time to study abroad, particularly in European universities, but there is less enthusiasm among the students.

After returning from a recent visit to India, Universities minister David Willetts wants to develop joint undergraduate and postgraduate courses between UK and Indian universities that will allow British students to spend course time in India.

Currently, more than 40,000 Indian students are studying in Britain, but only 500 travelled to India every year, Willetts told the Daily Telegraph.

"The number of students going to India at the moment is embarrassingly low. It is a scandal that only 500 British

students currently go to one of the world's fastest growing economies. I want to get it up to the thousands quite soon."

Under his plans, British students would be able to complete mainstream qualifications in India after starting them in Britain.

"Businesses say there aren't enough students with experience of languages, different cultures and the wider world," Willetts said.

Source: London/22 Oct, 2010/[Ahmedabad Mirror.Com](#)

Panel push on medical education

A task force set up by the human resource development ministry has suggested bringing medical education within the ambit of an overarching higher education commission.

Disregarding opposition from the health ministry, the task force has drawn up a draft bill for creation of a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) that would "holistically" look after higher education. It has also suggested that legal education be brought under the commission's ambit but the Bar Council of India (BCI) has opposed it.

The task force has, however, said that agriculture education should remain outside the NCHER purview as agriculture is a state subject and bringing it under the commission would require a constitutional amendment.

"We have finalised the draft NCHER bill. We have stuck to our stand that legal education and all branches of medical education should be brought within the NCHER ambit. Agriculture education should be kept out of NCHER as it is a state subject," a member of the task force said.

The task force members included professors Mrinal Miri, M. Anandakrishnan, Goverdhan Mehta and N.R. Madhava Menon.

Health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and secretary Sujatha Rao have opposed the HRD ministry's proposal. They have decided to set up a National Council for Human Resource in Health (NCHRH), which would regulate all branches of medical education, including medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing and physiotherapy.

The health ministry has already prepared a draft NCHRH bill, which has been sent to different ministries for consultation.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal has said the draft NCHER bill will be discussed with all "stake holders" before it is finalised. The draft bill will be sent for inter-ministerial consultation before it is taken to the cabinet. If the cabinet clears it, the bill will be introduced in Parliament.

The BCI, which regulates legal education, has opposed the task force's suggestion and boycotted one of its consultation sessions.

"We have prepared the bill as per the recommendations of a committee on higher education under professor Yashpal.

The committee had said that all branches of higher education should be brought under one overarching body," the task force member said.

The basic objective of the NCHER is to give autonomy to universities to innovate and experiment. Bringing all types of education under one body will break barriers between different branches of education and promote excellence, the member said.

Source: New Delhi/ 22 Oct, 2010/ [The Telegraph](#)

Virginia Tech to set up 3 centres of excellence in TN

Virginia Tech University, one of the oldest in the United States, plans to set up three centres of excellence near Chennai. The varsity has already acquired land for this purpose.

Virginia Tech president Charles Steger announced the plan on Monday after his meeting with HRD minister Kapil Sibal, who is currently in the US.

Virginia Tech has found an Indian partner for these three centres -- Centre for Critical, Technical and Advanced Science, Virginia Bio Informatics Centre and Virginia Transport and Technical Institute -- that are likely to be operational within a year.

However, the prestigious university is yet to announce regular courses in India. So far, most of the American universities have shown interest only in leadership programmes and short-term courses. With Foreign Educational Institutions (regulation of entry and operation) Bill still with Parliament's Standing Committee, a clearer picture about foreign universities setting shop in India will emerge only after a law is in place.

Virginia Tech has also signed a memorandum of understanding with MARG Swarnabhoomi group. The institution will be called Virginia Tech MARG Swarnabhoomi, India, and it will be the varsity's first campus outside the US.

University officials said its new campus would create a place in India, where engineers, students and high-tech science professionals from both the countries, would work together and learn from each other.

Source: New Delhi/ 22 Oct, 2010/ [The Times of India](#)

Change classroom architecture'

To bring in quality education, India needs to free knowledge from restrictions like intellectual property rights. There is also a need to change the architecture of classrooms and bring down the rigidity of subjects in the framework of national curriculum. This is the message emanating from the Confederation of Indian Industry's two-day National Summit on Quality in Education.

Anita Rampal, head, Central Institute of Education, New Delhi, said that schools need to change the architecture of classrooms to promote inclusiveness in education. The architecture of classrooms consists of sitting

arrangements, teaching methods, learning styles, assessment patterns. "Students should not sit facing the teacher alone. The students should sit in groups to promote interaction. We need to get rid of words like 'slow learners', tracking or streaming students. We should have mixed ability groups in schools," she added.

This, said Anil Kakodkar, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India, can be achieved by redefining knowledge.

"We are creating barriers and hierarchies by putting knowledge on a pedestal, while vocational skills are looked down upon," he said in his inaugural address at the summit. The challenge, he said, is to create an environment where the curriculum suits the industry requirements. "Knowledge multiplies when open and shared seems to have become an old adage with the enactment of intellectual property law."

One of the models that are working towards changing school architecture is the school cluster movement initiated by CII-IQ in various states. Here, member schools meet to share the best practices and learn from each other. However, Kakodkar suggested a similar clustering where students from neighbouring schools could get together and practise and share skill sets. He called for the support of NGOs and other corporate organisations for the promotion of this venture which will improve employability.

HA Ranganathan, director, NAAC, felt school education should go back to the traditional Gurukul format, which promotes holistic personality growth. Higher education should not be fragmented into specialisations and should promote research. "Many schools have certification, but they are still mediocre. We need a better definition of quality," he said.

The sessions during the two-day summit bring educationists, NGOs and industrialists to showcase viable models to scale up education. An exhibition centre also presents some technology available.

Source: 23 Oct, 2010/[DNA](#)

Foreign varsities slash grants

For those of you counting on big ticket scholarships in your favourite foreign university, here is some dark news.

Several universities across the world are still reeling from the backlash of the global economic turmoil and are desperately trying to cut costs. Most are reducing administrative expenses and aggressively raising gifts from emerging markets, but a few of them have already targeted their scholarship schemes and research funding.

The worst news has, expectedly, come from Greece which has been hit the worst. Just last week, its education and external affairs ministries stripped away every scholarship they offered international students from developing nations. "We will not be able to offer scholarships from the ministry of education and another 100 from the ministry of external

affairs this year to any student," said Christina Vasilatou, head of the consular section at the [Greece embassy in Delhi](#).

Most Indian students, she added, head to polytechnic colleges in Greece to study engineering. Although the situation is not so dramatic in other countries, several other universities have seen their endowments tumble dramatically too. They have also been forced to slash scores of scholarships.

Apart from Greece, several other south-European countries have signalled introducing austerity measures as the W-shaped or a double-dip monstrous recession seems to be charging its way into their weak economies. Some foreign universities have sold parts of their campuses to raise funds as government grants have plunged, some other like [Yale University](#) have launched a slew of cost-cutting measures like installing occupancy sensors to bring down electricity bills and eliminating non-essential travel.

Till last year, when a student was accepted by a college for a PhD programme in the [United Kingdom](#), it was a given that the fellow would be largely supported financially by the host university, thanks to the generous funding available for research.

Source: MUMBAI/23 Oct, 2010/ [Times of India](#)

Centre seeks report on fake IIT & teacher

The Centre today asked IIT Kharagpur to give a "factual account" of a professor's alleged role in running an unapproved institute and duping students into believing it was a branch of the tech school.

Amit Kumar Ghosh, the head of the department of aeronautical engineering, has been accused of having a hand in the running of the Institution of Electrical Engineering (IEE) in Kharagpur and offering diploma courses without the approval of the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE).

IIT Kharagpur director Damodar Acharya met human resource development minister Kapil Sibal today and is understood to have explained the matter.

The ministry is livid that a senior faculty member could be involved in "fraudulent" activities. "The IIT Kharagpur authorities have been asked to furnish a factual account on the issue," a ministry official said.

A senior IIT official said Ghosh had been removed as aeronautical engineering department head following the allegations. An inquiry has been ordered.

The IEE has been operating from a temporary campus and offering courses such as a diploma in electrical engineering. Ghosh has allegedly been serving as the institute president. J.K. Tiwary has apparently been managing the institute for the last two years and luring students by claiming that the IEE is a branch of IIT-Kharagpur.

Trouble started this year after students found out that the IEE had no connection with IIT Kharagpur. It did not even have AICTE approval, mandatory for an institute teaching any technical course.

Furious, the students registered a complaint with the IIT Kharagpur director. "They have spoiled our career. We want justice," M. Ramu, a student of IEE, said.

The institute has been closed for the last two months.

Source: 23 Oct, 2010/[The Telegraph](#)

Experts back Sibal's plan for legal education

A panel of eminent academicians has backed the the human resource development ministry plan to bring legal education under the ambit of a proposed overarching higher education regulator. Kapil Sibal's HRD ministry now hopes to use the suggestions of the panel of independent academicians to argue against the law ministry's objections to giving up the Bar Council of India's control over legal education.

"If eminent academicians —including legal scholars — with unimpeachable credentials believe that legal education is best suited under a common regulator, surely that must be respected," a senior government representative said.

The panel was set up by Sibal in 2009 and consists of experts including NR Madhava Menon — who founded the Calcutta based National University of Judicial Sciences and has played key roles in the emergence of national law universities.

The battle over legal education is particularly critical for Sibal because he may have lost an identical battle over medical education with the health ministry.

Officially, Sibal has refused to air any differences within the government over the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) — a proposed overarching higher education regulator — and has maintained that the "government will take a decision."

But it is a thinly veiled secret that Sibal believes all streams of higher education — including medical and legal education — should be under an NCHER autonomous from any government ministry.

His plans received a setback when the Prime Minister at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences convocation end September announced that medical education would soon receive a new regulator independent of the NCHER.

Source: New Delhi/Oct 23, 2010/[Hindustan Times](#)

Cambridge has no plans to open campus in India

The University of Cambridge has no plans to set up a campus in India even though a new legislation currently moving through Indian parliament will enable foreign universities to open campuses to meet growing demand for higher education in India.

The Foreign Educational Institution (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010, is expected to raise the quality and quantity of higher education to meet India's growing demands for skilled manpower. The Left parties are among those opposed to allowing foreign universities in India's education sector. However, knowledge powerhouses such as Cambridge, Oxford and Imperial College, London, have no plans to set up campuses in India, though they are keen to enhance and enrich their research and institutional links with Indian universities and research institutions.

A University of Cambridge spokesman told PTI: "We have no immediate plans to open a campus in India but with the number of vital, valuable academic collaborations now in place between Cambridge and Indian counterparts, the relationship between us has never been stronger, which is why we are exploring new ways we can work together".

British universities have a large number of agents in India and have long standing research and teaching links with Indian institutions.

However, the initial reaction to India's opening of higher education to overseas competition has been cautious from old and established universities.

The spokesman, who has visited India several times with the vice-chancellor, said: "The pattern of India's development, its demography, its industrial structure, its projections for economic growth and its agenda for community development place a spotlight on the pivotal position of Higher Education".

He added: "While there are no immediate plans to open up a Cambridge University campus in India, we note the alignment between Cambridge multi disciplinary strengths and Indian academia and we are exploring appropriate ways to scale up our collaborations and partnership, for that will be the basis of anything we do".

Britain's university sector has come under considerable strain with the David Cameron government announcing major funding cuts last week.

Source: Cambridge, Oct 24 (PTI)/[Deccan Herald](#)

Single test for admission to medical colleges'

Medical education in the country is going in for an overhaul. And the newly-constituted MCI will be instrumental in bringing about many changes. Ranjit [Roy Chaudhury](#), member, board of governors in the [MCI](#) and National professor of pharmacology in the National Academy of Medical Sciences, spells out some of the changes -

MCI was under a cloud after its president Ketan Desai was arrested for corruption. Is it now more stringent in giving registration to new medical colleges?

MCI has introduced a transparent system for assessing medical colleges. Out of a large database of doctors, three specialists are selected randomly by a computer to assess each college. The date of their visit is kept a secret. Their

reports are acted upon immediately. At the moment, only the physical facilities, number of faculty and availability of patients needed to teach medical students are assessed. We also want to assess the quality of teaching and the product coming out of the college. We are also tackling the ridiculous practice of fake doctors and fake patients who, it's alleged, suddenly appear at the time of the assessment. I hope soon it would also become mandatory for every doctor to attend a certain number of accredited Continuing Medical Education (CME) modules before he can be reregistered. The Delhi Medical Council had made 150 hours of CME mandatory in five years. The MCI can now bring this back not only for Delhi but all over India.

Will the MCI be taken over by a National Council for Human Resource in Health?

It may be replaced by several bodies the National Commission for Human Resources in Health, with an Education Council, a National Committee for Accreditation and a Medical Council of India. This is the best thing that could happen.

The health ministry recently gave a green signal for a common entrance examination for admission to medical colleges. Why was this done?

Today, a student has to go for 17 examinations in different parts of the country to secure admissions to different medical colleges. Sometimes the dates clash. Is it possible for a poor but talented student to travel to all these centres? No. That's why we are proposing a single test on one day. Also, the standard of tests varies. A single test will bring in uniformity and grade students, for example, from 1 to 35,000, for the 32,000 seats available. The state quota can be filled by domiciled successful candidates in order of merit. Private colleges charging capitation fees could continue to do so if they are recognised, but they too will have to choose from the list of 35,000 students who qualified. They cannot allocate a seat to anyone not in this list.

Scientists recently found a new superbug originating from India. Is this just a scare to hit India's medical tourism or something to be really worried about?

The conclusions drawn in medical journal Lancet from a small number of people are not justified. Also, to label it as Superbug New Delhi is not fair and asking tourists not to come to India because of this is unscientific. However, we are heading towards a situation when none of our antibiotics will work and new ones are not discovered. We need antibiotic policies and a surveillance system for monitoring resistance. Pharmacies shouldn't be allowed to sell certain antibiotics without a prescription.

Source: 25 Oct, 2010 [The Times of India](#)

Pearson, Pratham Books ink deal to carry story books to villages

Publishing giant Pearson Education (Pearson Longman) has inked a memorandum of understanding with Pratham

Books, a non-profit platform, to promote reading among marginalised children in the villages and small towns of India.

The agreement will help underprivileged children in the country access quality story books.

Announcing the agreement Tuesday, Vivek Govil, chief operating officer and president of Pearson Education-India (the Indian arm of Pearson), and Rohini Nilekani, the founder-chairperson said Pearson will keep aside an amount of 50 paise from the sale of every school title in India to help Pratham buy story books for children.

However, the clause will not be 'applicable to titles published by Pearson for different state boards or special deals', the memorandum said.

Set up in 2004, Pratham publishes quality books for children in multiple Indian languages at subsidised prices.

It has published titles priced below Rs.25 in 11 Indian languages and has helped more than 12 million children across 18 states in the country read both fiction and non-fiction books through a network of government agencies, rural libraries, non-profit organisations and the UNICEF.

Founder-chairperson Rohini Nilekani describes the mission of the organisation as 'to see a book in every child's hand'.

Pearson has helped educate 100 million people worldwide. In India, it specialises in the publication of academic and reference books in the school segment.

The company also designs instruction tools for teachers.

The books selected by Pratham under the project will bear the sticker, 'the book bought and distributed by Pearson as part of their efforts to promote reading in India'.

'Our goal is to create as many partnerships as possible to reach as many children as possible with as many books as possible. Our collaboration with Pearson is a new milestone in the journey towards a book in every child's hand. We are happy that

Pearson has integrated its social and business commitment in this wonderful way,' Rohini Nilekani of Pratham Books said.

'We are trying in various and innovative ways to spread the joy of reading books and at the same time reducing prices of books without compromising on accessibility and quality,' Nilekani said.

Govil said his company was committed to 'promoting education in every way'.

Source: New Delhi/ (IANS)/ 26 Oct, 2010/Sify.com

Bengal drafts own rules for effective Right to Education

To implement the Right to Education Act — providing free and compulsory education to all children between the age

group of 6 to 14, the state government has framed its own set of rules.

The Indian Express has accessed the copy of the 38-page draft, which the government has sent to various stakeholders. According to the draft, local bodies like panchayats and municipalities will identify children and enroll them in schools. It also talks of setting up more schools in consultation with the state School Education department.

“The local authority shall maintain records of all children in its jurisdiction — from birth till a child attains the age of 14 — through household surveys. They will also include children from disadvantaged groups or weaker sections who require special training,” the draft stated.

The schools will admit children within six weeks of the beginning of the academic year and not discriminate against children from the disadvantaged sections of the society. The government will award each child “Elementary Education Certificate”, issued by the school at the end of Class VIII.

Source: Kolkata/27, Oct, 2010/ Indian Express

Canadian universities build ties with India

Canadians are going to hear a lot about India in the coming months.

That's partly because 2011 has been designated the Year of India in Canada, and we're going to be exposed to Indian culture like never before through performances, exhibitions, film festivals, food festivals and other events and activities. In tandem with that, we're also going to be hearing a lot about India as a new economic partner, and the tremendous potential for mutually beneficial partnerships between our two countries.

It is in that context that the largest delegation of Canadian university presidents ever to travel abroad (and the largest delegation of university presidents ever welcomed by India) undertakes a seven-day mission in India this November. The visit, organized by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, includes 15 presidents from universities across Canada. The goal of the mission is to find new ways for Canadian and Indian universities to work together, while at the same time creating awareness of Canada's "brand" in India.

It's hard to exaggerate how far India has come in the last 20 years.

Characterized as an unparalleled innovation hub and an emerging economic powerhouse, India achieved average real growth of almost nine per cent per year from 2003 to 2007. Even in 2009's recession, according to Canada's Export Development Corp., the country's economy grew by six per cent in the final quarter. Over the next decade, the Indian government expects that 1,400 new post-secondary institutions will be created, to serve seven million more students.

India has recognized it can't do this alone and the country is inviting more international partnerships. Canada has signalled that it is willing to take up the challenge. Last June, as part of the G20 Summit held in Toronto, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in higher education.

Canada's internationally ranked universities have a lot to offer the Indian higher education sector. Canadian universities perform more than one-third of the country's research and contribute billions of dollars to the Canadian economy. Across Canada and every day, research institutes are being established and world-renowned research teams are setting up shop. Research in health, nanotechnology, high-performance computing and film animation, for example, is exploding.

Given India's potential, we have to be mindful of the fact other countries are also sounding out partnerships. One of the goals of the visit is to establish Canada's profile in India. We have to let people know that Canada stands for excellence in higher education and research, especially in fields of interest to India.

Canada has much to work with in seeking new partnerships with India: strong cultural links; thriving high-tech companies; a strong university research system; natural resource strengths; and a multicultural society and workforce. We are also both geographically large and ethnically diverse federations, democracies, and members of the Commonwealth using the Westminster parliamentary system. We have in common the English language. Canada is home to over a million people of Indian origin. There are already several well-established Indo-Canadian academic partnerships. Increasing Canadian universities' contribution to India's higher-education sector will do much to enhance Canada's profile and social and economic leadership in the world.

Harper noted in a speech in Toronto earlier this year that the economies of Canada and India "complement each other in so many ways that the low level of trade between us seems unnatural."

He added: "That's something we must change. ... The road to the future for both India and Canada could carry much more traffic, if we continue to work on building the bridges." This mission of Canadian university presidents is a step in that direction.

Paul Davidson is president of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

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Source: 27 Oct, 2010/more: vancouversun.com

Raising investment in higher education

While the university system in England is far from broken, in the last several decades, the more dynamic and competitive US universities have relegated it to the second

position worldwide. Abandoning the traditional destinations in England, 100,000 Indian students today study in American universities.

Aware of the decline, the British authorities have been reforming the system in the last 15 years. The latest step in this direction is the report of the independent panel headed by Lord Browne. The panel was asked to make recommendations to increase investment in education, ensure that the quality of teaching is world class and make higher education accessible to anyone with the talent for it. While the ailments of our higher education system are wider and deeper than those of the British system, there are useful lessons for us in the Browne report.

Consider first the access issue. In 2000, the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, which measures the number of individuals going to college as percentage of college-age population, was 8% in China and 10% in India. By 2008, the ratio had shot up to 23% in China but crept up to only 13% in India. College and university education remain off-limits to many talented Indian students.

On the quality front, consider the QS World University Rankings, which are designed to assess the all-round quality of universities across all disciplines and levels. Two Chinese universities found listing among the top 100 universities in the 2010 rankings, with the University of Peking ranking 47th and Tsinghua University 54th. Sadly, not a single Indian university made it to the list. No doubt, we have institutions of excellence in teaching in the IITs and IIMs. But they are not full-fledged universities. Universities of Hyderabad and Delhi that earn the top spots in the national ranking do not make to the QS list of the top 100 universities.

This comparison with China is especially telling since Mao Zedong had almost entirely wiped out China's higher education system during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-68. In contrast, India has had an uninterrupted history of modern universities since 1857 when the Universities of Calcutta, Mumbai, and Madras were founded. Soon after the independence, our university system was strengthened but it has languished during the last three decades, precisely the period during which the Chinese have been rebuilding theirs.

To be sure, financing is a key problem facing our higher education system. With tight central and state government budgets and pressures to cut fiscal deficits at all levels, the government lacks the resources necessary to expand access to all who deserve. With salaries rising in the private sector, universities also find it difficult to retain and recruit topquality teachers essential to good teaching. It is here that we could put the experience of England and the advice offered by the Browne report to good use.

Until 1997, college and university students in England paid no tuition fees whatsoever. With public expenditure on higher education stagnating, expenditure per pupil fell by 36% between 1989 and 1997. On the recommendation of

the Lord Dearing Committee, which reported in 1997, a fee of £1,000 was introduced, but it proved inadequate. The Higher Education Act, 2004, which came into effect in 2006, raised tuition fee further, but placing a cap on it at £3,000. The government had expected that only the best universities will hit the cap but all institutions have come to charge £3,000 today. As a result, there remains no further scope for increased investment to improve access or quality. The reform introduced by the Higher Education Act, 2004 has fallen well short of its objectives.

Source: 27 Oct, 2010/[The Economic Times](#)

Consultative Committee meeting for HRD held; Reforms in AICTE Discussed

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has introduced e-governance for transaction of all its business including online submission of applications-for transparency and clarity, easier & assured communication and fast processing of applications, This was stated by the Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal while addressing the Members of the Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of HRD here last evening. The subject of the meeting was "Reforms in All India Council for Technical Education". A presentation on the reforms initiated in the AICTE was also made in the Meeting. The Presentation outlined the following regarding the Reforms.

Organisational reforms: To strengthen the organization and enhance the functioning and performance of the Council, the following measures and practices have been adopted.

- Improvement in Security measures.
- Introduction of e-governance system for transparency.
- Website is being modified to make it more user friendly
- Office Manuals for adopting procedures have been drafted.
- Induction training/orientation programmes for incumbents are being drafted.
- Proper Records management, retention/weeding is being carried out.
- Personnel are appointed on deputation basis.
- Execution of Work order for Construction of Permanent Building at JNU
- Council approval for setting Internal Audit cell for finance & as well as performance Audit.
- Council is also exploring the possibility of Digitization of records.

Online submission of applications all year round: The process for the approval of cases electronically started for the year 2010-11 w.e.f. 10th January, 2010. It provided facility for tracking of applications by applicants and emphasizes on Self declarations by Institutions rather than inspections.

New Institutes/Integrated Campus: New Institutes can now start with enhanced intake capacity for more economic viability. Engg./Tech Institute can seek an intake of 300 instead of 240. Similarly MCA/MBA/PGDM/Pharmacy/Art & Craft can seek intake of 120 instead of 60 and Architecture & Town Planning 80 instead of 40.

Norms for Land Requirement: Land requirement for Engineering Institutions in mega cities reduced from 3 to 2.5 acres and in metro cities from 5 to 4 acres.

It was also stated that the Council has so far accorded approval to more than 7000 Institutions to impart technical education to around 2.0 million students in the country.

Subsequent to the Presentation, the Members of Parliament expressed their views/concerns regarding the AICTE. Most of the MPs emphasized that while increasing the number of colleges/seats, quality of education must be a prime concern. Some MPs expressed their concern regarding corruption / malpractices reported about educational institutions. Some MPs raised concerns about the efficacy of the e-governance system and that glitches and delays had come to light regarding it. One MP questioned the reason for according the e-governance contract to a private party rather than NIC. Some MPs talked about the revised land requirement norms, one MP was of the view that much larger land area must be mandated for educational institutions while one MP wanted uniform 2.5 acres irrespective of urban or rural areas and one MP wanted separate norms for hilly areas. An MP stated that the teaching of ethics, nationalism and of the Liberal Arts is also required in engineering education. One MP stated that the qualification for entering polytechnics be increased to plus two rather than the current class X. One MP expressed reservations regarding a common engineering entrance test for the whole country considering the disparities in the country.

Replying to the concerns of the MPs, Shri Kapil Sibal at first stated that the subject of the next Consultative Committee could also be AICTE reforms, considering the deep interest in the matter. Regarding the concerns raised by MPs on quality and regarding reports of corruption in technical institutes, he stated that the proposed Prohibition of Educational Malpractices Bill and The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority Bill, seek to address the issues of corruption and quality respectively. He sought support from the MPs present for these Bills. Regarding the concerns about e-governance, the Minister said that on the whole, the new system has found support and approval. He agreed that some problems/delays in its implementation had been experienced, but most of these problems could be attributed to Engineering Institutes not having computers of the quality that could upload the data as required and delays happened due to the time taken by the institutes to upgrade the computers. Regarding the project being undertaken by private sector parties instead of NIC, the Minister stated that he had been given to understand that

NIC was not able to provide the solutions required for the Project.

Also present at the Meeting, from the Human Resource Development Ministry were Smt. D.Purandeswari, MOS, HRD, Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary (SE&L) and Smt. Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, (HE), besides other senior officials of the Ministry. The Members of Parliament who are in the Consultative Committee and who attended the meeting include Shri Adagooru H. Vishwanath, Shri Ganeshrao Nagorao Dudhgaonkar, Ghanshyam Anuragi, Shri Jagda Nand Singh, Shri Kabindra Purkayastha, Shri Lalji Tandon, Dr. M. Thanmbi Durai, Dr. Nirmal Khatri, Shri Prem Das Rai, Smt. Rama Devi, Dr. Ranjan Prasad Yadav, Shri Sucharu Ranjan Haldar, Shri G.N. Ratanpuri, Shri Ishwar Singh and Dr. Prabhakar Kore.

Source: 28 Oct, 2010/[PIB](#)

IIT-Kanpur, IIM-Kozhikode tie up with Yale

In a step towards enhancing educational links with the US, the Indian Institute of Management-Kozhikode and the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur are tying up with the Yale University for collaboration in higher education.

The three institutes signed a memorandum of understanding Thursday for cooperation in higher education through research, a statement from the human resource development (HRD) ministry said.

Under the 'Yale-India Leadership Initiative', the partnership will begin with a term of five years and can be renewed after that. A six-member committee with equal participation from the three partnering institutes will determine the norms/qualifications for participating in these leadership programmes.

"This tie-up will expose university and academic leaders in India at the levels of vice-chancellor, director, and deans to the best practices of academic administration and institutional management in the United States," HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said after the MoU was signed.

The MoU would also engage in joint faculty research on higher education and collaborate to organise workshops and seminars on relevant areas of academic administration and leadership. The first programmes under the agreement would take place in 2011 in New Haven, Connecticut.

"Yale is pleased to undertake this important and much needed effort on higher education with IIM -Kozhikode and IIT-Kanpur . We look forward to working with them to advance the cause of higher education in India by sharing what we have learned over three centuries as an institution and we similarly look forward to learning from our partners in India in this age of global education," Yale president Richard Levin said.

The partnership will take effect from January 2011.

Source: NEW DELHI/28 Oct, 2010/[Economic Times](#)

Education loan racket caught in Delhi

The crime branch of Delhi police has arrested a group of eight youth in an [education loan](#) racket in Delhi. These youth cheated near about 500 students by promising them easy loans. The fraud amount has been found to be nearly Rs 1 crore. The leader of the gang has been identified as 24-year-old Varun Sardana, a former employee of a multinational bank.

According to additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Neeraj Thakur, "Sardana, his two school friends Himanshu Sharma, 21, and Sunny Pal, 22, and five girls, aged between 19 and 27 years, were arrested from their office at Parmanand Colony in Mukherjee Nagar on October 28."

Thakur said, "The gang advertised extensively in local dailies in the National Capital Region and offered easy education loans to susceptible customers." The gang had girl convicts too who aided in convincing the students to deposit their money.

There were 16 bank accounts and 26 mobile phones through which the gang operated, all bearing fake IDs. These banks include State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of India, Union Bank and Axis Bank. Fifty-seven unused SIM cards were recovered from the gang, along with 18 ATM cards.

"Sardana left his well-paying job and recruited his school friends, Himanshu and Sunny, to run the racket in Delhi," Thakur said. "He then hired a few girls and taught them how to sell the story of easy education loans to gullible callers," he added.

On the client's call the girl asked him to first deposit an amount between Rs 2,500 and Rs 3,000 as processing fee in a certain bank account. After this the client was asked to send relevant documents to a mail id. "Then the victim was asked to deposit the first installment of the loan in a bank account, before the promised loan materialised," added Thakur.

Source: 31 Oct, 2009/ [Rupee Times.com](#)

Virtual classroom on your mobile

Soon IIT aspirants will be able to access IIT JEE (Joint Entrance Examination) coaching material on their mobile phones. Six months hence, education service providers like Everonn Education and NIIT will be able to stream educational content through the third generation (3G) mobile telephony using the satellite-based Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) Technology and Broadband.

"3G is ahead of all the present services we use. Everonn, through its several studios, will deliver classes using presentations, video, audio and digital content just like it does with VSAT where a single instructor can teach students across the country without compromising on the quality of learning," said Kishore, managing director, Everonn Education.

Similar to a VSAT arrangement, 3G will have an instructor and students, in a virtual classroom environment using audio-video transmission. Interactions would be instant, as in a regular classroom not only enabling students to have interactive sessions with instructors but also peers across the country.

A 3G-enabled learning platform would mean anywhere, anytime learning accessible on mobile phones. The 3G spectrum will not only allow stronger bandwidth in remote locations but also better video quality.

"We are working on the per minute cost that would be charged to the users. We have already tied up with Airtel and may look at more tie-ups in the future," said Kishore. Everonn would also use 3G for language training for students.

Everonn, through Toppers Tutorial - which it acquired in February 2008 - imparts IIT-JEE and other engineering entrance examinations tutorials to students through VSAT technology.

NIIT on the other hand said the organisation is looking at a similar arrangement in the future. "Definitely there is a thought on providing training to students on the 3G platform as the world moves to a point where one can access any information on one's mobile phone. We would take to it in future," a senior NIIT official told Business Standard.

Last year, Delhi-based Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), an open university which offers distance learning courses signed an agreement with Swedish telecom giant Ericsson to provide educational content using 3G mobile telephony. The university with over 2.5 million students on its rolls, had launched the programme for 1,000 students pursuing the certificate course in information technology.

Source: 31 Oct, 2009/Sify.Com

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

'What does AIIMS aspire to become in the year 2025?'

Over the years, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has functioned in a complex working environment with multiple and growing demands on its resources. It is called upon to educate top quality health professionals, serve as a hub of biomedical research, provide extensive hospital services and increasingly provide leadership in the area of public health. Despite the enormous challenges, the institute has established itself as the country's pre-eminent medical institution, attracting the best and the brightest young in the country.

In meeting its onerous mandates, the institute has grown considerably – both physically and in terms of what it is doing. *But can one say that the growth has been organic or faithful to a central purpose or mission? What does AIIMS aspire to become in the year 2025? What*

relationship should it have with the government and with its other stakeholders?

The Veliathan Committee reflected on some of these issues and produced, I believe, a very good report. I suggested to Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad last year that we should have an ambitious and befitting vision of what this great institution should aspire to become and that we should, therefore, work on a far-reaching agenda of reform. I compliment Ghulam Nabi Azad and his colleagues in the Health Ministry for the efforts they have made to improve internal governance and management of the institute. I understand that a high-powered group is looking into changes in the statute, rules and regulations governing AIIMS that are considered critical for the institute to function effectively in an environment that nurtures innovation, talent and excellence. The government will consider the recommendations expeditiously and do what is in the best interest of the institute. We should aim at nothing less than making AIIMS one of the ten best medical universities in the world by the year 2020. This is not going to be easy. But it can be done.

In recent years, the government has adopted a more inclusive and holistic approach towards providing health security in our country, emphasising therein the importance of improved sanitation, nutrition and clean drinking water. The challenges are particularly acute in our rural areas. We have tried to address the critical lacunae of inadequate public provisioning for critical health services. The Eleventh Five Year Plan envisaged an increase in public expenditure on health to at least two per cent of GDP. This percentage was one per cent of our GDP at the start of the Eleventh Plan and has increased to only 1.1 per cent in 2009-10 according to the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Planning Commission.

There is clearly much more to do and a large effort will be required in the Twelfth Plan period to achieve the goal of taking the total allocation for the health sector to two-three per cent of our GDP. Since most of the expenditure on health is in state Budgets, the state governments will also have to substantially increase their expenditures.

In India and globally as well, there is a growing sense that medical education needs a revamp to adapt it to contemporary needs and realities. The need of the hour is to produce professionals who address health not only from the perspective of the individual patient but as part of a team integrated into the larger health system.

India needs many more health professionals, of different categories, to fill the huge shortfall in the health workforce. Many of our medical colleges are deficient in the learning resources needed to train specialists. High-quality faculty is in short supply. AIIMS, and similar institutions which are leaders in medical education, have to show the way ahead.

Source: (Excerpts from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's address at the convocation, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, in New Delhi on October 1)

PM backs health ministry on medical education

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Friday said the health ministry's proposed bill for a separate council to look after medical education in India will be introduced in parliament soon, putting an end to its turf war with the human resource development ministry.

'National Council for Human Resource in Health will be formed soon,' the prime minister said while addressing the 38th Convocation of All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the national capital.

Health Secretary Sujatha Rao said: 'Health education will remain with the health ministry, and the consultations for the bill are on.'

The turf war started when the HRD ministry proposed that the medical education be brought under the ambit of its National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) while the health ministry proposed a separate National Council for Human Resource in Health (NCHRH).

At this the health ministry voiced its concerns, maintaining that medical education needed to remain with it since it is a specialised field.

While the health ministry looked enthused over the prime minister's backing, a deadline for bringing the bill was not given.

'It is as per the president's address to the joint session. The prime minister also announced it on Independence Day. We are now working on the bill and it will be ready soon,' Rao said.

According to sources, the prime minister has been backing a separate council for health education since the beginning. The issue was first mentioned by Manmohan Singh in his Independence Day speech when he announced separate councils for higher education and health.

Source: New Delhi, Oct 1 (IANS) Sify.com

Sibal says foreign universities upbeat on India

The three centres of excellence - the Centre for Critical, Technical and Advanced Science, the Virginia Bio Informatics Centre and the Virginia Transport and Technical Institute - would be set up with an Indian partner. Experts seem to be taking in the information with a pinch of salt.

But others doubt claims, effectiveness of India campuses BY Nafisa Ali New Delhi A day after his return from the US, Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal is satisfied with his relationship-building exercise with foreign universities. He said some US universities have shown keen interest in the innovation universities, or institutions for vocational training, that are to be set up in India. According to the minister, University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University "are excited about our innovation university and are awaiting the passage of the foreign universities bill." Others have also extended

academic and financial support. "The Wadhvani Foundation in the west coast of the US is also willing to invest \$20 million in vocational education in the country," Sibal added. But educationists are sceptical. "How can foreign universities help with the curriculum that needs to be India-specific, especially for vocational courses? We have enough resources here.

These sound good but have no practical usefulness," said Tabrez Khan, professor, Jamia Milia Islamia University. In his week-long stay in the US, Sibal visited Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University popularly known as Virginia Tech. Sibal said that it "has decided to open three centres of excellence in Chennai dedicated to carrying out high-end research activities and producing sector-specific talents. The three centres of excellence - the Centre for Critical, Technical and Advanced Science, the Virginia Bio Informatics Centre and the Virginia Transport and Technical Institute - would be set up with an Indian partner. Experts seem to be taking in the information with a pinch of salt.

That is because last year the HRD minister had claimed that education providers like Harvard, Yale and Oxford had shown "keen interest" in setting up campuses in India. However, all three denied any such plans. "The institutes that will come eventually will just be education shops. They will not be the Ivy League (institutions) and that will adversely affect the quality of Indian education. The West is always not right," said Aditya Misra, president, Federation of Central Universities Teachers' Associations. The Foreign Education Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010, or the foreign universities bill as it is popularly referred to, is still pending in Parliament. The bill, which was to be taken up during the monsoon session, would now be debated in the winter session of Parliament. Until some clarity surfaces, such claims by the minister will have to pass the litmus test.

Source: Oct4, 2010, *Tehelka* sourced by HT Media Ltd/
Indiainfoline.com

India, China Neck-To-Neck In Race To U.S. Management Schools

Bangalore, India (AHN) - The battle for one-upmanship between South Asian economic giants India and China has entered the arena of higher education, as China recently overtook its neighbor in terms of sending more students to management schools in the United States.

.For many years now, Indian students led the number of foreigners enrolling for the Graduate Management Admission Test to U.S. B-schools. However, propelled by fast economic growth, China has overtaken India in the numbers – as many as 80,000 Chinese students applied to U.S. management schools this year against 65,361 Indian students.

Both countries are emerging economies raring to find a foothold on the global stage. While India has, for long, been outperforming China in clinching senior executive positions

in leading multinational corporations, the Chinese, known to be hard workers, are doing everything they can to catch up.

From bridging the gap in using English more prominently, overcoming the inability to work with outsiders, being more tolerant of change, the Chinese are making sure that they outperform India soon in the sphere of business.

Experts suggest that "India's edge in English language and sound management education helps Indians in snatching more senior executive positions than Chinese, but the latter, being fast learners, are expected to catch up soon."

However, there might be other reasons behind China gaining ground slowly. Indian business schools, such as the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) and Indian School of Business (ISB), are rising fast as "competitive business schools" globally. As a result, more and more Indian students prefer to take up management studies at home instead of going abroad.

Moreover, unlike overseas business schools, Indian higher education institutions are more difficult to get into, as observed by Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy, who recounted in a recent television interview how his son Rohan could not get admission into Indian Institute of Technology and had to opt for Cornell University instead.

Source: October 4, 2010 All-Headline-News.com

Ahluwalia urges agricultural universities to strengthen research

Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia today urged agricultural universities in the country to adopt innovative approaches to strengthen agricultural research and education in India.

Speaking at a meeting of Vice-Chancellors of agricultural universities here, Mr Ahluwalia said these institutions could play an important role in this area by providing research-based projects with the help of industry.

Appreciating the role played by the National Agricultural Research System in India, Mr Ahluwalia urged the scientists working in agricultural research institutes to re-orient themselves in the 12th Plan period (2012-17) to help the country face the challenges of food security and climate change.

Referring to the gap in agricultural growth rate and land productivity between China and India, he emphasized the need for more research on these two issues.

"Four per cent agricultural growth will be needed for a growing economy like India. It would require more investment in knowledge management, institutional support and diversification in agriculture. The government is also willing to fund such projects," he said.

Mr Ahluwalia also suggested a new mechanism to fund research projects instead of funding universities.

Dr. S. Ayyappan, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education and Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Education (ICAR), highlighted the role and contribution of the ICAR institutes and agricultural universities in developing new technology and seeds for Indian farmers.

He expressed the hope that some institutes could be converted into the centres of excellence.

"Institutional support, better infrastructure and faculty development can help them to emerge at international level," he added.

The meeting was convened to discuss the challenges before agricultural research and education.

Source: October 4, 2010/ Netindian.in/news

Don't think India can afford not to study the liberal arts'

Anand Mahindra, vice-chairman and MD of Mahindra and Mahindra, has offered his alma mater, Harvard University, a \$10- million endowment for its humanities centre. Mahindra, who graduated from the university with a degree in visual and environmental studies in 1977 and later from the Harvard Business School, told that in India, too, the focus of his philanthropy will to bolster the study of liberal arts.

Why did you decide on this endowment for Harvard? And why now?

I have always been looking for a way to give back to the university. When I went as an undergraduate, I was not permitted any foreign exchange by the RBI so Harvard gave me a full scholarship. I have never forgotten that. To me, the undergraduate liberal arts degree was perhaps the most important part of my education.

My mother passed away last year, and I was looking for some way to respect her memory. She was the quintessential Renaissance woman. I feel everyone needs a grounding in the humanities.

What does the centre plan to do with the grant?

One way of giving is to be very focused on a specific India-related cause. However, I have intentionally chosen to contribute to a field that is universal, and which all students, regardless of their area of study, will benefit from. I would therefore hope that this gift will help show that India is not just concerned with parochial issues, but can give back, globally.

Why is a liberal arts education important?

The humanities encompass a spectrum of disciplines. What it does is teach you not a particular skill or technology but to think and question. Conflict resolution and creating a better world do not come from an improved piece of software or a better engine or technology but from people who can break free from their rigid points of view.

Can a developing country like India afford to invest in the liberal arts over, say, vocational or job-oriented courses?

I don't think India can afford not to study the liberal arts. My greatest fear is that we will get carried away by India's economic success and focus on those disciplines that have immediate financial returns. That's why I'm glad there are benefactors planning to put up liberal arts universities. That is going to be the focus of my personal giving in India in the future: to bolster the study of liberal arts.

Some might say that instead of this kind of high-profile grant you could contribute to strengthening primary education in India.

The Mahindra family and companies have given far more than this to education in India. I personally funded the Nanhi Kali programme when I came back to India, which has been giving for the underprivileged girl child for years now and has become one of our strongest CSI programmes. We also created United World College in India, and other private schools. So we do give in India.

Second, why do people believe you can't do both?

Nobody asked, why did you buy companies abroad instead of investing only in India? Doesn't it seem terribly parochial to ask that question today? You do both. If India wants to take its place on the global stage a good cause is a good cause whether it's here or in Cambridge Massachusetts.

Source: October 05, 2010/ [Hindustan Times](#)

Exiting the stimulus - strategy for India: M Govinda Rao

Indian policy makers will have to evolve an exit strategy that maintains high growth with price stability

It is very well admitted that the economic crisis witnessed in the aftermath of the Lehman episode is the worst since the Great Depression of 1929. Since 2007, global output has contracted by 0.6 per cent and the decline in advanced economies has been as much as 3.2 per cent. Though the world economy has moved into a positive growth territory, thanks to large stimulus packages, fears of a double-dip recession remain. Though some countries, particularly the emerging market economies, have shown a faster revival, market sentiment in most advanced economies continues to be pessimistic.

There were considerable variations in the size as well as the composition of stimulus packages depending upon the intensity of the crisis, prevailing economic environment and the scope available for providing the stimulus. The average stimulus provided by the G20 countries in 2009 alone was \$692 billion or 1.4 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP). Just three countries, the US (39 per cent), China (13 per cent) and Japan (10 per cent), contributed two-thirds of the stimulus provided by G20 countries. In general, one-third of the stimulus measures have been in tax cuts and two-thirds in expenditure increases.

The consequence of these large stimulus packages has been to sharply increase their deficits and debt. The gross debt-to-GDP ratio of the G20 economies increased from 61.3 per cent in 2007 to 76.8 per cent in 2010. In the advanced countries, the increase was from 77.9 per cent to 104.4 per cent and in the emerging economies, it was from 32.3 per cent to 37 per cent. The average primary deficit in the advanced G20 countries in 2010 is estimated at 7 per cent of GDP and in the emerging market economies, 1.8 per cent. It is close to or more than 10 per cent in the US, the UK, Spain and Japan. These have brought to the fore the fiscal sustainability question.

Surely, most economies have shown definite signs of a turnaround and with growing concern about fiscal sustainability, governments and central banks need to work out strategies to unwind the stimulus. However, a simultaneous withdrawal of the stimulus, particularly by the advanced countries, could cause a double-dip recession and, therefore, the withdrawal has to be calibrated carefully. The countries where the revival has been faster, those with high debt-to-GDP ratios, and those with a looming threat of inflation, should initiate the process faster than the countries that are still vulnerable with private sector revival yet to take firm roots.

A coordinated stimulus withdrawal requires both internal and international rebalancing. Internal rebalancing is necessary to ensure that the withdrawal does not result in a decline in the overall demand. It is also necessary to adopt a strategy that employs a combination of tax increases and spending cuts. Credible commitment to cut expenditures is important. International rebalancing is even more daunting, for even as the developed countries start initiating their exit, others will have to fill the space and offsetting demand decline from advanced countries is most difficult. Prospects of persuading countries like China to increase their consumption to offset the US demand shortfall, for example, do not look very bright. Furthermore, increased external imbalance has persuaded many developed countries to resort to protectionist policy in one form or another, and China continues with a "mercantilist"-type exchange rate policy.

Among the emerging market economies, India is the right candidate for initiating the exit from expansionary fiscal and accommodating monetary policies. The Indian economy has revived to record an estimated 7.4 per cent growth in 2009-10 and in the current financial year, it is estimated at 8.5 per cent. Interestingly, India embarked on fiscal expansion much before the global financial crisis and this has helped the economy land softly during the crisis. The plan for large increases in public expenditures for pay revision, loan waiver and food and fertiliser subsidies was put forth in February 2008, much before the Lehman episode unfolded in September 2008. Besides, large election-related spending also resulted in a stimulus.

Exiting from the stimulus to phase out large volume of deficits and debt is, however, painful and Indian policy

makers will have to evolve an exit strategy that maintains high growth with price stability. India's consolidated fiscal deficit in 2010-11 is estimated at about 8 per cent which, although lower than the 10.2 per cent recorded in the previous year, is much larger than any other emerging market economy. India's debt-to-GDP ratio is also very high at about 80 per cent and though an overwhelming proportion of this is internal, it is a cause for worry. Also, expanding expenditures on education from the present level of 3.2 per cent of GDP to 6 per cent and healthcare spend from the present level of 1.4 per cent to 3 per cent in the medium term as indicated in the National Common Minimum Programme in addition to meeting large commitments on food security will make the task of fiscal consolidation really daunting.

The exit strategy will have to take into account these ground realities and will have to proceed on the lines indicated by the fiscal consolidation path laid down by the Finance Commission. This would require that the debt-to-GDP ratio is brought down to 68 per cent by 2014-15 and fiscal deficit is compressed to about 5 per cent. This implies that it is necessary to phase out/target subsidies on the lines indicated in the Economic Survey. On the tax side, the implementation of Direct Taxes Code (DTC) may not bring in large gains in the short term and it appears both DTC and Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be implemented only from April 2012. Nevertheless, the success of the exit strategy crucially hinges on a significant increase in the buoyancy in tax revenues. It was the successful application of the Tax Information Network that helped augment tax ratio by almost 3 percentage points since 2003-04, and the success of GST implementation will crucially depend on the adoption of technology in ensuring accurate and swift credit, clearance of inter-state transactions and refunds (zero-rating of exports). Hopefully, both the Centre and states will ensure this.

The author is director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. The views are personal. mgr@nipfp.org.in

Source: October 05, 2010/ Business-Standard.com

Anupam Kher's new role as Pratham goodwill Ambassador

Anupam Kher whose career spans nearly 400 films and over 100 plays, has been appointed the goodwill ambassador of the Pratham Education Foundation, which strives to improve children's education in India.

The actor claims that the new role is tailor-made for him as he has always been drawn to the cause of children's education, which was what led him to found his own School of Life Programme.

Kher, who has been travelling across the United States for the past few weeks and has already visited New Jersey, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Raleigh, North Carolina, Charleston, South Carolina, Boston, Washington DC and New York, said, "I am certain a lot of synergy will be

unleashed in being appointed goodwill ambassador for Pratham and in leveraging my media image. By becoming Pratham's public face, I hope to augment in its fund-raising, capacity enhancement and other initiatives dedicated to the cause of children's education."

Madhav Chavan, CEO of the Pratham Education Foundation, in announcing Kher's appointment, said, "While Anupam's accomplishments as an actor are well known, it is his determination to use his eminence to help India's children go to school and learn well, that has led to his appointment as the Pratham Goodwill Ambassador. I hope he can help spotlight the key issues concerning education and help Pratham achieve its mission of 'every child in school and learning well.'"

He added that Kher would also be hosting Pratham's informative television programme called *Angrezi OK Please*.

Kher took over Pratham's envoy from Waheeda Rahman, who was Pratham's Goodwill Ambassador for two years. And it was she who persuaded him to take over 'this labour of love' from her.

"I have been working with children for the last 15 years and have even been a teacher for mentally challenged children in special schools. I had attended some fund-raising events for Pratham too when Waheedaji was the brand ambassador," Kher said. "I think when they asked Waheedaji who should take over she had suggested my name because she was familiar with my work with children and had interacted with me in this work and knew my passion for it."

Kher said that *Angrezi OK Please* was a TV series to "teach slum children, or the poor and unprivileged children a basic knowledge of speaking in English. It's got a game show kind of format and it's a very interesting concept, where kids learn to speak basic English while playing a game. We feature children along with their parents -- who are basically working class parents."

The show, Kher says, is ready to go on air. Thirteen episodes have been shot, and it's waiting for a channel to pick it up and telecast it weekly.

"There a lot of people -- and I don't hold anything against them -- who are brand ambassadors of expensive watches, cars, suitings, and get millions of rupees for doing that, which is very fine and okay with me," Kher said. "But I believe it's a great service if I am a brand ambassador where I won't get paid anything but at least through me, I get to help in the education of children. For me, it's the greatest reward I can ask for because in some small way, I am making a difference in the lives of these children, and in the process making a difference in my life."

He said his work for Pratham is not for any fixed period of time, but open-ended, as long as they need him. "They have not told me any terms and neither do I worry about that. I will continue to work with them even if I am not the

ambassador and I'll also be working to develop my own foundation. But as long as we are doing the similar kind of work that is going to benefit children, whether you are an ambassador or not doesn't make a difference," he says.

Kher hopes to visit the US regularly on behalf of Pratham on fund-raising tours.

Describing what he has been doing thus far in his role as goodwill ambassador, he said, "Basically it's interacting with people because since my association is cinema, they recognise me. So my face helps in bringing awareness. It's a face, which sort of people listen to and because I speak with compassion and speak what I believe in, it becomes easier for me to change the mind-set of people and encourage those who are already involved to do even more.

"I am not like a serious person who has come to make serious speeches and lecture them about the abject poverty of India or how India is illiterate and things like that," he added. "Sometimes people feel uncomfortable if you lecture them. They want to give but with joy, and without feeling guilty. They want to give with a sense of spontaneity and I believe I bring that in them.

"So I motivate them because I am a motivational speaker. I've been speaking at the Kellogg School of Business on this trip, the Illinois Institute of Management, University of Maryland, Cambridge in England and at the IIT's in India," he added.

"While speaking on a motivational level, I bring Pratham in and why it is important that they help in alleviating the lot of these underprivileged children and why contributing to the cause is important. Unlike the branding of watches or whatever for commercial purposes like some people do, here I am dealing with emotions and not products. Everybody has those emotions, I just need to tap them."

Kher said he would also travel across India on behalf of Pratham and work in concert with his own foundation, "But right now I don't want to eat into the money that we will raise for Pratham. I will have plenty of time for my organisation since it's only two years old."

He added that he had a two-acre plot of land in Karjat, near Mumbai, which he had bought several years ago to build himself a weekend retreat. But he had never gotten around to building it. "Now I will use that land to build a home for the homeless children," he said.

Pratham was founded in the slums of Mumbai in 1994, with UNICEF support. Today, Pratham's urban programmes, including pre-schools, community libraries and remedial learning programmes reach hundreds of thousands of children every year.

In 2007, with the support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Pratham launched the Read India campaign -- an innovative, low-cost effort to reach more than 100 million children who cannot read, write or do basic mathematics. With the continued support of the Hewlett

Foundation in 2010, the Read India campaign has now entered its second phase, focusing its attention at the village level and teaching more advanced learning skills.

Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report evaluates India's status of education through direct testing of over 700,000 children in 16,000 villages across India. ASER is the only annual measurement of basic literacy and numeracy conducted at scale in India today and its widespread dissemination has helped focus government attention on the issue of learning. To support newly literate children across India, Pratham books has developed and published over 130 titles and printed over three million children's books in local Indian languages.

Over the years, Pratham's programmes -- which operate with an annual budget of less than \$15 million -- have been recognised internationally for their innovation and impact. Recently, Pratham won the CNN-IBN Indian of the Year Award in the public service category and the Henry R Kravis Leadership Prize. Pratham USA, has a four-star rating -- the highest possible, from Charity Navigator.

Source: October 06, 2010 <http://movies.rediff.com>

Incredible India, Indeed!

While coming to office today morning, I got a glimpse of where our country is heading. It is heading nowhere or at best to a disaster. While waiting at a busy traffic intersection for the lights to turn green, I felt a tap on my left window. A kid not more than seven years old was seen waving the morning newspaper at me with a hope in his eyes that I would buy a copy from him. When other kids like him would be preparing for their schools, this lad is running around a busy traffic intersection to earn his living. I got this jerk -- it is not only the kid who is in some physical danger amidst the chaotic traffic but also our future and our boasting images of India Rising or world's second fastest growing economy and nonsense like those are in some serious danger. Now someone shouldn't turn up and tell me that world's second fastest growing economy can't ensure basic education to its next generation. Shameful is an understatement.

Where are all those NGOs who siphon a lot of money in the name of fighting for a social cause? Where were those *Babus* and *Mantris* who were talking big when Right-to-education bill was passed? I always had a feeling that our government (of anytime) is best at lip service only and more I see these kind of display of our achievements even after 60 years of independence, I feel vindicated. On granular level -- it is not only about small kids or providing basic education. In every field we have made a habit of not giving individuals their due or worse we go through the recipient's economical stature before doing justice to their unspoken demands. All were charged up, including few HRD ministry sleuths and state education board when students of a certain posh *Dehradoon* school complained of getting stale soup for last three days. But I am sure, the same chaps would turn blind when they will see a small kid begging on

the streets. Come-on. When there are kids selling news paper on streets, doing *Phatka* on car wind screens (forget any education) so that they can live another day, HRD ministry shouldn't be too bothered about some stale soups supplied to kids getting down from *Mercedes-Benz* back doors. Why this selective amnesia? Is it because the kids at the *Dehradoon* School have their fathers posted at high position or an industrialist coughing out considerable amount to support *Mantriji's* election expense? Or are the kids at *Dehradoon* school are different or superior than the kid I saw selling news paper today morning? Or the kids of millionaires are the only set of kids left in this country who will build our nation tomorrow?

The more I question myself, the closer I get to an answer. It has got nothing to do with who is suffering or are we doing justice to our responsibilities. It is all about the weight of the wallet. You will only be heard and pampered if you carry a thick wallet or else get to the side and keep your mouth shut or find a way yourself. This precise attitude is what driving millions of our kids rather being in school seen selling News papers on streets or begging. Is this the Raising India we are boasting about?

The other day my friend sent across few pictures of the CWG opening ceremony. What struck me are few of those pictures which were depicting our hypocrisy. While rascals like *Kalmadi* and *Bhanot* were cordially allowed and welcomed by smiling females, poor chaps were seen getting pushed out by policemen. Let me assure you - the pictures were disconcerting. The guys who slogged for years to build the stadia were pushed out inhumanly while clowns who made sure that dirt and shit is thrown at our face are welcomed with garlands. Yes I am talking about those thousands of nameless and faceless daily wage laborers who slogged without any reward or recognition. I am talking about the same chaps who stayed for months in snake infested Yamuna bank to make sure that the athletes get a fabulous place to hang around. If anyone who deserves a front row during opening ceremony are these foot soldiers that sweat day-in and day-out so that we can cheer with full throat. But irony – we don't recognize the true contributors but appease all the scoundrels. If it is not money which drives our response, then I don't know what it is.

I hope we will change and change for good. I hope we will treat our fellow citizens as humans, irrespective of their wallet size. Hope we will care balls for dialogues – '*Jaanta hai mera baap kaun hai*'. Sorry it's not a question which will fetch me a crore in *Kaun Banega Karod Pati*. Thank you very much. I hope the day will come when we will see all our children going to school than running around traffic junctions to earn a living. Hope we will stop touting and be constructive in our approach all the while respecting the true value of – Equality To All. Amen!!

Source: October 06, 2010/ desicritics.org

Point-Counterpoint: Liberal Arts Education

It was about two years ago, and I was a terrified freshman, along with roughly 1,600 classmates. We had just come to college, and already our professors, our parents and the *New York Times* were telling us that we should not be looking forward to getting a job immediately after graduation.

The students who looked the most scared, I noticed, were the business students. Wearing black suits more appropriate for funerals, they went to job fairs that looked more desolate than Manhattan in *I Am Legend*. Suddenly, their dreams of BMWs and corporate expense accounts had dropped out from under them.

Without criticizing the motives of then-CBA undergrads, the economic climate of the past few years has made me realize how valuable a liberal arts education truly is. When you think about it, every good job requires the same skill set: an ability to read, write and use logic. This is what, at its very core, a liberal arts education is about.

Think about it. Can any college class give you specialized training for a career without limiting you to that same career? Can any job really train you in critical thinking and communication? No! Each has their place. One who majored in business with a focus in finance could probably be a good accountant or stockbroker. Those are two careers. One who majored in English and graduated with the ability to think and explain is, when you really think about it, infinitely more marketable.

In fact, it is well-known that the average college graduate today can expect to change careers several times in his or her lifetime. Why should one, then, pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to limit oneself to one or two careers?

I hate to toot my own horn, and I probably will end up as a stereotypical broke writer traveling the country in a '98 VW, but I believe in my choice of major, theology. It is a subject that best suits the fact that I, along with probably many 20-year olds, do not really know what I want to do with my life, and would like to be educated in a way that will give me the most potential. This, of course, has led to some strange looks from my relatives and acquaintances, asking me what on earth I plan to do with my major. Their instant assumptions, of course, are entering academia (relatively unlikely) or the priesthood (not entirely out of the question). However, I have heard this question enough times to have a quick response at hand, which goes something like this: "I am a theology major because the subject focuses entirely on comprehending and synthesizing arguments, which is a skill I can use in several careers I am considering."

You do not have to believe me. Take the advice of one of my theology professors who explained the benefits of his subject that should make everyone take notice. His wife, he explains, works for a major software company whose policy is to lay off and then outsource 10 percent of their workforce. People in China, India or a myriad of other countries will work for much less money than those in the

Western developed world. He explained that the only reason his wife is able to hold onto her job and good salary is that she has a firm grasp of the English language.

This is the world in to which we will graduate. Major companies that we have dreamt of working for are outsourcing everything from stock trading to research and development. We cannot market ourselves on the basis of the career-specific skills we learned here. Someone overseas solely can present that same resume and ask for a 10th of what we would expect. Something has to set us apart.

Not only does the job market recognize the need for skills beyond whatever one specific career requires. According to a *New York Times* article from January of this year ["Multicultural Critical Theory. At a Business School?"], more and more MBA programs are realizing that these same ideas; thinking critically and synthesizing arguments to solve problems, ought to be an essential part of the curriculum. The Stanford MBA program, for example, has a mandatory first-year course called "Critical and Analytical Thinking."

So remember this idea when you are sitting in your Composition and Rhetoric class, your Intro to the New Testament class or your English Literature class. There are reasons that Fordham has mandated them, and we're not alone. The idea comes from the Ancient Greeks and led to the development of several disciplines that took the name "liberal arts;" grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Philosophy and theology were subjects encompassed in the first three studies, known as the *Trivium*. Ben Franklin took those ideals in the 18th century and established the Academy and Charitable School of the Province of Pennsylvania. This became a small, unremarkable school called the University of Pennsylvania.

The value of a liberal arts education has been demonstrated over thousands of years. In our fast-paced age, it may seem like it is time to throw it all out and replace it with vocational training in order to prepare this generation for the careers of tomorrow. But some skills never disappear: the ones that Fordham and other liberal arts colleges teach us so well. I am proud to say that the value of my education will not dry up until the benefits of good communication and problem solving do.

Source: October 6, 2010/ The.ram.on.line.com

Look East Policy — millennia apart

File photo of a Nalanda Mentor Group meeting in New Delhi. The East Asia Summit in Hanoi offers a chance to consider ideas for enabling a modern-day land link between the Indo-China region and India, with the proposed Nalanda University as a backdrop, for intensified people-to-people contact.

It is time to take our Look East Policy to a new level. The continuous meeting and intermingling of people from

diverse social backgrounds will help in crafting a liberal and cosmopolitan attitude to life.

The year 2010 marks the 1000th anniversary of the founding of Hanoi as a capital by Emperor Ly Thai To, whose statue adorns the centre of the city. The year and the attendant celebrations would be a proud recollection for the people of Vietnam, and Hanoi in particular. At the end of this month, Hanoi will host a summit of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and the East Asia Summit. India will participate in both meetings.

We have come a long way since the first India-ASEAN summit held in 2002 in Phnom Penh. We are now on course to host the 10th such summit in 2012, presumably in New Delhi. In this backdrop, we can assess what can be done in the overall context of our Look East policy in general, keeping the Nalanda University project as a focus.

In January 2007, at the Cebu meeting of the EAS, the member-states reached an understanding on strengthening regional educational cooperation. As part of this, they welcomed the initiative for the revival of Nalanda University. This was the culmination of an idea conceived by the Bihar government and given shape later by Singapore. In March 2006, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam addressed the joint session of the Bihar Assembly and exhorted it to revive the ancient seat of learning in Nalanda where science, philosophy, spirituality and social sciences could be blended. The Bihar government introduced a Bill in the Assembly in 2007 and cleared it to establish this great university. The Nalanda project became the face of an emerging Bihar.

In the middle of 2006, a proposal was received from the Singapore government called "The Nalanda Proposal." According to this, Nalanda would be the ideal site for establishing a 21st century learning institution linking South and East Asia. The idea envisaged simultaneous upgrading of the infrastructure to promote tourism, and establishing a university at Nalanda to offer higher education facilities, thereby enabling all-inclusive economic development of the entire region.

In order to carry forward the proposals, a Nalanda Mentor Group (NMG), under the chairmanship of Professor Amartya Sen, was established by the Government of India in 2007. The group examined the framework of international cooperation and the structure of partnership, which would govern the establishment of the university. It also made proposals for the revival of Nalanda and the governance structure of the university, and other aspects covering finance, areas of study, etc. The NMG's recommendations were to be endorsed by the EAS leaders through a declaration to take the process forward. However, owing to unforeseen developments in Thailand in 2008 and early 2009, the fourth EAS was delayed. At the last EAS, held in Hua Hin in Thailand in October 2009, the leaders endorsed and extended their support for the establishment of Nalanda University.

The NMG completed its work in the first half of this year. In the recent monsoon session, Parliament passed the Nalanda University Bill, thereby making available a legal basis for going ahead with the implementation of the project. Thus the forthcoming fifth EAS is uniquely important for India. It would give us an opportunity to share the approach to be adopted for the construction of the university. It would also give us an occasion to maintain and intensify interest in the project among the participating countries. Given that civil construction projects in India have an inertial impetus of their own, it is necessary for us to keep the idea alive. It is important that facilities and opportunities be provided to the academic community, including students in EAS countries, to keep itself aware of what is happening on the Nalanda front.

The Hanoi EAS offers us a chance to consider ideas for enabling a modern-day land link between the Indo-China region and India, with the proposed university as a backdrop, for intensified people-to-people contact. Initially, we could focus on each of the five countries in the Indo-China region that abuts India — , Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar — which also have a strong Buddhist tradition. This land link could be projected as a means of access and exposure for students, academics, pilgrims and tourists as a special feature of our relations with Southeast Asia in general and the countries mentioned above in particular.

To buttress or land links with the ASEAN region and beyond, we could consider introducing a monthly bus service for about 100 pilgrims who, for reasons of economy, health, etc., may prefer, or be induced, to undertake surface travel. We can utilise the recently opened Asian Highway (AH16) from Da Nang in central Vietnam to Mae Sot on the Thailand-Myanmar border.

After traversing Yangon and Mandalay, and collecting pilgrims in Myanmar, the bus could enter India and come to Gaya. They could visit Nalanda, Rajgir and Sarnath and other places of Buddhist studies in Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. If Bangladesh is convinced to allow passage for these visitors, they can reach Kolkata much faster before going on a pilgrimage and to academic centres across India. It may not be too difficult for India to convince Myanmar authorities to join the initiative. After all, General Than Shwe himself visited Gaya and its environs recently. The ordinary pilgrim's travel would be a very symbolic representation of people-to-people cooperation.

India could even consider donating some modern, long haul buses and have the flagging off of a bus convoy in Hue, cultural capital of Vietnam, so that it can reach Gaya or Nalanda after collecting academics and pilgrims *en route*. It could be scheduled to arrive in the week of the India-ASEAN Summit in 2012.

With Nalanda University acting as a beacon, regular visits by academics, pilgrims, students and tourists would compel us to focus not only on sticking to a schedule but

also maintaining interest in all sides in the revival of the university project. The suggested land link will give it a historic and spiritual character.

One thousand years ago when Hanoi was being established, the Chola dynasty in peninsular India reached its pinnacle. One of its most powerful symbols, the Brihadeeshwara Temple in Thanjavur, also observed its 1000th anniversary this year. The Chola dynasty is the principal among those that consolidated and benefited by the original and proactive Look East Policy. The Cholas established strong maritime and commercial connections with countries and kingdoms to the southeast and east of India. Nagapattinam was the port from where all trade and other links were serviced with the kingdoms all the way up to, and including, China. As Professor K.A. Nilakanta Sastri states in his work, *The Cholas*: "At no time had Indian merchants ever ceased to frequent the shores of the Malay Peninsula and the islands of the archipelago, even Indochina and China ... Towards the ninth century A.D. the countries of Southern Asia had developed an extensive maritime and commercial activity, and attained a prosperity unequalled in history."

It is perhaps time to take our Look East Policy to a new dimension. The continuous meeting and intermingling of people from diverse social backgrounds helps in crafting a liberal and cosmopolitan attitude to life. An overland connection to Nalanda, just as Nagapattinam thrived on an aqueous connection, could be the first step in our journey of the next thousand years. India is ideally placed to spur a movement catalysed by spirituality, to reach an ancient destination in the new millennium — a place that set ancient India apart as a pioneer in higher education.

(The writer is a former Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. He was India's Ambassador to Vietnam between 2004 and 2006.)

Source: October 7, 2010 [The Hindu](#)

India needs focus on basic schooling

Sir, Regarding India's education conundrum, Amy Kazmin ("[Labour to unlock](#)", Analysis, October 5) presents a good analysis of a complex problem in one broadsheet page. However, like many other analyses, the article focuses too much on post-secondary education while skimming the surface of the main problem: lack of government commitment to creating a uniform curriculum at the primary and secondary stages of schooling, creating enough capacity and making it available at low or no cost across schools, while dealing with India's complex federated structure of governance.

The absence of robust primary and secondary schooling makes the competition at Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management entrance and the cost of coaching a nice story, but it is not much use in furthering the debate or seeking workable solutions. In the absence of such basic schooling, the pipeline of trainable persons is poor in both quality and quantity, leaving both skills training

institutions and employers high and dry. City and Guilds of the UK has long had an active presence in India and its experience will confirm this.

The other missing strand in the story is the increased corporatisation of education in India. Big corporate houses, perhaps long fed up with the pipeline's poor quality and facing the war for talent, are creating schools and training infrastructure for their future and current employees. It helps solve the problem a bit but leaves the government yet again unaccountable for its failures.

Education, skills and training is a key area of co-operation agreed between UK prime minister David Cameron and Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh in the former's recent visit to India. As we in the UK struggle with our own "K-12" education challenges, academies, free schools and tele-tuition in maths in north London from Ludhiana, perhaps it is an opportunity for education strategists in both countries to collaborate to solve each country's peculiar problems.

Source: October 7 2010 [The Financial Times Limited 2010](#)

Release the Stranglehold

Higher education in India has, by and large, come to be governed by political compulsions. Instead of building capacity, the focus has been on who gets a bigger piece of the pie. This in turn has stunted the growth and development of our institutes, as reflected in their poor standing in global rankings. Universities are over-regulated, preventing out-of-the-box thinking in curriculum and functioning. In that context the move by the HRD ministry to allow IIMs the freedom to set up branches anywhere in the world, pay salaries that are globally competitive and have a significant degree of autonomy in their functioning needs to be welcomed.

There is a massive dearth of quality higher education institutions in the country. This has contributed to years of brain drain. Even institutes of excellence such as the IITs and the IIMs have had to adhere to strict government norms. It is because Indian universities are kept on such a tight leash that they are unable to compete with the best in the world. There is a case here to go beyond our socialist approach to higher education and initiate market-oriented reforms. By deregulating and giving universities the freedom to chart their own course, we would not only be creating a competitive platform that would force them to become more efficient but also provide greater incentives for investment. This in turn will help channel funds towards creating world-class research facilities, a key ingredient of quality educational institutions.

At present, the government plans to select 'navratna universities' which would then be accorded the benefits of financial aid and academic autonomy. Rahul Gandhi has called for freeing up the IITs as well, a move that in his view could make them competitive with the Harvards and Oxfords. That could well be the case, but shouldn't other Indian institutions be allowed to be competitive with the

IITs as well? And wouldn't that be the best antidote to the brutal competition for an IIT seat, leading to most applicants being rejected? Pre-selecting universities for special treatment would not only be unequal to the wider reforms that are desperately needed, they would be unfair to those on whom such benefits aren't conferred.

However, autonomy should not mean throwing accountability to the wind. Institutes must be made to adhere to the highest standards of transparency, to ensure that they don't mislead students. The aim should be to strike the right balance so that universities have the flexibility to chart their own course while responding to student demand. Only then can we have Indian Harvards and Oxfords

Source: [Oct 15, 2010/ The Times of India](#)

There is an 'education arms race' on from India to China – Obama

Washington: US President Barack Obama has warned that cutting America's education budget would amount to "unilateral disarmament" in an "education arms race" from India and China to Germany to lead the global economy.

"Nothing would be more shortsighted," Obama said at the White House on Wednesday noting "the nation that educates its children the best will be the nation that leads the global economy in the 21st century."

"There's an educational arms race taking place around the world right now -- from China to Germany, to India to South Korea. Cutting back on education would amount to unilateral disarmament," he said. "We can't afford to do that."

Obama said he was asking the Congress to make the "American Opportunity [Tax Credit](#)", a college tuition tax credit worth up to \$2,500 a year, permanent for four years of college "because we've got to make sure that in good times or bad, our families can invest in their children's future and in the future of our country."

But the opposition Republican proposal to cut back on education by 20 percent would mean "reducing [financial aid](#) for eight million students and leaving our community colleges without the resources they need to prepare our students for the jobs of the future."

"It's not just about preparing our kids for the jobs of the future," he said. "It's about building a brighter future ... where the American Dream is a living reality. By opening the doors of college to anyone who wants to go, that's a future we can help build together."

In another address on "Moving America Forward" at George Washington University here Tuesday, Obama said, "The single most important determinant of how we do economically is going to be the skills of our workforce. "

"We used to be at the top of the heap when it came to math and science education. We're now 21st and 25th respectively in science and math. We used to be number

one in the proportion of college graduates in the world. We're now ranked around ninth."

"Other countries are making huge investments," Obama said citing China, which "is doubling, tripling, quadrupling the number of college graduates it's generating" because it understands "that to start moving up the value chain in the economy, they've got to start producing more engineers and scientists."

"India understands that. Germany has long understood that. And yet here we are, losing that first-place position. That is unacceptable." Obama said.

Source: Washington/ IANS/ October 15, 2010/ [India Edu News.news](#)

Advantages of Indian model

When does a small town grow up and become a big boy?

Does size matter? Geography is a peculiar addiction. Fat makes you large, possibly very large, but it does not make you strong. Some nations have a quarter of their population herded in slums extending in myriad directions because they have not created the capacity to build more cities. America's strength does not lie in New York and Washington but in the fact that Microsoft can be born in Seattle and the world's software industry is controlled from a desert in California. India was weak as long as its strength lay in the traditional four great cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. These urban sprawls became sores instead of cities as the poor flocked toward them, driven by unrealistic hopes. It is only logical that all four were British cities. Chennai was seeded by an English adventurer who wanted to live within riding distance of his local girl friend; Mumbai harbor came as part of the dowry of Charles II and was then rented by the British monarch to the East India Company. Job Charnock founded Kolkata on a marsh because better points to the north along the Hooghly River were taken by European merchants who had arrived earlier. You might think of Delhi as a Mogul city, and so it was; but every bit of Delhi was razed to the ground by a vengeful East India Company after the uprising of 1857, and modern Delhi is a British invention with only a whiff of its glorious history. The great capitals of Indian India, Lucknow or Mysore or Patna or Jaipur, stagnated or decayed during the British Raj.

Modern India is rebuilding itself along its old centers of economic and political power, even as it lifts unknown one-street inhabitations into industrial hubs that are, to use a well-known phrase, the marvel of our age. Jamshedji Tata provided the template with Jamshedpur; Jawaharlal Nehru used state resources to create more steel cities. It was Dhirubhai Ambani who took the imaginative leap forward into the private sector ecopolis - the economic conglomerate around which Indians could create a new future. Imperceptibly, but indelibly, the map of India is now crowded with dozens of germinal points that make great labor migrations unnecessary. The future is in cities like Kochi or Aurangabad or Barmer: In less than a decade

Barmer will rival Jaipur, and within the foreseeable future become the second or third heart of Rajasthan.

It is this India which is crashing through the glass ceilings of our social and economic history. It has turned Marxism on its head; instead of seizing from the rich in order to give to the poor, it is churning out its own cream. It is driven by a passion to improve the individual self, but knows that this is impossible without changing the collective well-being. It is not socialist, and indeed might be suffering from generosity-deficit when it comes to those at the lowest levels of our tragically tiered social order. But it is social-democratic, in an European rather than American fashion, willing to tolerate positive discrimination even if it grumbles relentlessly while doing so. The grumble is human; but tolerance comes from the fact that it has itself benefited from reservation policies.

It is this Indian who has swarmed across the medal podiums of the Commonwealth Games. Sport is a significant route to recognition as well as economic upsurge. The story of the farmer who could not enter the stadium to watch his wrestler son win a medal because of his unfamiliarity with the big city and its projects, and the contempt which police have for the poor, is both saddening and luminous. That unfortunate father will get over his hurt; pride in the son's glory has changed his life already. These athletes, including the many who did not win medals but learned to compete, were not manufactured in some state factory machine, as in China; they are champions of free will, as well as champions through free will. China's achievements will be vulnerable to the contradictions inevitable within a state-dominated matrix; the idealism of Marx and Lenin could not prevent such contradictions from eroding its successes. Individualism makes Indian achievement more chaotic, but it is also the bedrock strength that will carry it further. China irons its dangerous creases once every 50 years; we do so as we go along, perhaps leaving the collar ruffled as we get the rest of the shirt right. The possibility of turmoil is far less in the second model. This is not to make a value judgment; one merely records an ongoing reality. Chroniclers do not always know how the chronicle will end, but we still have to do our reporting.

China makes the Chinese. Indians make India. Give me the second option any day.

Source: M.J. Akbar/Oct 16, 2010/[Arab News](#)

Inclusive education key to progress: Anand

Mathematician Anand Kumar of Super-30' was in Abu Dhabi on Thursday and Friday at the invitation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and the Abu Dhabi India School to deliver separate lectures about the education system, how underprivileged children are able to make it to the top institutions of the country and his own Super-30'.

The ICAI had earlier invited eminent personalities like former President APJ Abdul Kalam and former diplomat Mani Shankar Aiyar.

Speaking at the ICAI, Anand said inclusive education was the key to progress. In India, education has caught the fancy of even the poorest sections of the society. This trend is making a big difference. "People have learnt to appreciate the importance of education and are ready to sacrifice even their land and cattle, their main source of income for the poor for their wards studies," he added.

Citing examples of some Super-30' students, for whom cracking the IIT-JEE brought about a new social awakening; he said such success stories have inspired thousands of others in the remotest corners of Bihar. "The journey has just begun. There is a long way to go," Anand added. Indian singer Sunidhi Chauhan was also present on the occasion.

Recounting how he had set up Super-30', Anand said: "I set up the Ramanujam School of Mathematics way back in 1992 and gradually started giving coaching to students at a nominal fee. Having experienced the pangs of poverty, I always wanted to do something for poor students, who came to my coaching. This resulted in Super-30' in 2002."

He also addressed students and teachers at the Indian School, which was followed by an interactive session, wherein Anand answered several questions about mathematics and key to success. It is not without a reason that US President Barack Obama is also talking about the Indian education system, he added.

Source: Oct 16, 2010/ [Times of India](#)

IIMs should evolve like corporate entities: panel

Proposals include restructuring IIM boards and offering incentives to corporate houses in lieu of funds

The elite Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) should function like corporate entities and improve their academic standards to stand up to the competition from foreign business schools that are expected to open branches in India, says a government panel.

The committee, headed by Maruti Suzuki India Ltd chairman R.C. Bhargava, submitted its report last week to the human resource development (HRD) ministry, proposing changes to how IIMs are managed and financed.

The government plans to bring in a law allowing foreign universities to set up branches and issue their own degrees in India. Currently, they have to work with Indian partners and issue Indian degrees. Several varsities, particularly in the US, have expressed interest in establishing Indian campuses.

Last week, the HRD ministry had accepted the proposals of another committee, which had suggested that IIMs be given more financial autonomy and be allowed to seek

funds from alumni settled around the globe. It had also allowed IIMs to set up branches in India and abroad.

The Bhargava committee included directors of IIMs at Kolkata, Bangalore and Kozhikode.

"Private investment in management schools is growing rapidly, and the ministry of HRD is keen on attracting foreign direct investment in education, which could include joint ventures. This will pose new challenges to the IIMs," says its report, reviewed by *Mint*.

The proposals include hiring directors with experience of working abroad, altering their designation and profile, restructuring the boards of governors and offering incentives to corporate houses in lieu of funds.

"The director should be the chief executive officer of the IIM and carry out all the functions entrusted to him by the board (of governors)," says the report.

This would entail giving more administrative and financial powers to the directors. They should be people with the experience of working in different parts of the world, so that the institute can benefit from their global exposure.

"It is recommended that his designation be changed to president-cum-dean. Not only would this be in line with the designations prevailing in leading business schools, but would enable the organizational structure to have vice-presidents and vice-deans," says the report.

These, it adds, would be better accepted than vice-directors or deputy directors.

All the boards of governors should be dissolved and reconstituted with 14 members instead of the usual 26; a third of the new members should be IIM alumni. Absence from three consecutive meetings without taking leave should automatically curtail membership, the report says.

A cadre of managers should be developed to take up administrative work.

Every IIM is registered as a society, whose members are nominated by the government. The panel has suggested that payment of a substantial donation should be the criterion for membership. A corporate house, for instance, can become a member for five years by donating Rs.20 crore. "This would be equivalent to a person having an equity stake in the company, except that there would be no dividend payout from IIMs," the report says.

Members can be offered preference in placement dates and discounts in executive education programmes. Buildings, blocks and facilities can also be named after them.

"Autonomy and accountability should go hand in hand," HRD minister Kapil Sibal said last week.

Amitabh Jhingan, partner and national leader of the education practice at the audit and consulting firm Ernst and Young, said some of the recommendations of the Bhargava committee seem progressive. "I think what the

committee is trying to do is benefit the students by collecting donation from society members or giving more time to teaching and research,” he said. “I think they are trying to find ways where student fees will not increase.”

Academician Yash Pal, however, said IIMs should not behave like corporate entities.

“I do agree that (a) lot of consultancy work and executive education takes away the teaching and research time of faculties, which is not good,” he said. “But I think IIMs should remain as excellent educational institutes, not corporate or placement agencies. I feel IIMs should get engaged in rural management, agriculture management and even other issues that the country is facing.”

Source: Mon, Oct 18 2010/ [Live Mint](#)

Revisit the basic framework of the system

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, after China and the US. But in spite of the various steps being taken by the government, the country is able to manage a literacy rate of just 65%, which is far below even many of the lesser developed countries. Several initiatives like the Right to Education Act and government-sponsored education have not been able to provide the desired results. The sluggishness of Indian bureaucracy, widespread corruption and the lack of monitoring by various administrative bodies are some of the reasons that have marred the growth of the education system.

As of 2009, India has 227 government-recognised universities of which 20 are central universities, 109 deemed universities, 11 are open universities and 215 are state universities, under the State Act. According to the department of higher education, government of India, there are 16,885 colleges, 99.54 lakh students and 4.57 lakh teachers in various higher education institutes in the country.

And steps to improve higher education in the country are being taken. The Prime Minister announced the establishment of eight IITs, seven IIMs, five Indian Institutes of Science, Education and Research, and 30 Central Universities in his speech to the nation on the 60th Independence Day.

The coming of foreign universities in the country will further add to the competition and will push Indian universities towards excellence. Defending the proposed entry of foreign universities in India, union human resource development minister Kapil Sibal asserted that they would help create a talent pool for the country. This will also help recognition of Indian university courses in the foreign countries.

Apart from these initiatives, in order to raise the quality of education even in small towns, the central government has to revisit the whole framework of this system. Almost all of us agree that our education system focuses on learning by rote rather than understanding the basic concepts. All the

institutions, right from the primary schools to the colleges, should focus more on concepts and practical applications of learning.

Last but not least, most government schools and colleges fail to provide quality education because of poor infrastructure, a problem that can be solved if the government mandates sharing of infrastructure with private education institutions.

Source: Monday, Oct 18, 2010/[Financial Express](#)

Third largest in world Sibal's new impetus

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, after China and the United States. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grant Commission (UGC), which enforces the standards, advises the Government, and helps coordinate between the Centre and the States.

Significantly, as of 2009, India has 227 Government-recognised universities of which 20 are Central Universities, 109 deemed Universities, 11 Open Universities and 215 State Universities, under the State Act. According to the Union HRD Ministry's Department of Higher Education there are 16,885 colleges, 99.54 lakh students and 4.57 lakh teachers in various higher education institutes all over the country.

Not only that. In addition, two years earlier in 2007 the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh imparted an impetus by announcing the establishment of eight Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), seven Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and five Indian Institutes of Science, Education and Research (IISERs) and 30 Central Universities in his speech to the nation on the 60th Independence Day on 15 August 2007.

Taking up from there, the Union HRD Ministry in March 2008 announced the setting up of four new IITs in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab. This was in addition to the four announced previously in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Himachal Pradesh. Along-with six IIMs would be launched in Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Haryana. And the new IIM in Shillong would begin operations by admitting students from June.

In May 2009, Union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal added a new dimension to education during his visit to the US. He welcomed foreign universities to invest in India's education sector but should not aim at making profits. In March 2010 Sibal introduced the Foreign Educational Institution (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010, in the Lok Sabha allowed foreign education institutions to set up institutions in the country.

Defending the proposed entry of foreign universities Sibal asserted that these would help create a talent pool for the country. As also help the recognition of Indian university courses in foreign countries. “We have a foolproof plan for the entry of foreign universities. Any foreign varsity entering

India will have to create a \$12-million corpus fund and profits will not be allowed to be expatriated to shareholders,' he added for good measure.

However, when some MPs expressed misgivings about foreign education institutions having their own admission process and to fix fees, Sibal argued that the laws applicable to private institutions would be applicable to foreign universities aspiring to set up campuses in India. At present, the fee for private engineering and medical colleges is fixed by a State level committee headed by a private judge. There is no mechanism to finalise the fee structure in private universities.

Asserted the HRD Minister, "Foreign education providers will neither be discriminated against nor will be shown any favour. We are trying to go to a regulated regime from a de-regulated regime on foreign universities. The foreign institutions will come through registration."

However, Sibal had to beat a hasty retreat when he failed to get the Rajya Sabha to pass the crucial Educational Tribunals Bill 2010 in August last. A determined Opposition and some Congress MPs ensured that the Bill was deferred to the winter session by expressing strong reservations.

The Bill proposes to set up a two-tier structure of educational tribunals at the national and State levels to adjudicate disputes that arise in the higher education system. The tribunals would act as forum for fast track and speedy resolution of issues in institutions in order to build an effective system of checks and balances in higher education.

While the State tribunals would deal with matters concerning teachers, employees and students of institutions in the respective States, the national tribunal would deal with matters concerning regulatory bodies in higher education. The HRD Ministry hopes to get this Bill passed in the forthcoming session beginning 9 November.

The tragedy of India is that even after 63 years of Independence we are far away from the goal of universal literacy. Towards that end, the HRD Ministry needs to address three important issues immediately. One, presently, our education system tends to churn out people who are good at certain skills, but not necessarily efficient at problem solving or, doing out-of-the-box lateral thinking. The reforms should bring about a broad-based education that combines liberal arts with technology and science.

Two, the regulatory system in education, employment and employability, encourages the production of dwarfs. But the need is to encourage the production of babies. One should be able to regulate the incompetence, which one observes sometimes in education or the lack of performance management that is observed in the public sector.

Last but not least, while India produces over six to eight lakh technical graduates annually. However, research studies show that only 25 per cent of them are career

ready and employable by the industry. A vast majority of technical graduates are deficient in communication skills, analytical / problem-solving capabilities, learning abilities, process orientation and domain skills.

Clearly, the lack of effective industry academia inter-action has been one of the failings of the Indian knowledge ecosystem. An overwhelming majority of students go into the employment markets armed with only educational qualifications. Whereby they ensure that their employment is a responsibility, which industry and the academia need to address together. Wherein faculty development and training programmes with a module for judging/testing the new recruits on their ability to impart the requisite skills become very critical.

Simultaneously, Sibal intends raising important issues vis-à-vis education with US President Barack Obama during his forthcoming visit to Delhi and Mumbai early next month. One, recognition of Indian University degrees by the US and other points of mutual interest.

All eyes are now on the ensuing winter session. Will Union HRD Minister Sibal succeed in imparting a new momentum to higher education given that it is the third largest in the world.

Source: October 27, 2010/[Central Chronicle](#)

Need to deregulate education - Sam Pitroda

National Knowledge Commission chairman Sam Pitroda on Thursday stressed the need to deregulate education, calling it the need of the hour.

"We don't need central or state control on universities and colleges. Today the challenge is to deregulate education," Pitroda said, addressing a conclave organized by the Indian Institute of Technology alumni group PanIIT.

"That's what we did to economy in 1991. That is what we need to do to education in 2011," he stressed.

Pitroda also emphasized that there was need to urgently pass the educational reform bills, expressing dissatisfaction over the fact that they have been delayed.

"There is no sense of urgency over passing the education reform bills, many of them have not even been tabled yet," he said.

Many new bills, including the much debated National Commission for Higher Education and Research Bill have been drafted on the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission and the Yashpal Committee. However, they have not been tabled in parliament yet.

"We have had debates and discussions, but no action. It's time for government to act," he said.

At least nine new bills have been drafted by the human resource development ministry. Of these, the Foreign Education Providers Bill, the Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, the Educational Tribunals Bill and the

National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, have been introduced in parliament.

These have been sent to parliamentary standing committees, and are likely to be taken up during the winter session.

"Education is the only area we have not focused on economy of scope. We have to create an atmosphere where even a plumber can think of going for a Ph.D. in Mathematics," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, HRD ministry's secretary for higher education Vibha Puri Das stressed on increasing the gross enrollment ratio (GER) to 30 percent by the end of this decade.

The GER, representing the percentage of students enrolled for higher education, is presently at 12.5 percent.

"We are giving right to education to students, higher education should be made available to them," she said.

Source: IANS/ Oct 29, 2010/[India Edu News. in](http://IndiaEduNews.in)

America's lesson for British classrooms

Michael Gove's plans for 'free schools' will get a boost this week with a visit from the like-minded US education secretary. Alex Spillius reports from Washington.

As we all know by now, US President Barack Obama has not had a great first two years. His Republican critics have hammered him at every opportunity as an out-of-touch, anti-business, high-spending liberal. His greatest social mission – healthcare reform – has backfired. Elected on a promise of uniting the country, the divisions between Left and Right – or progressive and conservative, to use the American terminology – have instead solidified.

Education, however, has been an exception to the relentless criticism. Even prominent Right-wingers such as Newt Gingrich, the former Speaker of the House, and Jeb Bush, the former governor of Florida, have praised the President's approach to reforming schools. The Obama administration's centrepiece initiative has been Race to the Top, which allocated \$4.35 billion (£2.7 billion) – nearly a tenth of annual federal spending on education – for a competition among the 50 states to improve academic standards and teacher performance, turn around failing schools and encourage the establishment of what are known as charter schools.

"The idea here is simple: instead of rewarding failure, we only reward success. Instead of funding the status quo, we only invest in reform," said the President when introducing the scheme at the start of the year. Using language that could have come from his predecessor George W Bush, Mr Obama has consistently cited education as the country's greatest long-term challenge; and, indeed, decades of mediocrity and failure have led to a staggering decline that should make policy-makers in Britain thankful for small mercies.

The US has one of the worst high-school drop-out rates in the world, and, where once it led, it now trails well behind other countries in producing college graduates. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, pupils in the US rank 21st for science in the world, compared with Britain's ninth place. In urban black spots such as Washington DC, only half of children finish high school and one in eight students has been threatened with a weapon.

Mr Obama's ally and enforcer is his education secretary Arne Duncan, a 6ft 5in former professional basketball player (in Australia), who has the giant task of turning around American schools. Together they have delivered a stern message to the Democratic Party and the teachers' unions that the status quo of failing schools and job-for-life teachers is unacceptable, and that, in Mr Bush's memorable phrase, the "soft bigotry of low expectations" will have to end. Repeatedly, the President has warned that, if American schools don't succeed, then neither will the country.

It is against that backdrop that Mr Duncan arrives in London this week to support Michael Gove's plans to set up "free schools".

In advance of his trip, Mr Duncan issued a resounding endorsement of the Coalition's plans. "I just have tremendous respect for the educational work and the leadership that I've seen coming from the UK, and we're all working on the same issues and have the same challenges," he said. "I think one-size-fits-all is part of what hasn't worked in education, frankly. The more we can create a series of great choices, the better."

For Mr Gove, the visit, which will include a visit to Mossbourne Academy in London on Wednesday, is a chance to show doubters that across the pond their kindred spirits in the Democratic Party and the White House strongly favour the sort of reform that the Conservative Education Secretary is proposing. As director of education in his home state of Illinois from 2001 to 2008, Mr Duncan vigorously supported charter schools.

"It is interesting that in England the charter school movement is being called 'free schools', because that is what it is all about here," says Collin Hitt, director of education policy at the Illinois Policy Institute. "It's about the freedom to choose and to innovate. The basic value of charter schools is they provide a choice for parents to gain something better than what they have been getting. Schools can create vastly different paths, in terms of things like instruction, the organising of the school day and discipline, but are nonetheless aimed at the same end of an improved education."

Charter schools are typically set up by parents, teachers, non-governmental organisations and universities, or a combination thereof, who apply to the state for a charter – a contract – and for funding. They operate outside the control of local school boards or districts .

The first charter school opened in Minnesota in 1991, and there are now about 5,000 across the country, serving 1.5 million out of a total of 50 million school-age children. Defenders of the schools reject the criticism that they are elitist and exacerbate the segregation of the poor and the middle class.

In suburban parts of Mr Duncan's home state, charters allow parents to express cultural preferences that go beyond any debate about class privilege. The Prairie Crossing Charter School in Grayslake, for example, offers a curriculum based on the environment. Children do some learning every day in the open, school meals are strictly "farm to table" and student trips are taken to "environmental learning centres" – lakes and state parks.

The school's mission statement may be teeth-grindingly worthy in places ("Students, staff, and parents are compassionate, just, caring, and health-conscious individuals"), but the point is that the statement is the school's and not the bland imprimatur of the state education department.

As appears to be the case in Britain, the most heated battle over charter schools has been fought in inner cities, where the arguments also used against Mr Gove's free schools – that public funds will be siphoned off for the benefit of pushy middle-class parents – have not been borne out.

"The notion that the middle classes and the well-to-do are the only ones, or even the main community, setting up these schools in urban areas would be patently false for the experience in the US," said Mr Hitt. In Chicago, plagued by familiar urban problems of drugs and unemployment, parents in poor and ethnic minority communities were getting involved, he says. "They are monitoring the lunch room and after-school activities and volunteering on school trips. It takes some time, but, after a while, parents develop a faith in schools that wasn't there before, and a partnership is created between communities and schools that wasn't there before."

In the inner cities, charter schools have been set up mostly by local welfare groups that have often worked in deprived communities for decades, teachers who have been yearning to put their ideas and experience into practice, and the University of Chicago, which wanted to put the lessons of years of research into failing schools into practice. Charter schools are now so popular in the inner cities – and elsewhere – that the majority are heavily oversubscribed.

A riveting new documentary, *Waiting for Superman*, follows five children going through the agonising application process. Anthony is in the fifth grade (year six) in Washington, one of the worst-performing school districts in the country. He never knew his mother, and he lost his father to drugs. He is taken in by his grandparents, who instill discipline and a desire to learn but fear that when he enters secondary school the drug gangs and mean streets

will drag him down. He applies for a place at a charter boarding school and the results of this brave child's quest to better himself have been bringing a tear to audience's eyes.

Critics of charter schools claim that results are not that good, that the likes of Anthony would not be any better off in the mainstream system. A recent study of charter school students aged 12 to 15 found that they performed no better in maths and reading than other state school students. However, urban areas were an exception: students did better in tests by four to five per cent, and were generally more satisfied with their schools.

Jennifer Marshall, director of domestic policy studies at the Heritage Foundation, views the criticism as misplaced. "Policy-makers tend to over-rely on test scores, which are not the only issues that concern parents. They are interested in the culture of a school and a calm learning environment that has good peer pressure not bad peer pressure," she says. "The idea is that every child can learn. It is unconscionable that we would tolerate public [state] schools that, decade after decade, fail students. Charter schools operate outside the inertia of the bureaucracy and the intransigence of the teachers' unions. They are a very important innovation."

Source: 31 Oct, 2010/[The Telegraph](#)

Sibal for vocational option at Class 8

Union Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal said that a comprehensive skill development programme and a Vocational Education Qualification framework were key to India's growth story. Addressing the 8th Pan-IIT Conference, Sibal said there was a need to change the mindset and approach to the education sector to keep up with the changing times.

Promising a ten-level Vocational Education framework that would enable a school student to choose academics or a vocation as early as the eighth standard, Sibal said the student would be able to get a CBSE vocational degree after the 12th standard, enabling him to be directly absorbed by the industry. Sibal was addressing a plenary session on "The Future of Education: Education Skills Development & Employability".

Sibal called on the IIT alumni to collaborate with the government and help with research in India, connect with the industry and institutes to set up research parks and help develop a curriculum at all levels that will address the needs of the industry and ensure student pass out as employment-worthy candidates.

President of Yale University Richard Levin, who also addressed the conference said India needs to create high quality educational institutes and develop academic leadership.

Source: New Delhi/ Oct 31 2010/[Indian Express](#)

Parents Crucial To Child's Education, More Than the School

Parents play a far more crucial role in the child's education than the school, it has been found in a research at the University of Leicester and University of Leeds.

The socio-economic background of a family not only affects the child's educational attainment — it also affects the school's effort.

Researcher Professor Gianni De Fraja, who is also the Head of Economics at the University of Leicester, said: "The main channel through which parental socio-economic background affects achievement is via effort.

"Parents from a more advantaged environment exert more effort, and this influences positively the educational attainment of their children.

"By the same token, the parents' background also increases the school's effort, which increases the school achievement. Why schools work harder where parents are from a more privileged background we do not know. It might be because middle class parents are more vocal in demanding that the school works hard."

The study is based on the very simple observation that the educational achievement of a student is affected by the effort put in by those participating in the education process: the schools attended by the student, the student's parents, and of course the students themselves. The researchers analysed the effort of these three groups as jointly determined: students respond to the effort exerted by their parents and their schools, and correspondingly schools also respond to the effort exerted by their students and their parents and parents to the effort exerted by their children and their children's schools.

Source: 1 Nov, 2010/ [Med India. Net](http://MedIndia.Net)

Public universities must embrace academic excellence

ACADEMIC excellence is the *sine-quo-non* of a great university. Without academic excellence public universities are like factories producing half-baked products hazardous to any user. A university education without quality is a lifetime defective investment, a waste of scarce public funds that gives false hope to the rakyat and it will deprive the nation of the much needed brain power.

Universities are not about buildings and large halls; what counts is the universality of their scholarship. Qualified, open-minded and dedicated teachers with excellent communication skills tend to produce critical minded-students who will make good citizens. The ambitious economic transformation programmes will come to nought without a versatile, knowledgeable and scalable technical and managerial brain power which the nation expects from public universities. Going by the university ranking index, the performance of our public universities is disappointing.

None of the 21 public funded universities were among the top 100 since 2004.

Prejudices aside, Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli and Symonds (QS) World University are widely recognised as rating agencies for assessing scholarship or academic excellence. The same criteria (peer review, recruiter review, citations, student/staff ratio and international staff) for ranking the top universities are also used to grade universities in Malaysia. To dispute our position and yet accept their ranking for Harvard, MIT, Yale, Oxford and Cambridge sounds like sour grapes. We live in a world of opinion polls where perception indices matter. I am a bit perplexed by our expectation: on the one hand, we seem to have embraced their findings, albeit in some cases, reluctantly. But when it comes to THE and QS ranking index, some people are angry. Are they angry with the criteria or because outsiders have exposed the poor quality of scholarship in our universities?

The lack-lustre performance of our universities is symptomatic of a larger structural problem. According to some analysts the standard of academic excellence began to decline since 1971 following the decision to use Malay as the medium of instruction as recommended in the 1956 Razak Report. Those who have read the Razak Report (Report of the Education Committee, 1956) are familiar with the recommendation to make the national language as the medium of instruction in schools. Conveniently forgotten is the recommendation in para 71 which says "we recommend that the study of the Malayan national language and that of the English language shall be compulsory. The reason for the study of the Malay language is the intention ... to make Malay the national language of the country. The reason for teaching English is that we desire that no secondary school pupil shall be at a disadvantage in the matter either of employment or of higher education in Malaya or overseas as long as it is necessary to use the English language for these purposes."

Had our politicians and policymakers insisted on the mandatory use of English in our schools, the quality of academic scholarship in our public universities would most likely remain respectably high. This point was highlighted in a World Bank Report (2007) on higher education in Malaysia ("Malaysia and the Knowledge Economy: Building a World-Class Higher Education System"). The consequence of not embracing international standards (like using English) in our education system has, in the opinion of the report, been detrimental to our economy. It also affects diplomacy, international trade and access to global minds.

The report says, among other things, that to sustain its competitive edge Malaysia needs a world class education system that provides knowledge-based manpower to propel the country into an innovative economy. It reiterates the need to improve "the overall effectiveness of the university and national innovation system". The report chided our schools and universities for failing to effectively deliver

knowledge and they need to buck up. Some 50,000 graduates were not employed in 2004, according to the report, because of skills mismatch -meaning public universities did not prepare their graduates well for the job market. Suggestions in the report for universities to introduce soft skills in the curricula are veiled language, implying failure to produce students with relevant transferable skills and relevant knowledge.

The report also finds graduates of public universities lacking in effective communication skills to take advantage of global job opportunities. Of course, it is understood that the purpose of higher education is much greater than preparing students for jobs. The report also calls on policymakers to focus more on monitoring and evaluation of their policy education outputs than "has been hitherto the case in Malaysia". Deciphered, it means our schools and universities are miles behind the best in the region. The university ranking index has acknowledged this assertion. The report says the decline in the education quality has affected Malaysia's economic attractiveness in the region. In 2007, for example, the World Economic Forum ranked Malaysia 24th on Growth Economic Index and 23rd on Business Competitiveness Index among 116 countries. Although Malaysia was ahead of the Philippines and Thailand in both indices, it was placed below South Korea and Singapore.

In terms of innovation, which measures creativity, Malaysia was ranked 60th on UNCTAD's World Investment Report. Malaysia was rated higher than China and India but behind Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Japan. These countries (except Thailand) were ahead of Malaysia in terms of the number of patents registered with the US Patent and Trade mark Office. For 2001-2005, Malaysia registered 49 patents compared with 11,152 for Korea and 795 for Singapore. In 2004, MIT generated 133 patents.

Malaysia was also behind these economies in terms of the number of researchers per million people; Malaysia (294), Korea (2,979), Singapore (4,532) and China (633). Malaysia also spends less than these economies for R&D as a percentage of GDP. The figure for Malaysia for 2002 was 0.69%; Korea 2.53%, Singapore 2.15%, China 1.2% and Japan 3.12%. There is plenty of catching up to do for Malaysia to remain in the league.

The World Bank Report further reiterated that "Malaysia's quest to become a sophisticated knowledge-based economy is likely to be frustrated, unless policies to link Malaysian firms with universities and research institutes are strengthened." Though a mouthful it begs a pressing question. Except in very few cases, research by multinationals are firm-specific and they do not always contribute to local needs. The report also suggested that "to compete economically Malaysia needs to integrate science, engineering and technology knowledge into the production process." The policy that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad introduced to use English to teach maths and science in schools was primarily aimed at expediting the

transition process from the current economic mode to an innovative economic model. Unfortunately, the current government has abandoned this policy. This policy change is likely to delay Malaysia achieving the innovative economic mode. To move forward with confidence Malaysia needs to embrace academic excellence from primary school to university level and align the national educational policy with the international standards and adopt at the same time the international best practices in education.

Source: 1 Nov, 2010/[The Sunday Daily](#)

RESOURCE

India: Labour to unlock

Knowledge economy: clamouring to collect application forms for a Delhi university. Competition for education is fierce but employers complain that the workforce lacks the requisite skills

India's remote Rajasthani town of Kota thrives by peddling hope to aspiring young students preparing for the most crucial exam of their lives: admissions tests for the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology. The state-run colleges' top-ranked engineering degrees are seen as passports to a lifetime's success. Competition is fierce – more than 470,000 candidates vied for just 7,740 places last year. Securing entry to the Indian Institutes of Management is equally tough, with 290,000 aspirants for just 1,700 places in 2008.

In an attempt to beat these daunting odds, about 60,000 teenagers flock each year to Kota, a hub of intensive cramming schools known for boosting chances of acing the tests. The leading centres – which conduct their own highly competitive entrance exams – boast multistorey buildings, student support services and computer labs where students replay DVDs of star lecturers. Smaller operations focus on a handful of charismatic tutors. Private hostels have mushroomed, feeding and sheltering the out-of-town teenagers whose bicycles jam the town's roads. Expenses for the best schools can exceed \$3,400 a year, for which many poorer families, dreaming of their children's success, take out loans. That compounds the pressure on students such as 16-year-old Manmeet Kumar from impoverished Bihar state, whose railway worker father borrowed \$2,200, equivalent to several months' salary, to meet the cost. "We don't want to be here – we are extremely homesick and overburdened. But it's a sacrifice for our parents."

Kota's booming cram-school economy reflects the biggest challenge confronting India today. It will need to absorb a massive "bulge" – an estimated 240m youths coming to working age in the next 20 years and clamouring for opportunity – in a system not fully geared to accommodate them. Potentially, rising numbers entering the labour market could accelerate economic growth, bringing a much-touted "demographic dividend". But the frustration of their hopes, security experts warn, could fuel social instability. "When countries have had youth bulges like ours, it's either been a

time of great progress or a time of revolution,” says Major General G.D. Bakshi of the Vivekananda International Foundation, a New Delhi-based think-tank. “At this moment, we are at a tipping point. It could go any which way.”

As economies worldwide – including fast-growing rival China – grapple with the cost of ageing populations, India, with 1.2bn people, [growth of 8.5 per cent a year](#) and a pro-western business elite, is widely expected to be an engine of global growth, both as a market for multinationals and as part of the global supply chain. Its estimated 4m English-speaking software engineers and call-centre workers – as well as talented scientists and investment bankers – create the aura of an emerging knowledge superpower, brimming with untapped talent waiting to be absorbed. In reality, however, about 50 per cent of the population still lives in rural areas and works in agriculture. Pressures on land are pushing many to seek other opportunities, potentially unlocking a huge manpower reservoir. Many question whether India, with its weak physical infrastructure, restrictive labour laws and stunted manufacturing sector, can create enough work to absorb them. An even bigger worry is whether most young Indians have, or can be given, the skills required to fill those jobs already available or rapidly being created, both white and blue collar.

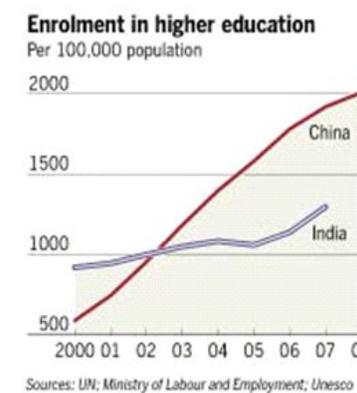
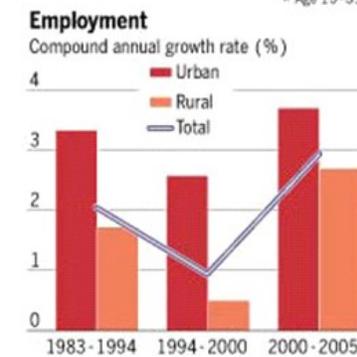
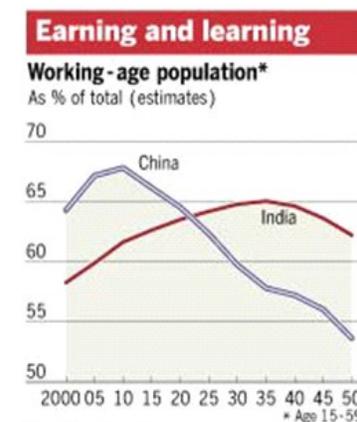
YOUTHFUL FUTURES

Aspirations and opportunities shaped by family and geography. Famously competitive exams for senior bureaucratic posts at leading educational institutions, such as the Indian Administrative Services, have helped shape India’s image as a place where talent can rise to the top even from a deprived background. Officials and local media delight in celebrating apparent rags-to-riches stories, such as that of billionaire Anil Agarwal, founder of resources group Vedanta – though he actually came from modest business family, albeit from remote Bihar, and attended a respected local private high school. Indeed, for every young Indian who emerges from humble, provincial origins, millions of others have their destiny largely determined by accidents of birth – be it their family’s social status, the region they come from or the quality of government schools, which varies widely from state-to-state. Despite the rapid economic growth and greater opportunities of recent years, most young Indians’ aspirations – and their ability to realise their dreams for the future – are still largely determined by the powerful forces of the past.

“In the next four or five years, there is a higher probability that India’s growth machine will stop because of a lack of skills – because it can’t create the skills – rather than because it can’t create jobs,” says Jahangir Aziz of JPMorgan Chase. “We are already seeing significant wage pressures building, and part of that is because there are serious skills shortages.” Many believe India is poised to cash in on a demographic advantage. As a result of its

[one-child policy](#), China’s population is peaking and will slowly turn grey. By contrast, India’s population – 50 per cent of which is under 24 – is growing, and also growing younger, because of New Delhi’s poor record in promoting smaller families. By 2020, the average Indian will be 29; the average Chinese will be 37.

Indian entrants to the labour force will rise in each of the next 16 years. By 2035 the population will reach 1.5bn, with about 65 per cent of working age, making it the world’s largest labour market. More working-age adults should translate into a higher savings rate, potentially spurring investment and facilitating growth. Goldman Sachs estimates that the rate could rise from 32.5 per cent of gross domestic product now to about 40 per cent by 2016, remaining at that level for more than a decade. Kaushik Basu, the government’s chief economic adviser, says these trends could fuel faster growth and increased



prosperity just as they did in many east Asian economies and, more recently, during Ireland’s transformative 1990s economic boom. “The demographic dividend really creates a potential for India to go up to 10 per cent growth,” he says.

But such an outcome is hardly guaranteed, he warns.

“If this is an ill-educated, ill-skilled labour force coming in, it can cause all kinds of political trouble. Potential workers who are not working – there is nothing as dangerous. That is the downside risk.” The crux of the labour problem – the poor employability of many young people – is reflected in the paradox of high unemployment coupled with labour shortages.

Despite the ostensibly favourable demographic trends, companies complain of difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified staff, whether civil engineers and software developers or bricklayers, waiters and shop assistants. “We don’t have people to build bridges.

We don't have people to build high-quality buildings. We are bringing in architects and engineers from overseas," says Saurav Adhikari of information technology company HCL.

Yet unemployment, especially among the young, remains high. According to the labour ministry, 16 per cent of urban men aged 20 to 24 were unemployed in 2005, the most recent year for which data are available; as were 12 per cent of the same age group in rural areas. Of an estimated 510m Indians in the workforce, just 7 per cent have formal-sector jobs, of whom two-thirds are civil servants. The rest toil in informal jobs, unprotected by labour laws and often paid less than the minimum wage.

The problem is acute for those from rural areas, where government schools – often staffed by poorly trained, absentee teachers – produce low learning levels and high drop-out rates. But even privileged youths whose families have paid for private education can emerge ill prepared for the modern environment. "Unemployment to a large extent is because people are unemployable in the absence of a significant, urgent dose of skills upgrading," says Mr Aziz.

Close to one in three of those aged 15 to 35 is functionally illiterate, according to the National Sample Survey Organisation's most recent data. States with the fastest-growing young populations tend to be the poorest, with the weakest schools and lowest literacy rates. Even rural youths who achieve basic literacy rarely have any vocational training.

While India boasts a few tiny bastions of world-class excellence in higher education, many of its other institutions churn out degree holders who are barely prepared for work. As a result companies must invest heavily in training, adding to their costs.

Video: Cyberwarfare and the economic toolbox

FT.com launches [Analysis Review](#), a fortnightly debate between a panel of FT experts. This week they discuss cyberwarfare; and the economic tools available to policymakers as interest rates remain near zero

"There seems to be a subterranean government and civil society expectation that: 'you want employees – can't you manufacture them?'" says Manish Sabharwal of TeamLease, the country's largest temporary staffing company. "But shaming corporate India, or threatening them – that 'you need to manufacture your own employees' – is not a lasting solution."

New Delhi is sluggishly awakening to the challenge. The recent Right to Education act guarantees free education from six to 14 and mandates a maximum teacher-pupil ratio of one to 30. Activists hope this will improve state schools, in which there are about 500,000 teaching vacancies, 550,000 staff without training or qualifications and a teacher-pupil ratio, in the case of Bihar, of up to one to 114. However, central government is quibbling with

states over who will meet the estimated \$37bn cost of the act over the next five years.

The government is slowly establishing more IITs and IIMs, and considering reform of its tightly controlled higher education sector, including allowing foreign universities to establish campuses as China has done. Companies such as the Indo-Japanese Hero Honda motorcycle company, Tata Motors and Ispat Steel of India are adopting obsolete state-run vocational training centres to modernise and expand, while the government has established a National Skill Development Corporation, with \$217m to seed private training ventures.

Yet many fret that the pace of change is too slow. McKinsey, the consultancy, estimates that – with 12m students enrolled in higher education – up to 7m more university places are needed to meet economic needs. "This is the one big brake on Indian development," says Mr Adhikari. "Unless you free education, you are not going to free up the accelerators to Indian growth."

India is already feeling the impact of restiveness. Agitation to [divide southern Andhra Pradesh state](#), which shut down the IT hub of Hyderabad for a few days this year, is fuelled partly by ill-educated youths who believe such a division would give them better chances of winning civil service jobs. In the north of the country, the powerful Jat caste is threatening protests to demand government posts for the community.

"A government job still occupies a particular place in our imagination," says Pratap Bhanu Mehta of New Delhi's Centre for Policy Research. "The distributive conflict in India has not manifested itself starkly in terms of rich versus poor. What has taken a political form is how to distribute this government pie."

But the anger of youth excluded from the growth story could yet take a harder turn. There is already [a strong Maoist insurgency](#) in the heartland states involving indigenous tribal people threatened with the loss of their land to industry. Authorities say leftwing ideologues are trying to organise in cities.

"You have 300m Indians whose lifestyles are akin to [those] in the US, and 700m who don't know where their next meal is coming from," notes Maj Gen Bakshi. "You are already seeing the first incipient clash. What is leftwing extremism? It is the thin edge of the wedge."

Source: Oct. 4, 2010/ The [Financial Times Limited 2010](#)

Broad-basing broadband

Education and training through the Internet need Commonwealth Games-like crisis management

The central government and the Delhi administration have shown they can engage in sheer execution to save face for the Commonwealth Games. Couldn't our governments choose to make similar efforts to improve an aspect of infrastructure that is perhaps the most powerful means for

enhancing our productive capacity and quality of life: broadband? One might ask: why broadband, and not energy, water/sanitation, or roads...? While all infrastructure is essential, broadband gives the quickest, biggest bang for the buck, because of its nature vis-à-vis energy, water or transportation and our regulatory environment and functional organisation (for instance, the complexity of addressing power supply). If we could increase mobile phone coverage to present levels by reducing costs and increasing availability, it should be possible to do so for personal computer (PC) also, to draw on the wealth of free educational and training material for our vast numbers.

Unfortunately, for such infrastructure, there is no triggering crisis like the threat of failure of the Commonwealth Games, and consequently, no face-saving or glam factors, like the arrival of foreign teams and visitors. This article makes a case for a Commonwealth Games-type crisis management for broadband through a collage of factors.

Consider these aspects of our demographics:*

- Nearly 460 million people are aged between 13 and 35 today.
- Of these, 333 million are literate.
- In 10 years from now, the countrywide average age will be 29, compared to 37 in the US and China, 45 in Europe, and 48 in Japan.
- As many as 100 million Indians — the combined labour forces of Britain, France, Italy, and Spain — are projected to be added to our workforce by 2020, which is 25 per cent of the global workforce.

This indicates our productive potential. Its realisation would require education and training, efficient functioning, i.e. the matrix of enabling infrastructure, and organisation. If these needs remain unmet, the demographic opportunity can become the liability of an unproductive population, with attendant difficulties and social hazards.

We have many formal and informal institutions providing training and education. We add nearly 300,000 engineering graduates every year to our pool of 2 million engineers. India's vocational training capacity is estimated at 3.1 million a year, whereas about 12.8 million people enter the workforce. However, the National Sample Survey (2004) found that only 2 per cent of the 15-29 age group had formal vocational training and another 8 per cent had non-formal vocational training. In the developed economies, the proportion of skilled workers is 60-80 per cent; Korea has 96 per cent skilled workers.**

Five years ago, McKinsey reported that only a quarter of India's engineers were employable in the IT industry. Recently, a survey showed this has reduced to 18 per cent.***

Apart from training and education in specific disciplines, the processes that make for good work practices are:

systems thinking, a scientific temper, and goal-oriented work practices to meet standards of quality and time. Then there are the attributes of playing team, while engaging in a hard-charging individual effort. All these skills and practices are necessary and can be learned and renewed over time.

How will our workforce of over 500 million, adding 12.8 million every year, have access to continuing education and training, information for civic amenities and facilities and easy, efficient access to commercial and public services? What about the prerequisites of schooling, vocational training and university education? To answer these questions, consider parallel developments in domains such as distance education, e-learning and smart applications. Here are glimpses of the transformation underway in university and secondary education, especially outside India:

- iTunes U has become one of the world's largest educational catalogues for free educational material. After three years, there are over 300 million downloads. Over 800 universities have their websites at iTunes U, including many of the top universities from the US, UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore and so on.
- Khan Academy (<http://khanacademy.org>), a brilliant, free educational site by an ex-hedge fund analyst and manager, Salman Khan (Salman Khan of Silicon Valley, not Bollywood), covers mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, with over 18 million page views in August (<http://khanacademy.org>). Started in late 2006, Khan is reportedly developing an open-ended set of material covering many subjects, and is a favourite among people like Bill Gates, and John and Ann Doerr (Fortune: http://money.cnn.com/2010/08/23/technology/sal_khan_academy.fortune/index.htm). Of the 200,000 students who access this site every month, only 20,000 are from India.
- There are many other educational sites from school level upwards, for instance, the Open Courseware Consortium (<http://www.ocwconsortium.org>) by MIT, with US members like the University of California (Berkeley), Michigan and so on. Many universities and schools have their own websites. There is the Wikiversity, with portals from pre-school through primary to tertiary education, non-formal education and research (see <http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Wikiversity:Browse>).

India, BCG estimates that Internet usage will increase from 7 per cent of the population in 2009 to 19 per cent in 2015 (237 million). PC penetration, which was just 4 per cent in 2009, is estimated at 17 per cent by 2015 (216 million). To quote BCG: "India has among the highest PC costs and lowest PC availability of all the BRIC countries (including Indonesia)." Mobile phone penetration, however, is 10

times higher, at 41 per cent. This appalling situation needs to be redressed.

Inferences

Hundreds of millions of Indians should use these websites and the Internet for radical transformation. This will require policies and practices aimed at providing:

- inexpensive access to broadband;
- greater access to PCs and PC-equivalents as they evolve (e.g. Pranav Mistry's SixthSense); and
- systems and processes that encourage distance education, and discipline in all fields, with professionalism and excellence across all activities.

Regulations and tax regimes determine which activities are profitable, and to what extent. This is where the government and its policies come in. Could Internet users in India converge public opinion to rouse governments to address these needs, emulating the example of Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit?

Source: October 07, 2010/ [Business Standard](#):

Recruitment of management professionals in PSUs rises to 7%: Survey

In what can be seen as good news for management professionals in India, recruitments of such professionals in the public sector has increased to seven per cent, out of the total placements, according to a survey.

"Although private sector companies continue to remain the biggest employers of management professionals, the domestic public sector companies have become more aggressive with recruitment accounting for 7 per cent of total placements in 2009 as compared to 4 per cent in 2007," a survey conducted by Dun & Bradstreet said.

"The increasing demand for management education in all major cities in India along with the Government's role in ensuring better access to higher education has had a positive impact on the economic growth of our country," D&B's (India) CEO, Kaushal Sampat, said in a statement today.

The company had surveyed 168 universities affiliated as well as private business schools in India. The study further indicates that there is a 22 per cent increase in the number of students with work experience opting for management studies.

"In terms of placement, our study also reveals that in 2009 around 61 per cent of the management schools offered more than 85 per cent placement," Sampat said.

According to the report, Category I business schools account for 16 per cent of total intake capacity of the surveyed 168 schools. On the other hand, category II and category III business schools cover 55 per cent and 28 per cent respectively.

The report mentioned that the number of new courses and programmes offered by business schools has also increased, to meet industry demand for employees with certain skill set and talent.

"Consequently, the number of students with work experience increased 22 per cent from 1764 in 2006-08 batches to 2167 in 2007-09 batches," it said.

The report mentioned that for the academic year 2007-09, total student enrolments increased 6 per cent YoY.

For the 2007-09 batches, on an average, female students constituted nearly 40 per cent of the total enrollments, which had increased by seven per cent as against six per cent growth of male students.

"Among the different categories, category II business schools registered highest growth of 9 per cent YoY in terms of student enrollments in 2007-09 batches. In fact, this category recorded the highest y-o-y growth of male and female enrollers at 7 per cent and 11 per cent respectively," the report said.

Source: Mumbai/ PTI, Oct 15, 2010/ [The Times of India](#)

D&B launches inaugural edition of 'India's Leading Business Schools'

Public sector companies get more aggressive with recruitment accounting for 7% of total placements in 2009 as compared to 4% in 2007: Dun & Bradstreet Study

Dun & Bradstreet, the world's leading provider of global business information, knowledge and insight, released the inaugural edition of its publication, 'India's Leading Business School's on October 14, 2010.

The publication profiles 168 University affiliated as well as private Business Schools in India that fall under the purview of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and/or governed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Apart from profiling, the publication also provides detailed insights on the operational aspects, infrastructure, placements, challenges faced, growth drivers and future plans of these business schools. To understand the functional and operational dynamics of business schools, the respondent business schools were divided into three categories, based on their average placement salaries in 2009.

Speaking at the launch, Mr. Kaushal Sampat, President & CEO – India, Dun & Bradstreet, said, "The increasing demand for management education in all major cities in India along with the Government's role in ensuring better access to higher education has had a positive impact on the economic growth of our country. D&B's study on the leading business schools reveals that although private sector companies continue to remain the biggest employers of management professionals, the domestic public sector companies have become more aggressive with recruitment accounting for 7% of total placements in 2009 as compared to 4% in 2007.

The study further indicates that there is a 22% increase in the number of students with work experience opting for management studies. In terms of placement, our study also reveals that in 2009 around 61% of the management schools offered more than 85% placement", he added.

About D&B's India's Leading Business Schools:

'India's Leading Business School' is Dun and Bradstreet India's (D&B India) recognition of the prominent business schools in the country. Business Schools covered in the publication have affiliations and recognitions with the Foreign Universities, Central Universities, State Universities, Deemed Universities, Private Universities, AICTE, AIU, UGC, MHRD and Institutes of National Importance. The publication is based on direct responses received from business schools.

To invite nominations from various business schools, questionnaires were sent out to business schools sourced from MHRD, UGC, AIU, NAAC, AICTE and D&B's internal database. Additionally, mass media channels such as advertisements in leading business news dailies were used to invite participation in the publication. Every effort was made to reach out to all business schools and ensure their response to the questionnaire. Business schools that did not respond to the questionnaire have been excluded from the publications.

For the purpose of this publication, the total number of students provided are for the batch passing out in 2009. Business Schools have been listed on various parameters such as total number of full time faculty, region wise and total intake capacity of the students. A standardised format has been used for reporting the information of the business schools.

Key highlights:

- Establishment of business schools gathered momentum in the post liberalisation period, owing to a spiraling demand for talented professionals. The survey reveals that nearly 53% of the surveyed business schools were founded during 1990-2000, while 32% of them were established post 2000.
- While the private sector continues to be the biggest employers of management professionals, it is worth mentioning that domestic public sector companies have been aggressive in the last year. The survey revealed that the public sector companies accounted for 7% of total placements in 2009 as compared to 4% in 2007.
- In the study, Category I business schools clearly outperform other institutes in the study in terms of placements. Category I business schools placed 98% of its batch in 2009. Overall, the surveyed business schools achieved 87.46% for the same period.
- Composition and quality of faculty have a direct bearing on the performance of business schools. On

this front too, Category I institutes are clear leaders in the study – over half of the faculty in Category I business schools have doctoral degrees – substantially higher than the rest of the institutes.

- An increasing number of students with work experience are opting for management studies - an indication of the fact that many professionals prefer to upgrade their skills to remain competitive. The survey has revealed that the number of students with work experience opting for management studies increased by 22% y-o-y in the 2009 batch.
- Marketing and finance, the two most preferred specialisations, registered a decline in their overall share in 2009 batch. On the other hand, the share of students opting for retail management studies increased to touch 4% of the overall number of students.
- One of the prerequisites for imparting quality education is to maintain a lower faculty to student ratio. On an average, the faculty-to-student ratio of all business schools taken together stood at a respectable level 1:11.4. The Category I schools emerged as the best in terms of faculty to student with a ratio of 1:8.6 and the Category III schools had the highest faculty to student ratio of 1:13.2
- The increasing cost of managing business schools and lack of quality faculty emerged as the two biggest challenges faced by the business schools in the country.
- To meet the challenges posed by globalisation of management education in India, the study found that business schools consider collaborations with international universities/associations, development of infrastructure and global accreditation as top priority.
- Category I business schools account for 16% of total intake capacity of the surveyed schools. On the other hand, category II and category III business schools cover 55% and 28% respectively.
- Average intake capacity of category I schools is the highest at 210 students per business school followed by category II and category III with 168 and 137 students per business school respectively.
- Average number of classrooms per business school for the surveyed schools stood at 13 per school with category I business schools leading with 17 classrooms per school.
- Around 93% of the surveyed business schools provide hostel accommodation to students, which can accommodate a total of 30,112 students.
- The surveyed business schools are well equipped with latest technology and have a high student to computer ratio of 1:1.03.

D&B's 'India's Leading Business Schools' was launched by Dr. Stephen D'Silva, Director, Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies and Mr. Alok Bharadwaj, Senior Vice President, Canon India was the Key Note Speaker. A panel discussion on "Taking Indian Business Schools to the Next Level" followed thereafter.

Source: October 15, 2010/ [Business Standard](#)

India's youth have moved on

The subdued, mature response by all manner of people and organisations to the recent Lucknow High Court verdict on the six-decade old Ramjanmabhooni-Babri Masjid dispute has been rightly read by political commentators and media pundits alike as sign of a new India's desire to move beyond divisive politics to more progressive, development-led agendas.

And it seems the desire to 'move on' has been particularly strong with India's young population for some time now. The country's young demographics, over 65% of the population under the age of 35, is our biggest calling card, not just in terms of achieving the much avowed global economic stardom, but critically the nature of polity that we ultimately become.

INDIAN YOUTH	
Religion and development go hand-in-hand	
Are you religious?	76.00%
Media interest	
News & current affairs	72.00%
Music & films	78.00%
Cookery	39.00%
Environment	34.00%
Politics	30.00%
Member of political party	1.00%
Support women reservation in Parliament/state assemblies	
	67.00%
Live in joint family	75.00%
SC/ST/OBC	
	63.00%
Support caste reservation in higher education	47.70%
Source: National Book Trust-NCAER National Youth Readership Survey 2009	

Let's look at some proxy indicators. A massive survey of India's youth last year by the National Council of Applied Economic Research for NBT throws of some very interesting findings. The survey takes the National Youth Policy's definition of 13-35 years as youth. The survey, undertaken as part of the National Youth Readership Survey 2009, interviewed over 3,11,431 youth in 432 villages & 199 cities/towns the biggest by any survey so far.

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Lest we assume that we're now a country of atheists or 'non-religious' young people, the survey says that a overwhelming proportion, over three-fourths, of India's literate youth (333 million) said they were religious, with the count of atheists at 2% and non-religious at 15%. These numbers are roughly similar across gender, faith, cities and villages and level of education.

But it seems being 'personally religious' (the specific question was "Irrespective of whether you attend religious services, would you say you're a religious person?") does in no way come in way of embracing progressive thoughts and rejecting dogmatism.

Under 1% of literate youth in the country is associated with any political party as a member, lower than memberships for apolitical organisations like self-help groups and youth clubs.

The study trashes the 'fairly competitive and intense student politics at the university and college level', as non-representative of 'the political orientation of the literate youth in India'. After all, only a third of all 333 million literate youth in India are students, and less than one in ten literate youth go to colleges for higher education, so indeed why should 'students politics' in big cities based colleges be marker for all youth in the country!

Clearly, Indian youth and not political creatures in the sense of belonging to one group or the other, or espousing one ideology over another, but that doesn't mean they're apolitical. Far from it. Over a third are interested in politics, higher than the proportion that shows interest in fashion. And a high number (72%) is interested in news & current affairs making them aware citizens.

A large majority (67%) of literate Indian youth support reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies. And around half are aware of developmental programmes like NREGA and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, pointing to a growing trend towards supporting gender & economic inclusiveness.

Importantly, even while two-thirds of India's literate youth fall in the SC/ST/OBC category, the proportion that support the current caste-based reservation in higher education is under half (47.7%). And this, even when unemployment remains high (around 10%) amongst graduate/post-graduate youth. What this points to is a losing traction for caste-based politics of the Mandal kind that tore through the country's social fabric in the early 1990s. However, a caveat here is in order.

The NCAER-NBT survey is for a period in time (2009) and we don't have time series figures to compare it with, 1990-91 for instance, the year of the anti-Mandal agitation against OBC reservation. Nonetheless, available anecdotal

evidence suggests that indeed caste-based reservation is losing its potency to rally people, for or against it.

What is also important to bear in mind is that a large part of literate Indian youth (75%) still lives in a joint-family, with around three generations under one roof. With conformism a social behaviour even with young people in India, undoubtedly, the general family/elders view has a bearing on the youth's responses and opinions.

In that sense, what the youth of India is articulating here points to a vastly changed India. And that, in a sense, proves that we as people are surely moving away from the bitterness, insularity and parochialism of the past, and for the better.

Source: Monday, Oct 18, 2010/ [The Financial Express](#)

Class of 2009 victims of 17-year high in graduate unemployment

Unemployment among Britain's graduates is at its highest level for 17 years, according to figures released today. They show that more than one in 12 (just over 21,000 or 8.9 per cent) of those who left university in the summer of 2009 were still unemployed six months later.

In addition, more than one in three of those who found work – 48,000 – are in stopgap rather than graduate jobs. In all, 70,000 of the 224,495 graduates surveyed were either on the dole, or pulling pints or waiting tables.

The figures emerged as ministers are on the verge of announcing they will raise the £3,290-a-year cap on student tuition fees to as much as £9,000 a year. An announcement is likely within the next fortnight.

Worryingly, the rise in unemployment among graduates in the past two years has been cushioned only because recruitment to public-sector jobs remained steady. But with 490,000 jobs expected to disappear in the sector following the Comprehensive Spending Review, this safety blanket is likely to start fraying.

The new figures show more young people are also opting to stay in full-time education after graduating rather than looking for a job. This accounts for a further 15.4 per cent of graduates – up 1.3 percentage points from the previous year.

Today's figures, from the Higher Education Careers Service Unit, show that graduate unemployment has risen by one percentage point to 8.9 per cent this year – leaving the class of 2009 the worst off since 1993 in the search for jobs.

Aaron Porter, the president of the National Union of Students, said: "These latest figures show that students are graduating from university into the bleakest employment market for decades.

"This is yet further proof that the radical proposals in Lord Browne's review [of student finance] to remove

government funding for the majority of subjects and simply transfer this cost to students is unfair and illogical."

The figures coincide with one of the country's biggest graduate recruiters reporting that applications to its graduate training programme for next year have doubled. Ernst and Young, the professional services firm, says 4,500 graduates are chasing 700 places.

Stephen Isherwood, head of graduate recruitment at the firm, said: "Over the last two months we've seen interest in our graduate recruitment programmes rocket."

However, today's unemployment figures are still markedly lower than they were in the wake of the recession of the early 1990s, when the figure reached 11.6 per cent

Graduate employment experts point out that the rise appears to be peaking. Unemployment the previous year rose by 2.4 percentage points to 7.9 per cent. However, they acknowledge that the unknown factor is the impact of public spending cuts.

Charlie Bell, the deputy research director at HECSU, said: "Prospects for graduates in the short term look brighter, with unemployment likely to have peaked, and next year we expect to see a decline. However, with the public-sector job cuts, the future in the medium-term looks less clear."

However, Sally Hunt, general secretary of the University and College Union, warned: "We fear it is perhaps a little optimistic to assume that graduate unemployment has peaked.

"We believe there are all sorts of benefits from a university education. However, the Government cannot make a case for increased contributions from graduates, students or their parents based on specious graduate pay premiums."

Ministers have said the average graduate earns £100,000 more over their career than those who have not been to university. However, bleak employment prospects threaten to torpedo their argument that, because of this, students would be prepared to pay higher tuition fees.

Ministers are now said to be ready to announce raising the cap to £8,000 or £9,000 a year. An earlier plan to limit the rise to £7,000 is being rejected because universities say that would barely cover the cuts in the teaching budget announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The Universities minister David Willetts favours a two-tier approach to tuition fees – fixing a minimum fee of around £6,000 a year and a maximum approaching £9,000. However, those charging the higher fee may have to face a public benefit test similar to that imposed on charities – and show they were still attracting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A final decision on fees has yet to be made. Ministers will, though, put a package before Parliament for approval by Christmas. Mr Willetts has already said they have rejected Lord Browne's most radical option – that of lifting the

£3,290 a year cap on fees altogether and letting universities charge what they like.

Today's graduate employment figures show the biggest drop in recruitment was among IT graduates, with 16.3 per cent unemployed. In addition, media studies graduates' unemployment rate increased by 2.6 percentage points to 14.6 per cent.

The biggest boost to recruitment was in retail services – up 3.8 percentage points to 14.4 per cent of the graduate employment market.

Also on the rise were recruitment to social and healthcare jobs – up 0.5 percentage points to 5.2 per cent and 0.2 points to 14.8 per cent respectively. However, they are both public-sector jobs. Graduates salaries, though, have continued to rise – albeit modestly.

This year's graduates can expect a salary of £19,695 on average – £18 more than those in the previous year.

Chris Brady: Was getting a degree the right choice?

I've been unemployed since I finished my MA six weeks ago, which I did partly because the job situation wasn't great, but also because I thought it would help me when it comes to getting jobs.

I've been applying for things to tide me over, but I was told I didn't have the qualifications and experience even for minimum-wage office work. I've got an MA in international relations. I'm not stupid. I can think. It's frustrating because I wanted to join the police but had to write that off because the cuts are huge. No police forces are recruiting.

I feel like I'm going backwards. I've had to move back with my dad. I'm on the dole, and it's frustrating because I've invested so much time and money in my education to avoid relying on the state.

It makes you wonder if getting a degree was the correct decision when you end up in the same place as people who haven't made the same investments. I'm still grateful, however, to have something to fall back on.

The situation's not surprising and it kind of makes you feel better that there are other people in the same position. The Government is cutting 500,000 public sector jobs and it's cutting benefits. They don't go hand in hand.

I've got a positive outlook, I'm sure I can get something off the back of my ability, but these last six weeks have been really frustrating."

Claire Salmon: I was lucky – I got a job after five months

I was unemployed for five months after I graduated this year and have only just got a job with IBM. It was really tough because I did a placement there as part of my marketing degree and I was fast-tracked through their graduate assessment centre, but there was no guarantee of a job.

I missed out on a lot of graduate jobs because I was so focused on IBM. I had a couple of interviews that didn't go anywhere, and there was a perfect job that I didn't even get an interview for, even though I filled every criteria. If IBM hadn't come through I would still be jobless. It was frustrating and quite scary because I came out of uni and moved back home faced with no money. I didn't know what to do – whether to get a local job in a bar or something. I didn't know if I'd get a job tomorrow or what. If you think that you're perfect for a job and keep getting knocked back after you worked so hard (I got a first), it's almost as if your degree counts for nothing.

You don't realise how bad it is until you graduate. You think you'll be fine. You think, "It's tough, but if you want it that badly, you'll get it" – but it is tough. I think the Government should do something if they want to start rebuilding the country. Graduates are the ones to fill the roles to kick-start the economy, and they are making them unemployed. I'm one of the lucky ones – about 80 per cent of my friends are still unemployed and they're just floating around.

You've got to stay positive – something will come up; but I can see it's hard to keep that frame of mind.

Sarah Carlile: Public-sector cuts will just make it harder

I've been unemployed since I graduated with a degree in human resource management in June. I'm looking for something in the field, and have done a lot of temping but I can't find any permanent work. I'm really frustrated and hold out hope that I might find the one temping job that will turn into something permanent.

All of the jobs I've been through have been temporary, and I've been through four. I've been to quite a few interviews and have been turned down in all of them. That's a bit deflating. There's quite a bit of temping work around but I've not been able to start my career properly. I'm not surprised at the news, just because of the country's situation. There are lots of graduates around compared with the number of jobs.

Maybe the Government could provide funding for companies, perhaps to start a scheme to take on graduates.

I think the public sector job cuts will make things harder because there will be more competition in the private sector. I think I'll be in this situation for a while but if I get a job, it will be the start of my career. If I haven't got a job by June, I'll probably go travelling. I can temp until then and pay for it. I'd love to go travelling, but if I find the right job I'll stay.

I'm the kind of person who thinks everything happens for a reason, so I'm positive. There are jobs out there – I haven't found one yet."

Source: 1 Nov, 2010/[The Independent](#)

Contribute

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

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