



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

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ASPECT**Delhi University: in a hurry to 'Semesterise'?**

What really is at stake in academic and governance terms in the battle over the semester system? What implications does it carry for academic reforms in the country more generally?

The managers of higher education appear to be in a crisis. This may appear a bit rich coming from two teachers of a university that has been in the news for the trade union-like attitude of its academics. Earlier, the Vice-Chancellor knocked on the doors of courts to restrain the Teachers' Association, and now a public interest litigation plea filed by an ex-serviceman has resulted in its withdrawing the agitation. The High Court threatened to pass orders on what is at core an academic and governance issue: the content and modality of the dozen-odd science courses which were recently 'semesterised.'

The bitter confrontation between the administration and the teachers of Delhi University has been seen as a clash between progress and mule-headedness. The immediate issue — 'semesterisation of undergraduate education' — seems simple enough, with which no reasonable person should have any quarrel. The basic idea is that students will learn and get evaluated after 13-15 weeks, and move on to the next set of courses. This would make college education student friendly. It would take away the pressure of having to sit for 8-10 papers at the end of the year. It will also create greater mobility, the transfer of credits and resource utilisation across Indian universities. A short-term student exchange between Indian and foreign universities would become possible. Besides, this is the practice in the best universities on the East Coast of America. That Berkeley and Chicago have quarters, not semesters, and Oxford and Cambridge end-of-year examinations appear to be matters of detail.

Over the last year, a rapid introduction of the semester system has been advocated by the University Grants Commission and the Human Resource Department as being productive of assured results. But as policy decisions turn into hurriedly-assembled common sense, any plea for reconsideration — even caveats — gets perceived as oppositional. If the Indian Institutes of Technology and even Jawaharlal Nehru University can have semester systems, why not Delhi University, one of the premier universities in the country? The question, it seems, has to be posed only for the answer to be in the negative. Unless, one pauses to ponder over the aphorism: 'The devil is in the details.'

So what really is at stake in academic and governance terms, in the unsavoury battle over the semester system? What implications does it carry for academic reforms in the country more generally? The problem, indeed tragedy, of Delhi University's recent history — symptomatic of educational reforms in the country as a whole — has been the failure of honest and effective academic exchange

between the teachers and the administration. One could well decry the politicisation of the Delhi University teachers' association, and allude to the little known fact that an organisation which had Amartya Sen as a founding member has been reduced to arguing for the fundamental right to strike in a court of law.

It is undoubtedly true that such associations very often work as trade unions. However, the failure of the university to adhere to strict academic norms is very largely a failing of its Professoriate, that is, professors, heads, deans, etc, who, as ex-officio members of decision-making bodies, have been charged with overseeing academic standards but who seldom assert their intellectual independence. With the over two-score undergraduate colleges having a smaller voice in decision-making, the clutch of elected teachers' representatives get all the more vociferous at being marginalised by the ex-officio majority.

This asymmetry between the policy-effectiveness of its constituents produces an oscillation between accommodation and steamrolling within the university system. "Weak" or "ordinary" Vice-Chancellors operating in normal times tend to be accommodative, even soft, towards the vociferous elected teacher minority. Additionally, they end up being solicitous even of deadwood configurations within the departments. This results in zero academic change.

If an incumbent Vice-Chancellor perceives a messianic role for herself — as not just a messenger but an enforcer of centralised change, emanating largely from the UGC and the HRD — then everyone not paying untrammelled obeisance will have to go unheard. Contrarian academic opinion, almost by definition, becomes invalid; expecting to be sidelined in decision-making, teacher representatives filibuster or, worse, stall proceedings. All normal procedures of academic decisions get subverted: committees that are to approve newer courses don't get to see, much less discuss, what they approve; pliant heads of departments start functioning as backroom boys; major decisions about the organisation and the quality of education that we impart to students are "technically" approved sans deliberation, and without feasibility studies on their deliverable worth.

At such crucial times, the Professoriate either looks the other way or lowers its academic guard: a *coup de grace* can now be administered. The Vice-Chancellors wheel in the heavy artillery of emergency powers. The normal tendency of the eminent outside nominees on the executive bodies of a university is not to queer the pitch: for, there surely must have been an emergency for such powers to have been invoked. With the abdication of the watchdog function by the apex body, we enter an Orwellian world where the very use of emergency powers becomes the supreme justification.

So why can't Delhi University with its illustrious list of alumni and the Prime Minister among its past professors implement the semester system? To even pose the question this way is to buy into the argument that no

thinking academics are left in the capital's oldest university at present, that college teachers are an ungrateful lot unwilling to innovate and work harder even after the recent pay hike, and the CEO knows best while exercising her emergency powers. These are all questionable assumptions.

What is clear is that very little thought seems to have gone into balancing the requirements of access, equity and quality. Universities are now committed to increasing student intake from 'backward' social groups at all levels. To adjust and develop the capacity to imbibe what is necessarily a more rigorous academic programme requires time and mentoring.

To examine and grade differently-abled students in the first two months when a large number are still struggling to find their feet is in effect to deny them the opportunity they had come seeking in the first place. It will be unwise to just keep failing students in large numbers. What we need are imaginative schemes that enable knowledge acquisition by all — in the classroom and in smaller tutorial groups.

The real danger of hurriedly cobbled semester courses, as has happened with the undergraduate programmes in science subjects in Delhi University, is that the deliverables, in terms of the structure, course content, its logic and student uptake, the vaunted inter-disciplinarity and enhanced modularity have been sacrificed. It saddens us when in a mid-semester evaluation in a new-fangled M.Sc. programme, only five out of 300 students make the grade. At times, it is salutary to be reminded of the expression: 'devilish hurry.' This is not to argue that a semester system is principally evil: it is what one does with the principle that creates the possibility of a wholesome interest in the newer investment in higher education. This seems to be the lesson for all universities poised at the launch pad of educational reforms.

Source: 10 Nov, 2010/[The Hindu](#)

NEWS

Mastering bits and bytes

Schools need to integrate new technology into their MBA teaching. But doing still involves plenty of trial and error

In the world of business they call it "the consumerisation of IT": employees who are used to powerful smart phones and tablet computers in their personal lives are now demanding similar tools in their professional ones. Now business schools are also coming to terms with students who are increasingly tech savvy. Some even see the way they integrate technology with pedagogy as an opportunity to differentiate themselves from the B-school pack.

The beauty of MBA courses is that students can try out new technologies without fear of a serious backlash if the trials don't pay off. "The threat level is just a grade, not a

career," explains Michael Koenig, the director of MBA operations at the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business, which is among the vanguard of schools incorporating new technologies in their Programmes.

Yet there are still concerns about whether new technology in the classroom will enhance the MBA experience or diminish it. Some professors fret that embracing gadgets for the sake of appearing "wired" will detract from the quality of classroom discussions. That has not deterred schools from experimenting. Innovations designed to help students manage information more efficiently, interact with their peers wherever they are and imbibe important business lessons via virtual simulations are all being tested.

The pioneers are discovering that some technologies are not yet ready for prime time. Consider the experience of Darden. In a recent experiment the business school gave a random sample of MBA students Kindle DX e-readers, as well as standard printed handouts and textbooks for their first-year courses. It then encouraged them to use the electronic versions instead of the paper ones.

The students did just that—and many concluded that the Kindle's limitations were too great to justify its widespread adoption on the programme. Switching between text, graphs and charts, they complained, took far longer than on paper-based alternatives. This made it hard for them to keep up with fast-paced class discussions. Nevertheless, some schools are toying with the idea of testing the Apple iPad to see if that has greater success.

As well as trying out gizmos designed to help students handle large volumes of content, schools are also using technology that helps members of study teams to keep in touch with one another. Darden, for instance, has equipped some classrooms with widescreen TVs and software that allow students who are off campus to share data and opinions with those who are... : on it. "Our job is to stretch skills as well as minds," says Koenig, who points out that many executives now need to be able to influence virtual teams they rarely meet face-to-face.

Duke University's Fuqua School of Business has taken this a step further, installing a Cisco "Telepresence" system in one of its lecture theatres. Giant plasma screens and cameras display life-size video images of people in remote locations to an entire class. The school reckons the new system allows professors seamlessly to include overseas participants in class discussions, although further refinement is needed before it can accommodate large numbers of folk joining all at once.

INSEAD, which has campuses in France and Singapore, as well as an executive education centre in Abu Dhabi, has turned to Second Life, a popular virtual world, to help bring students together. It has constructed a cyber campus in which its MBAs can interact and it has begun to integrate Second Life into a few of its courses. One elective, focusing on business-to-business marketing, requires students to

roam around the virtual world assessing how firms are using its capabilities to market their wares.

Schools are also using technology to bring academic theory to life in other ways. Some institutions use online trading rooms to give students a taste of how real financial markets work. Other Web-based simulations that enhance the classroom experience are becoming popular. At Stanford, for instance, James Lattin, a marketing professor, has worked with the school's IT team to create a Web-based programme that lets students work in, and run, a sales team touting a disruptive new product. Using the simulation to teach them about the challenges of sales forecasting has produced far better results than simply lecturing, he says

Source: Nov1, 2010/[Financial Express](#)

India to hold higher education summit

Taking forward deepening ties between India and the US in the education sector, India on Monday announced the holding of a higher education summit next year.

The announcement was made by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his opening remarks during a joint press conference with the U.S. President Barack Obama here.

"Cooperation in the field of education sector holds great promise because no two other countries are better equipped to be partners in building the knowledge economy of the future," he said.

The summit is likely to be held in India, and will see the participation of academicians and private players.

Source: Nov 9, 2010/New Delhi/ [The Hindu](#)

U.S. Officials to Press India on Education

A delegation of U.S. education officials visiting India alongside President Barack Obama is trying to push India to speed up its acceptance of foreign universities, an Indian government initiative that has been promised but appears to be stalled. The group of about a dozen U.S. officials, including representatives from Duke University, Rutgers University and Arizona State University, will make its case Tuesday to senior officials from India's Human Resource Development ministry, which covers higher education.

The ruling Indian National Congress party introduced a bill in March that would allow foreign universities to set up stand-alone undergraduate and graduate-degree programs here. Foreign institutions are now allowed to set up only programs in India that are part of degree programs based elsewhere.

The foreign universities bill is being reviewed by a parliamentary committee. Supporters hope the legislation

will be approved in the winter session, which begins this month.

The foreign delegation is hoping a meeting on Tuesday with Vibha Das, secretary of higher education, will yield some clues about the best approach to take in expanding their higher education opportunities in India, participants say.

India, with more than half of its 1.1 billion people under the age of 30, represents a vast new market for U.S. universities. Duke University, for example, aims to set up a campus in India, starting with a business degree program. To do so requires passage of the foreign universities bill, said Jaivir Singh, an adviser to Duke in Delhi who is part of the delegation.

"Nothing significant from the perspective of a campus can happen until that bill passes," said Mr. Singh.

Kapil Sibal, minister of human resource development, has said he wants to encourage foreign universities to establish undergraduate and graduate degree programs in India as part of a broader plan to substantially increase the quality and quantity of higher education programs in India. The country can't meet the demand of its growing economy for better educated workers unless its higher education system is substantially expanded and improved, supporters of the bill have said.

Mr. Sibal has said he wants to increase the number of high school graduates who enroll in college to 30% by 2020, from 12% currently. To do so, India needs to build hundreds more colleges and universities, he has said.

India's economy is expected to grow at about 8.5% this year, aided by the loosening in the 1990s of many of the socialist-style regulations of industry. But the government has been slow to lift similarly stringent regulations on education that legislate aspects such as tuition fees, teacher salaries and curriculum. As a result, there is a shortage of qualified workers in the expanding economy, and the shortfall is only expected to worsen.

Among the many problems that plague Indian higher education is the difficulty recruiting faculty because salaries are so low compared to the private sector.

American universities have made clear to Mr. Sibal that they can't operate in India under such heavy regulations. And Mr. Sibal has repeatedly said he hopes not only to allow foreign universities to operate in India without the burden of such regulations but to liberate the entire higher education system from these outdated rules.

Whether he will be able to do so remains in question, in part because many Indians fear tuition fees, unregulated, would soar out of the reach of the average Indian, in the absence of substantial student loan programs.

Mr. Sibal has said he intends to set up student loan programs and vocational education programs, both of which are virtually nonexistent in India.

Source: Nov 9, 2010/ Mumbai/ [The Wall Street Journal](#)

India, Canada ink education pacts

Canada on Tuesday pledged investments worth almost \$4 million in collaborative education projects with India, including fellowships for Indian students to study in Canada. The pacts were announced after a meet between human resource development minister Kapil Sibal and Canadian science and technology minister Gary Goodyear. Canadian and Indian institutions also signed four memoranda of understanding.

Eight Canadian varsities have started the Globalink Canada-India Graduate Fellowship Program that will provide scholarships to 51 Indians.

Source: Nov 9, 2010 /New Delhi / [Hindustan Times](#)

UGC plan to dilute norms for lecturers rejected

Dashing the hopes of thousands of M.Phil-holders, the Centre has rejected the UGC resolution to dilute the eligibility norms for appointment of lecturers and vetoed a proposal to have MPhil as the minimum academic qualification.

The UGC's proposal to dispense with National Eligibility Test (NET) or State-Level Eligibility Test (SLET) qualification for lecturer aspirants and, instead, have MPhil as the minimum required qualification is clearly incongruous and hence not acceptable, the Union ministry of human resources development (HRD) told the Madras high court on Tuesday.

A submission to this effect was made by additional solicitor-general of South India M Ravindran, when a writ appeal filed by a batch of guest lecturers in various government colleges in Tamil Nadu came up for hearing before the first bench comprising Chief Justice M Yusuf Eqbal and Justice TS Sivagnanam.

The UGC had decided to exempt all candidates who obtained an MPhil degree on or before July 10, 2009 from clearing the NET/SLET to qualify for appointment as a teacher in a college or university.

There are 1,024 guest lecturers employed in the government arts and science colleges in the state. The lecturers, who have put in service ranging from 7 to 13 years, only have MPhil degrees and have not cleared NET/SLET. As the government cannot regularise their services without them clearing the NET/SLET, they approached the court, stating that they should be either given time to acquire the qualification or be absorbed as a one-time exemption.

Source: Nov 10, 2010/ Chennai/ [Times of India](#)

Setting up of World Class Standard Universities

The National Development Council has approved the setting up of fourteen Universities aiming at world class standards and dedicated to innovation. These universities

are proposed to be located at Bhubaneswar in Orissa, Kochi in Kerala, Amritsar in Punjab, Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh, Patna in Bihar, Guwahati in Assam, Kolkata in West Bengal, Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, Gandhinagar in Gujarat, Coimbatore in Tamilnadu, Mysore in Karnataka, Pune in Maharashtra, Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and Jaipur in Rajasthan respectively.

A concept paper finalized by the government is available on website www.education.nic.in and includes the scope for public private partnership.

The proposed universities for innovation are to be established across two plan periods of XIth and XIIth Plan.

This information was given by the Minister of Human Resource Development Shri Kapil Sibal, in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: Nov, 10, 2010/[PIB](#)

Setting up of Research and Development Centre in PPP Mode

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) proposes to establish a Centre for Assessment, Evaluation and Research on Private Public Partnership (PPP) mode. The objectives of the Centre are:

- i)to create research capability and assessment resources of international quality,
- ii)to establish a system through diagnostic testing to provide input to CBSE regarding student learning as well as providing professional development and leadership training.
- iii)to conduct research into policies and programmes that can improve students learning and teaching quality.

The Centre will help create an effective teaching environment in school keeping in view the need for quality education comparable to international standards.

This information was given by the Minister of Human Resource Development Shri Kapil Sibal, in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: Nov, 11, 2010/[PIB](#)

Board exam or school test? Choose carefully

Central Board of Secondary Education Class 10 students may forego their chance of continuing in their current school in Class 11 if they choose to appear for the board-conducted examination in March, the CBSE has warned. Though individual schools may still agree to admit their former students, the CBSE will not intervene to ask schools to admit students who opted out of the school-conducted test, the board has said.

Class 10 students will this month, for the first time, have to choose between the CBSE- conducted examination and the summative assessment individual schools will conduct, senior board sources have confirmed.

This is the first year that the decades-old Class 10 board examination has been made optional.

Students will need to inform their schools in writing whether they intend to take the summative assessment conducted by their school at the end of this term or the board-conducted public examination. The written statements of all students will be forwarded by schools to the CBSE. But students – and their parents – must be extra cautious while making their choice because at stake is the possibility of continuing in the same school and even in the CBSE system in Class 11, the board has warned.

Only students who leave the CBSE and join Class 11 in schools affiliated to other boards need to take the CBSE-conducted examination. The school-conducted examination is adequate for all those who pursue Class 11 in CBSE schools — whether or not the school is the same as the one in which the students completed Class 10.

But students and parents will not have the luxury of keeping both options — CBSE and non-CBSE schools — open for Class 11 and should make a “conscious decision”, the Board said in a set of responses to frequently asked questions it has prepared.

“Having given in writing that you are going to leave the CBSE system, you may probably forego your priority in admission in Class 11 in the same school,” it said.

Source: Nov 11, 2010/New Delhi/ [Hindustan Times](#)

India-Britain sign education MoU

India and Britain Friday signed an MoU for the second phase of their Education Research Initiative.

The MoU, signed by Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal and Britain's Universities Minister David Willetts, will take ahead the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) that has already created almost 600 new partnerships between their institutions at all levels of the education system. The new programme will be funded by both governments.

'We are focusing largely on collaborations in the field of higher education the MoU focuses on skill development, leadership and quality in education, and student exchange along with the UK's cooperation in setting up the innovation universities in India,' Sibal said after signing the MoU.

Source: New Delhi/Nov 12, 2010/[Sify News-IANS](#)

Indian English books place in South Korean education

When a high-level summit of the world's most powerful countries is on, the talk invariably revolves around money. That is true of the G-20 summit which kicked off here today, but it is difficult to deny Abby Thomas his moment in the sun for making English education history in South Korea.

The rise of India's services industry has been about low wages and English language skills. Thomas embodies both, in becoming the first Indian to teach English in this country. Of course, he costs his employer, the Wanju High School in North Jerolla province, considerably less than standard wages for English teachers from other countries.

Thomas' feat, though, cannot be separated from the summit. In fact, it is very much a result of hectic trade parlays which resulted in India's Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Cepa) with South Korea last year.

Earlier, only those from native English-speaking countries could teach English in South Korea. The nationality of the English teachers in this country was thus limited to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Ireland. Cepa had a clause to allow Indians.

“It took great diplomatic effort to achieve this. It can really open the market for our teachers,” India's Ambassador to South Korea S R Tayal told Business Standard. “We have to leverage our human resources. South Korean companies employ many Indians in important positions in India. We must have more Indian workers in South Korea.”

However, in the occupation of teaching English, it is early days for the Indians. The North Jerolla Province Office of Education has so far recruited two Indian teachers — the other, Robins Mathew, is working at an English experience centre — amid skepticisms over the Indians' accent. South Korea hires, on annual contracts, some 6,000 English teachers.

The heartening bit is that students told The Korea Times that Thomas' accent was not an issue. Parents and colleagues, who attended demonstration classes, were also happy with him. Some welcomed the inclusion of Indians in teaching because they thought the native English speakers were not serious about their classes and looked down on Korean teachers.

Source : Nov 12, 2010 / Seoul / [Business Standard](#)

'Outsourcing' the in-thing in Naxal hotbed!

This seems to be a different kind of 'outsourcing' that is fast catching up in several remote Naxal-affected areas.

Teachers, who continue to remain absent for long periods from work due to fear of life, are now "hiring" local youth to take classes on their behalf and paying them half of their salaries.

It has apparently turned out to be a 'win-win situation' for both the teachers as well as the local, half- educated and unemployed youths putting the education of students at stake.

The teachers get half of their salaries staying at home while the youths, who do not have the required qualification, get to teach students school and even get half the salaries.

The trend is fast catching up in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa as school inspectors hardly could visit the schools in remote areas for a reality check due to presence of Maoists and lack of security.

"It is a very disturbing scenario. We can well imagine what would be the quality of education in these schools. We hope that as security forces taking control of more and more Naxal dominated areas, situation would be improved gradually and normalcy is restored," a government official said.

As the Maoists continue to hold sway over large parts of central India, besides the primary education, healthcare for poor also has gone haywire in many such areas as a substantial number medical practitioners are staying away from duties due to threat to life. Many posts in primary health centres are also lying vacant as no one is willing to work there.

State governments too are facing problems in running schools and PHCs in Maoists-hit areas as hundreds of teachers and doctors continue to remain absent for a long time due to Naxal threat while many others did not join their duties even after getting appointment.

Several teachers were either killed, abducted or thrashed badly by Naxals labelling them either police informers or opposed to Maoist ideology.

In seven Naxal-affected districts of Chhattisgarh, only 526 teachers are on the job, out of 2,558 sanctioned posts. In Jharkhand's 11 Maoist-hit districts, 2,937 teachers are working, out of 4,066 sanctioned posts. In Orissa's five districts, 3,566 teachers are on the roll, out of the 6,003 sanctioned posts.

Till September 30 this year, four medical practitioners were killed by Maoists, two in Chhattisgarh, one in Jharkhand and one in West Bengal, who was a veterinary doctor.

Source: Nov 14, 2010/New Delhi/[The Economic Times](#)

Now, HRD wants to keep tabs on grads

A country getting younger has decided to map its youth population. From who's in college and who's been left out and why, to which student earned a scholarship, to which candidate graduated from where, a kind of pan-India census would plot the lives and performance of all those attached to the higher education sector.

The human resource development ministry, which has projected a gross enrolment ratio (GER) in the country's universities to 30% by 2020, is drawing up modalities of conducting the all-India survey in higher education institutes and research labs of the country. "The building blocks of a sound database of higher education would require an all-India survey involving higher educational institutions, including universities, research bodies, statutory councils for higher education, state governments and academics, among others," stated an HRD ministry

notification, which is looking for an agency to conduct a thorough survey.

The survey, government officials felt, would help design the course of action for higher education, a sector which is expected to leapfrog its GER from 12% to 30% in a decade. A taskforce has been set up to explore the mechanism of conducting the all-India survey on higher education.

Headed by the additional secretary of higher education, the panel would prepare the modalities of conducting the survey, which includes the method of survey, the implementation plan, the manner in which data would be captured, collated and tabulated, the plan for analyzing the information and the budget for the mammoth task. The task force would also identify the implementation agency to conduct the survey, besides monitoring the implementation of the survey till its completion.

According to officials, the ministry felt the need for creating a "robust" databank on various aspects to get the real picture on the status of higher education before it could plan on the way forward.

Source: MUMBAI/Nov 19, 2010/[The Times of India](#)

Setting up of New Central Universities

The Central Universities Act, 2009 for establishment of one new Central University in each of the States of Punjab, Kerala, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu and conversion of three State Universities, namely, Dr. Harsingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur and Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna, Garhwal University, Srinagar in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand, respectively, came into force on 15.1.2009. By an amendment to the said Act, a second University in the State of J&K has since been established by the Central Universities Act, 2009.

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

Source: Nov 19, 2010/[PIB](#)

Setting up of New IIITs

The Government of India has a proposal to set up 20 new Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The proposal has been approved by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC). The locations and other details of new IIITs will depend upon the response of the State Governments & Industry partners.

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

Source: Nov 19, 2010/[PIB](#)

Reservation of Seats for Poor Children in Schools

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, provides that a specified category school and an unaided school not receiving any kind of aid or grants to meet its expenses from the appropriate Government or the local authority shall admit in class 1 to the extent of at least twenty-five per cent of the strength of that class, children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantage groups in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory elementary education till its completion. The unaided school shall be reimbursed expenditure so incurred by it to the extent of per-child-expenditure incurred by the State, or the actual amount charged from the child, whichever is less subject to certain terms and conditions.

The RTE Act provides for monitoring and protection of rights of the child by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and the State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights.

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

Source: Nov 19, 2010/[PIB](#)

Common Entrance Test for Undergraduate and Post-Graduate Courses

The recommendations made by a Committee of Vice-Chancellors in regard to a Common Entrance Test in Central Universities was discussed recently in a Conference of Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities. There was a consensus that the present college/institution specific system of admission places immense burden on the students/applicants as well as parents and, therefore, the admission procedure needs to be modified. For admission to undergraduate courses, it was felt that the marks obtained in class 12 and the scores obtained in a common national level aptitude test should get appropriate weight age. For admission to postgraduate programmes, the basis could be marks obtained at the graduate level and a common test to assess the aptitude and knowledge in the subject concerned. The modalities in this regard, however, would be worked out by each Central University keeping in view their specific requirements.

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

Source: Nov 19, 2010/[PIB](#)

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme was launched in July 2004, for setting up residential schools at appear primary level for girls belonging predominantly to

the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. The scheme is being implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) of the country where the female rural literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is above the national average. The scheme provides minimum reservation of 75 per cent of the seats for girls belonging to SC, ST communities and priority for the remaining 25 per cent, is accorded to girls from families below poverty line. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme was merged with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the XIth Plan with effect from 1st April, 2008.

The scheme is not being implemented in the States and UTs of Andaman & Nicobar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Daman & Diu, Goa, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Puducherry and Sikkim as no blocks in these states and UTs fall under the category of EBB. The criteria of eligible blocks had been revised with effect from 1st April, 2008 to include an additional 304 educationally backward blocks with rural female literacy below 30 per cent and 94 Towns/cities having minority concentration with female literacy rate below the national average (53.67%: Census 2001).

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

Source: Nov 19, 2010/[PIB](#)

Grievance Redressal Mechanism in Mid-Day-Meal Scheme

In accordance with guidelines issued by HRD Ministry, the following grievance redressal mechanisms have been set up, for Mid Day Meal Scheme, by different States/UTs:-

- i) The States of Rajasthan, Tripura, Goa and Andhra Pradesh have set up Grievance Redressal Cells.
- ii) The States/UTs of Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands have set up review committees at various levels.
- iii) The states/UTs of Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Mizoram, Bihar, Orissa and Chandigarh have set up telephone helplines.
- iv) The States of Chhattisgarh has established a Call Centre.
- v) The States of Sikkim has set up complaints boxes.

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

Source: Nov 19, 2010/[PIB](#)

India-US education ties set for major expansion

China may have overtaken India in terms of student inflow into American campuses over the past year, but Indian Ambassador Meera Shankar believes the stage is getting

set for a big expansion in cooperation with the US in the field of education.

At an event to celebrate 60 years of the Nehru-Fulbright Educational Exchange Programme, Meera referred to the Bill now before Parliament that would open up the education sector to foreign universities.

"This provides an excellent opportunity for US universities to increase the number of Indian students studying in their institutions, not only in the US, but also in India, through opening of their off-shore locations or through tie-ups with Indian institutions," Meera said.

With a large percentage of young population, India faces a great demand for expansion of its education infrastructure, prompting the government to move towards raising its expenditure on education from 10 percent to 19 percent.

During President Barack Obama's recent visit, the two sides agreed to convene an India-US Higher Education Summit in 2011 as part of the effort to strengthen educational opportunities.

Meera termed this a follow-up to the 'Singh-Obama 21st Century Knowledge Initiative' that was launched during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Washington in November, 2009.

Under this initiative, India and the US have announced a matching contribution of \$5 million for five years in order to fund increased university linkages and junior faculty development exchanges between universities in the two countries.

Lauding the Nehru-Fulbright programme, Meera said it nurtured educational cooperation at a time when political ties between the two countries were not so robust.

Source: Washington/ Nov 18, 2010/ [Express Buzz](#)

Education Loans in India and Education Loans for Studying Abroad

When it comes to Education Loans in India and Education Loans for Studying Abroad, infinite courses put forth all pertaining and precise information on the establishments which proffer educational

Scholars from all across the globe are increasingly becoming aware of the significance of higher studies to ensure a rewarding and satisfying career and life. The number of colleges and universities proffering study alternatives will undeniably sweep you off your feet. However one point of concern which is intimidating many a talent is the unavailability of apt funds to sustain the edification solution which results in intellectuals deprived of education due to financial problems and unawareness about education Loans in India and Education Loans for Studying Abroad.

With state of the art infrastructures, increasing placement opportunities and experienced and expert teaching staff

pitching in, it has come as no surprise that the pricing structure of tuition fees are also climbing the charts like anything. In such milieu, one name that stands out in the crowd for making students and parents aware of the various students scholarships accessible is Infinite Courses. You will be amazed to know that there is a multiplicity of Education Loans in India which students are not acquainted with because of lack of apposite revelation.

Infinite courses is a leading name in the arena of education based web sites which proffer comprehensive information and acquaintance for scholars on a plethora of edification based aspects which also encompasses Education Loans in India, Education Loans for Studying Abroad, scholarships for students and much more. a mere visit to the online education portal of Infinite Courses will make you aware of the assortment of colleges and universities, courses and careers, distant learning universities, coaching institutes, entrance exams, studying abroad, and other pertaining resources.

When it comes to Education Loans in India and Education Loans for Studying Abroad, infinite courses put forth all pertaining and precise information on the establishments which proffer educational loans. Some of the renowned names associated with Education Loans in India are: - IDBI Bank Education Loan, HDFC Bank Education Loan, Baroda Education Loan, SBI Education loan, Axis Bank Education Loan, Bank of India, SyndVidya:- A SyndicateBank's Education Loan Scheme, Punjab National Bank (PNB) EDUCATION LOAN - "VIDYALAKSHYAPURTI", Oriental Bank Of Commerce (OBC), Vijaya Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, The Saraswat Co- op Bank Ltd, Canara Bank, Indian Overseas Bank VidyaJyoti Education Loan, Union Bank of India, Indian Bank, HSBS Bank, Dena Bank and Andhra Bank.

"We at Infinite Courses are enthusiastic and dutiful to help you in every method possible to accomplish your career aspiration. The sheer varieties in our web portal will send you reeling in your head as you will find educational blogs, educational articles on our web portal and you can also ask our experts if you have any quandary or predicament related to just anything even remotely concerned with education and education loans in India or abroad. We have a devoted segment named community wherein you can join discussions on a plethora of issue like accommodation, jobs, study materials and a lot more." Says Rajnish Mehan, an Infinite Courses Spokesperson.

Source: Nov 18, 2010: [Big News](#)

Land largesse for corporate universities

When the Orissa High Court on Tuesday described the Vedanta Group's acquisition of 6,892 acres for its university project in Puri "illegal and void", the judges were merely articulating a widespread concern.

In fact, when Reliance-Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) recently got 110 acres from the Madhya Pradesh

government for its foray into education, it raised many eyebrows. Ditto with Hyderabad-based Indian School of Business (ISB), to which 70 acres had been allotted by the Punjab government on a 99-year lease at Re 1 an acre, annually.

For Vedanta University, the Anil Agarwal Foundation had acquired about 4,500 acres of the 6,892 acres allotted to it.

“It’s a good revenue model and an attractive business proposition for many business houses. They get land — a resource that will be scarce a few years down the line — at throwaway prices. If they are serious about giving back to society, why don’t they purchase land at market rates? The Infosys Technologies training campus in Mysore is also built over acres of donated land,” said Premchand Palety, director, Centre for Forecasting & Research (Cfore), New Delhi.

Infosys Technologies’ Global Education Centre (GEC- II) is located at its 337-acre Mysore campus. Infosys spent over Rs2,000 crore to set up the centre, of which Rs1,700 crore was spent on education- and training-related infrastructure.

Industry players said a fairly good engineering institute can be set up on 10 acres. While a good management institute needs no more than 5 acres and a medical college requires 25-30 acres. “So, why does one require hundreds and thousands of acres to set up an education institute or training centre?” asks Palety.

While the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad, is spread over 67 acres in Vastrapur, Gujarat, IIM-Bangalore is spread over 100 acres.

Some academicians say if the country’s premier institutes can make do with less land, there is no reason why corporate universities need so much of it. This only shows a kind of land grab, as in the case of special economic zones, where around 40 per cent of land acquired belonged to tribals.

“In the name of setting up education institutes, most of these business houses are setting up technical institutes, and not universities. Only technical education assures quick returns along with a ready pool of takers,” says the director of a Bangalore-based management institute.

Consultants advising private companies on their education ventures agree. “Setting up a technical institute is the easiest, as the initial investment required is low and the returns quick. Mostly, the initial cost is covered at most within eight years. That’s why most business houses aren’t interested in setting up a multi-disciplinary university,” said a Delhi-based consultant, who is advising at least a dozen companies on their education ventures.

He adds that many of these businessmen opt for land in states like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Rajasthan, as governments there are ready to give cheap land in the name of development.

However, officials at the All-India Council for Technical Education, the country’s technical and management education regulatory body, disagree. AICTE says it is confident that corporate houses will improve the education scenario. Possibly, this is why it is working on a proposal wherein companies formed under Section 25 of the Companies Act may be considered to run technical colleges.

“We believe that institutions run by business houses are more professionally managed than others. So, their request for more land is not the issue. One cannot invest a lot of money to purchase land and then set up the institute, too. We also believe they would be more transparent,” said an AICTE official.

As ISB Dean Ajit Rangnekar says, “An educational institution’s life-span does not cover years or decades, but centuries. A hundred years from now, 70 acres may limit the campus. Every major university in the world faces a severe shortage of space because the initial estimates of land were grossly inadequate.”

Most companies don’t agree with the land-grab comparison, either. Sunil Bharti Mittal-promoted Bharti Enterprises, which runs Satya Bharti Schools in partnership with state governments and a few vocational courses, plans to set up a university. “Even the thought of equating the setting up of education institutes to a way of land grabbing is bad. It’s not land for commercial use, but to create temples of tomorrow,” said Rajan Bharti Mittal, vice-chairman & managing director, Bharti Enterprises.

Amitabh Jhingan, partner and education leader at Ernst & Young, agrees. “The corporate world needs some amount of support. Land is not a large proportion of the entire exercise, anyway. The cost of setting up an institute is the highest. Besides, there can’t be a possible alternate use to the land.”

Bakul Dholakia, who has been heading the Adani Group’s Institute of Infrastructure & Management in Gujarat, says if the land allotted for an education site is not being put to use properly, it can amount to land grabbing. “If you liberalise education, the demand for land for education may go up. In that case, such a situation may arise. But that is certainly not happening in the near future,” said Dholakia.

Many companies, however, are spending on the prevailing land prices instead of depending on government grants. For example, Shiv Nadar, promoter of the \$5.5-billion enterprise HCL, is planning a university over 286 acres on the outskirts of Delhi and has invested in the land on his own, says an official from the Shiv Nadar Foundation.

Azim Premji University, which is being set up by the Azim Premji Foundation on 50 acres in Sarjapur near Bangalore, is buying land directly from the owners.

Source: Mumbai/Novr 18, 2010/[Business Standard](#)

India needs to develop skills to deliver on demographic dividend

While elite education in India is world class, it is not the route to inclusivity

India has the lowest education indicators among the Group of 20 countries and the world's largest number of illiterates. At the same time, about 12 million people need to join the workforce every year. Moreover, 500 million skilled people will be needed in the country by 2022.

How India could improve education and skills development to deliver on this demographic dividend was debated at the World Economic Forum's India Economic Summit on Tuesday.

Most policymakers, while being aware of India's skills, don't entirely agree over which system or model of education suits a country that is as diverse and poorly connected as India.

Meanwhile, the best institutions providing elite education remained focused on academia. Most panellists agreed that while such elite education in India was world class, it was not the route to inclusivity.

Venkat Matoory, chief executive officer, Junior Achievement India, said the school system had not changed in his lifetime. "There is a lot of good teaching of physics, chemistry and biology, but sadly no context is provided to students." He said this restricted innovation and creativity to some extent.

Hari S. Bhartia, co-chairman and MD, Jubilant Bhartia Group, said there needed to be increased involvement of the private sector in providing education. He proposed a coupon system, which would limit the government's involvement to subsidizing education, which would be facilitated by the private sector.

Bhartia and Accenture's chairman and geography managing director, Harsh Manglik, were convinced that India could not fill the skills gap without market forces ensuring standards.

The emphasis shifted to the link between education and employability of the Indian workforce. The importance of e-learning—or using the Internet as a tool for education—was also brought up as one system that could be used.

The panel agreed that if India had to sustain its high growth trajectory, it needed to provide jobs and skills. The reality, however, was that large numbers of people still live in rural areas and work in agriculture, which in turn contributes a substantial proportion of gross domestic product.

Moreover, pressures on land were pushing many to seek other opportunities, potentially unlocking a huge stock of manpower.

Many question whether India, with its feeble infrastructure, and insufficient industrial sector, can create enough jobs to absorb them.

An even bigger issue is whether most young Indians have, or can be given, the skills required to fill both white and blue collar jobs rapidly being created.

Many believe India is poised to cash in on a demographic advantage but to achieve this means new models for education have to be created and for a country of India's size, this means the private sector may be required to provide reach and scale.

But whatever has to be done needs to be done quickly given the Indian labour force will keep growing, and by 2035 the population will reach 1.5 billion, with about 65% of people being of working age, making India the world's largest labour market.

Source: New Delhi/16 Nov, 2010/[Live Mint](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

DU's New VC Prof. Dinesh Singh speaks out

Three days ago, when professor Dinesh Singh took over as the new Delhi University vice-chancellor, right in the middle of the semester imbroglio, all sections of the university hoped that this is one problem the mathematician would solve well. The withdrawing of the teachers' strike following the HC order could not have come at a more opportune moment for the new VC. But in a freewheeling interview with Neha Pushkarna at his Kalkaji home, DU's man of the moment conceded he has no magic solutions. Excerpts:

What was your first reaction as you took over as the VC of one of the biggest universities in the country?

I had a strange feeling of calm. I remembered my father who is no more. In a way my career has run parallel to his. He was also a professor of maths in DU. He had also become the pro- vice-chancellor and then the vice-chancellor of Delhi University for a brief period in 1980. He signed my wife's degree and also my sister's. I have also taken up the same positions.

You have joined at a time when the varsity is going through turbulence. Will the stand-off between teachers and the university end now?

I will work with a spirit of cooperation. We need to work together for the betterment of the university. I am open to suggestions but the students' interest will be the uppermost for me.

Will there be semesters or the annual mode at undergraduate level?

Has the university changed its stand? It hasn't. I alone can't take a decision.

The implementation of OBC quota is complete but the infrastructure in many colleges is still not adequate.

How do you plan to solve the problem of overcrowding in classrooms and lack of space?

For that, we plan to use IT. Students will not have to sit in the same classroom. They can sit in adjacent classrooms and a large screen will be put up there. They can see the teacher on the screen even if he/she is in another room. The lecture will also get recorded this way so that the teacher can work on it later. We will make it happen soon.

Though the admission process has been reformed and made simpler in the last few years, students still vie for only a handful of colleges. What stops DU from creating new brands?

I have a plan for that. Students in all colleges must have access to good laboratories, libraries, recreation facilities and teachers should have a decent office space. How else can they do quality research? There should be better funding and technology for colleges.

DU's ranking was 254 in QS World University Ranking in 2007 which slipped to 371 this year. What are your plans to take the university to global standards?

Our research facilities are good but infrastructure is a huge letdown. The quality of our students is also one of the best in the world. But we will have to become more professional. We need a website which is more user-friendly. The university, I feel, often misses out on the credit due to it for the research work done by the college faculty. They after all are a part of the university and for that we have to make sure that teachers feel a greater sense of attachment, their missions are fulfilled and they are given enough encouragement.

DU is one of the least expensive universities. Do you think student fee needs to be hiked?

That's not my concern right now. DU is not short of funds.

Are the funds allocated to the university enough? Or do you think DU is the pampered one here?

Government has been very generous to us. It's not being pampered, we need the money. Lot of infrastructure is coming up in the university.

What changes can we expect?

The Dhaka campus close to north campus will have some extraordinary hostels for girls and boys and also faculty accommodation. It will be a mini-campus in itself. These will be undergraduate hostels and I will make sure that students from all colleges get a quota there. Since the Metro will be close by, students from all colleges can stay there and know about different colleges from each other.

What do you think about the common entrance test for all universities as proposed by the MHRD?

I think it makes a lot of sense. It's tedious for students to go through different tests.

Do you think teachers' performance should be evaluated by students?

There should be constant interaction between students and teachers to learn about each other. There should be a procedure by which a teacher can know what students think...Did I teach slow or should I have referred to more books? It is important to have a critic around.

Source : New Delhi/ Nov 1, 2010/ [Times of India](#)

Remarks by U.S. President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama with students at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai

Mrs Obama: Hello, everyone. Namaste. It is a pleasure and an honor to be here in India. Everyone, please sit, who can sit. Rest. It's warm. We are thrilled to be here and to have a chance to spend time with so many outstanding young people from St. Xavier's College and so many other schools across Mumbai.

Now, this is my first trip to India, but it is not my first exposure to India's wonderful culture and people. See, I grew up in Chicago, which is a city with one of the largest Indian-American communities in our country. And of course, last year, as you know, we were proud to host Prime Minister Singh and Mrs. Kaur for our very first state visit and dinner. It was a beautiful evening under a tent on the South Lawn of the White House, and we got to hear some pretty great Bhangra as well. I danced there, too. (Laughter.)

So I have really been looking forward to this trip for a very long time. The time that we spend with young people during our travel is very special to both me and to the President. When I was your age, I never dreamed of traveling to countries like this and meeting with young people like all of you. In fact, there were a lot of things that I had never imagined for myself growing up, including having the honor of serving as my county's First Lady.

My family didn't have a lot of money. My parents never went to college. I grew up in a little bitty apartment in a working-class neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. My parents worked hard to pay the bills and to keep a roof over our heads. But even though my parents couldn't give us material things, they gave us something much more precious -- they gave me and my brother strong values. They taught us to treat others with dignity and respect. They taught us to push for excellence in every single thing we did. They taught us to be humble and to be grateful for everything we had. They taught us to put every last bit of effort into our education and to take pride in our work. They taught us that our circumstances didn't define us, and that if we believed in ourselves, if we made the most of every single opportunity, we could build our own destinies and accomplish anything we put our minds to.

And I try every single day to take those lessons to heart. And the fact that all of you are here today tells me that we

all share these same values, that we all learn these same lessons. You're here today because, like me and my husband, you believe in your dreams and you're working hard every single day to fulfill them. More importantly, you're here because you've committed to something greater than yourselves. You're here not just because of your academic and extracurricular activities and achievements, but because of what you've done to give back to your schools and to your communities.

Your willingness to serve is critical for all that lies ahead once you finish your education. Because the truth is pretty soon the responsibilities for building our future will fall to all of you. Soon we're going to be looking to your generation to make the discoveries and build the industries that will shape our world for decades to come.

We'll be looking to you to protect our planet. We're going to be looking to you to lift up our most vulnerable citizens. We're going to be looking to you to heal the divisions that too often keep us apart. And I believe that you and your peers around the world are more than up to the challenge, because I've seen it firsthand right here in India.

Just yesterday I had the wonderful opportunity to visit an organization called Make A Difference. It's an amazing program designed and run by young adults who recruit other young people, outstanding college students like themselves, to mentor and teach children who, as the founder said, haven't had the same chances in life as many of the mentors have had.

These young volunteers understand and believe in something very simple, that all children, regardless of their circumstances, deserve the same chance to get educated and to build productive and successful lives. And I know that many of you here today are doing equally important work in your communities and your schools -- everything from holding camps for kids in need to teaching computer literacy skills, to finding new ways to conserve energy.

And let me tell you, this work is amazing, and it is vitally important. And that is why, as First Lady, I have tried my best to engage young people not just in the United States but around the world, letting them know that we believe in them, but more importantly, that we need them. We need you. We need you to help solve the great challenges of our time.

And that's also why when my husband travels abroad, he doesn't just meet with heads of state in parliaments and in palaces. He always meets with young people like all of you. That's why he's been working to expand educational exchanges and partnerships between the United States, India, and countries around the world.

Right now, more Indian students like you come to study in the United States than from any other country. And I'm proud to see that so many American students are doing the same thing right here in India, building the types of friendships and relationships that will last a lifetime. Our hope is to provide more Indian and American young

people with these types of opportunities to continue to connect and share ideas and experiences.

And finally, my husband is also working to encourage young entrepreneurs everywhere to start businesses, to improve the health of our communities and to empower our young women and girls because it is never too late or too early to start changing this world for the better.

So I want to end today by congratulating you all -- congratulating you on everything you do. We are so proud of you. I want to encourage you to keep dreams -- keep dreaming big huge, gigantic dreams -- not just for yourselves, but for your communities and for our world.

And finally, I want to urge you today to ask my husband some tough questions, all right? (Laughter.) Be tough. He loves doing events like this. This brightens his days. But you got to keep him on his toes, all right?

So if you promise me that, without further ado, I would like to introduce my husband, the President of the United States, Barack Obama. (Applause.)

The President: Thank you, everybody. Thank you so much. Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you very much. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Namaste.

Audience: Namaste.

The President: It is such a pleasure to be here. Now, I have to say, first of all, I don't like speaking after Michelle. (Laughter.) Because she's very good. Also because she teases me. You notice how she said for you to all ask tough questions. If you want to ask easy questions, that's fine. (Laughter.)

But on behalf of Michelle and me I want to thank St. Xavier's University. I want to thank Rector DeSouza. I want to thank Principal -- I want to get this right -- Mascarenhas. (Laughter.) But it's a little smoother than that, when you say it. I want to thank Vice Principal Amonka and all of you for being such gracious hosts.

And I know it's hot out here today. For you to be so patient with me, I'm very grateful to you. I also want to thank the city of Mumbai and the people of India for giving us such an extraordinary welcome.

In a few minutes, I'll take some questions. I come here not just to speak, but also to listen. I want to have a dialogue with you. And this is one of the wonderful things that I have a chance to do as President of the United States. When I travel, we always try to set up a town hall meeting where we can interact with the next generation, because I want to hear from you. I want to find out what your dreams are, what your fears are, what your plans are for your country.

But if you will indulge me, I also want to say a few words about why I'm so hopeful about the partnership between our two countries and why I wanted to spend some of my time here in India speaking directly to young people like yourselves.

Now, as Michelle said, we have both looked forward to this visit to India for quite some time. We have an extraordinary amount of respect for the rich and diverse civilization that has thrived here for thousands of years. We've drawn strength from India's 20th century independence struggle, which helped inspire America's own civil rights movement. We've marveled at India's growing economy and its dynamic democracy. And we have personally enjoyed a wonderful friendship with Prime Minister Singh and Mrs. Kaur, over the last two years.

But of course, I'm not just here to visit. I'm here because the partnership between India and the United States I believe has limitless potential to improve the lives of both Americans and Indians, just as it has the potential to be an anchor of security and prosperity and progress for Asia and for the world.

The U.S.-India relationship will be indispensable in shaping the 21st century. And the reason why is simple: As two great powers and as the world's two largest democracies, the United States and India share common interests and common values -- values of self-determination and equality; values of tolerance and a belief in the dignity of every human being.

Already on this trip, I've seen those shared interests and values firsthand. We share a commitment to see that the future belongs to hope, and not fear. And I was honored to stay at the Taj Hotel, the site of the 26/11 attacks, and yesterday, in meetings with some of the survivors, I saw firsthand the resilience of the Indian people in overcoming tragedy, just as I reaffirmed our close cooperation in combating terrorism and violent extremism in all of its forms.

We also share struggles for justice and equality. I was humbled to visit Mani Bhavan, where Gandhi helped move India and the world through the strength and dignity of his leadership.

We share a commitment to see that this era after globalization leads to greater opportunity for all our people. And so yesterday, at a summit of business leaders and entrepreneurs, we discussed the potential for greater economic cooperation between our two countries -- cooperation that could create jobs and opportunity through increased trade and investment, unleashing the potential of individuals in both our countries. And even as we are countries that look to the future with optimism, Americans and Indians draw strength from tradition and from faith.

This morning, Michelle and I enjoyed the chance to join young people here in Mumbai to celebrate Diwali -- a holiday that is observed not just here in India but also in the United States, where millions of Indian-Americans have enriched our country. I have to point out, by the way, those of you who had a chance to see Michelle dance, she was moving. (Laughter.) And it was just an extraordinary gift for these young people to perform and share this wonderful tradition with us.

Tomorrow in New Delhi, I'll have the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Singh and many other leaders, and I'll have the privilege to address your parliament. And there I will discuss in greater detail our efforts to broaden and deepen our cooperation and make some specific announcements on important issues like counterterrorism and regional security, on clean energy and climate change, and on the advance of economic growth and development and democracy around the globe.

Just as the sites I've seen and the people I've met here in Mumbai speak to our common humanity, the common thread that runs through the different issues that our countries cooperate on is my determination to take the partnership between our two countries to an entirely new level. Because the United States does not just believe, as some people say, that India is a rising power; we believe that India has already risen. India is taking its rightful place in Asia and on the global stage. And we see India's emergence as good for the United States and good for the world.

But India's future won't simply be determined by powerful CEOs and political leaders -- just as I know that the ties among our people aren't limited to contacts between our corporations and our governments. And that's why I wanted to speak to all of you today, because India's future will be determined by you and by young people like you across this country. You are the future leaders. You are the future innovators and the future educators. You're the future entrepreneurs and the future elected officials.

In this country of more than a billion people, more than half of all Indians are under 30 years old. That's an extraordinary statistic and it's one that speaks to a great sense of possibility -- because in a democracy like India's -- or America's -- every single child holds within them the promise of greatness. And every child should have the opportunity to achieve that greatness.

Most of you are probably close to 20 years old. Just think how the world has changed in those 20 years. India's economy has grown at a breathtaking rate. Living standards have improved for hundreds of millions of people. Your democracy has weathered assassination and terrorism. And meanwhile, around the globe, the Cold War is a distant memory and a new order has emerged, one that's reflected in the 20 members of the G20 that will come together in Seoul next week, as countries like India assume a greater role on the world stage.

So now the future of this country is in your hands. And before I take your questions, I want you to consider three questions I have for you -- questions about what the next 20 years will bring. First, what do you want India to look like in 20 years? Nobody else can answer this question but you. It's your destiny to write. One of the great blessings of living in a democracy is that you can always improve the democracy. As our Founding Fathers wrote in the United States, you can always forge a more perfect union.

But if you look at India's last 20 years, it's hard not to see the future with optimism. You have the chance to lift another several hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, grow even more this enormous middle class that can fuel growth in this country and beyond. You have the chance to take on greater responsibilities on the global stage while playing a leading role in this hugely important part of the world.

And together with the United States, you can also seize the opportunities afforded by our times: the clean energy technologies that can power our lives and save our planet; the chance to reach new frontiers in outer space; the research and development that can lead to new industry and a higher standard of living; the prospect of advancing the cause of peace and pluralism in our own countries but also beyond our borders.

Which brings me to a second question. Twenty years from now, what kind of partnership do you want to have with America? Just before I came to speak to all of you today, I visited two expos right in another courtyard here that underscore the kind of progress we can make together. The first focused on agriculture and food security, and I was able to see innovations in technology and research, which are transforming Indian farming.

A farmer showed me how he can receive crop information on his cell phone. Another showed me how tools appropriately sized and weighted for women are helping her and other female farmers increase their productivity. Many of these innovations are the result of public and private collaborations between the United States and India, the same collaboration that helped produce the first Green Revolution in the 1960s.

And tomorrow, I will be discussing with Prime Minister Singh how we can advance the cooperation in the 21st century -- not only to benefit India, not only to benefit the United States, but to benefit the world. India can become a model for countries around the world that are striving for food security.

The second expo I toured focused on the ways that innovation is empowering Indian citizens to ensure that democracy delivers for them. So I heard directly from citizens in a village hundreds of miles away, through e-panchayat. I saw new technologies and approaches that allow citizens to get information, or to fight corruption, monitor elections, find out whether their elected official is actually going to work, holding government accountable.

And while these innovations are uniquely India's, their lessons can be applied around the world. So earlier this year, at the U.N., I called for a new focus on open societies that support open government and highlighted their potential to strengthen the foundation of freedoms in our own countries, while living up to the ideals that can light the world. And that's what India is starting do with some of this innovation.

We must remember that in some places the future of democracy is still very much in question. Just to give you an example, there are elections that are being held right now in Burma that will be anything but free and fair based on every report that we're seeing. And for too long the people of Burma have been denied the right to determine their own destiny.

So even as we do not impose any system of government on other countries, we, especially young people, must always speak out for those human rights that are universal, and the right of people everywhere to make their own decisions about how to shape their future, which will bring me to my final question, and then you guys can start sending questions my way.

How do you -- how do each of you want to make the world a better place? Keep in mind that this is your world to build, your century to shape. And you've got a powerful example of those who went before you. Just as America had the words and deeds of our Founding Fathers to help chart a course towards freedom and justice and opportunity, India has this incredible history to draw on, millennia of civilization, the examples of leaders like Gandhi and Nehru.

As I stood in Mani Bhavan, I was reminded that Martin Luther King made his own pilgrimage to that site over 50 years ago. In fact, we saw the book that he had signed. After he returned home, King said that he was struck by how Gandhi embodied in his life certain universal principles that are inherent in the moral structure of the universe, and these principles are as inescapable as the law of gravitation.

You have that power within you. You, too, must embody those principles. For even within this time of great progress, there are great imperfections, the injustice of oppression, the grinding punishment of poverty, the scourge of violent extremism and war. King and Gandhi made it possible for all of us to be here today -- me as a President, you as a citizen of a country that's made remarkable progress. Now you have the opportunity and the responsibility to also make this plant a better place.

And as you do, you'll have the friendship and partnership of the United States, because we are interested in advancing those same universal principles that are as inescapable as the law of gravitation.

The lives that you lead will determine whether that opportunity is extended to more of the world's people -- so that a child who yearns for a better life in rural India or a family that's fled from violence in Africa, or a dissident who sits in a Burmese prison, or a community that longs for peace in war-torn Afghanistan -- whether they are able to achieve their dreams.

And sometimes the challenges may be incredibly hard, and in the face of darkness, we may get discouraged. But we can always draw on the light of those who came before us. I hope you keep that light burning within you, because together the United States and India can shape a century in

which our own citizens and the people of the world can claim the hope of a better life.

So thank you very much for your patience. And now you can take Michelle's advice and ask me some tough questions. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

So we have I think people in the audience with microphones, and so when they come up, if you could introduce yourself -- love to know who you are. And we'll start with that young lady right over there.

Q: Hi, good day, sir. Hi, my name is Anna and I'm from St. Davis College. My question to you is, what is your take on opinion about jihad, or jihadi? Whatever is your opinion, what do you think of them?

The President: Well, the phrase jihad has a lot of meanings within Islam and is subject to a lot of different interpretations. But I will say that, first, Islam is one of the world's great religions. And more than a billion people who practice Islam, the overwhelming majority view their obligations to their religion as ones that reaffirm peace and justice and fairness and tolerance. I think all of us recognize that this great religion in the hands of a few extremists has been distorted to justify violence towards innocent people that is never justified.

And so I think one of the challenges that we face is how do we isolate those who have these distorted notions of religious war and reaffirm those who see faiths of all sorts -- whether you are a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian or a Jew or any other religion, or you don't practice a religion -- that we can all treat each other with respect and mutual dignity, and that some of the universal principles that Gandhi referred to -- that those are what we're living up to, as we live in a nation or nations that have very diverse religious beliefs.

And that's a major challenge. It's a major here in India, but it's a challenge obviously around the world. And young people like yourselves can make a huge impact in reaffirming that you can be a stronger observer of your faith without putting somebody else down or visiting violence on somebody else.

I think a lot of these ideas form very early. And how you respond to each other is going to be probably as important as any speech that a President makes in encouraging the kinds of religious tolerance that I think is so necessary in a world that's getting smaller and smaller, where more and more people of different backgrounds, different races, different ethnicities are interacting and working and learning from each other.

And those circumstances -- I think all of us have to fundamentally reject the notion that violence is a way to mediate our differences.

All right. Yes, I may not get to every question. I'll call on this young man right here. Right there, yes.

Q: Good morning, sir. My name is Jehan (phonetic). I'm from H.R. College. So my question is more about spirituality and moral values. We see today in today's world, there more of a materialistic frame of thought when it comes to generations -- budding generations. So what do you believe is a possible methodology which governments, rather yours or any other governments in the world, they can adopt to basically incorporate the human core values, the moral values of selflessness, brotherhood, over the materialistic frame of thought which people work by today?

The President: It's a terrific question and I'm glad you're asking it. India is making enormous progress in part because, like America, it has this incredible entrepreneurial talent, entrepreneurial spirit. And I think we should not underestimate how liberating economic growth can be for a country.

In the United States, I used to work with a lot of churches when I was still a community organizer, before I went to law school. And one of the common phrases among the pastors there was, it's hard to preach to an empty stomach. It's hard to preach to an empty stomach. If people have severe, immediate material needs -- shelter, food, clothing -- then that is their focus. And economic growth and development that is self-sustaining can liberate people, allow them -- it forms the basis for folks to get an education and to expand their horizons. And that's all for the good.

So I don't want any person here to be dismissive of a healthy materialism because in a country like India, there's still a lot of people trapped in poverty. And you should be working to try to lift folks out of poverty, and companies and businesses have a huge role in making that happen.

Now, having said that, if all you're thinking about is material wealth, then I think that shows a poverty of ambition. When I was visiting Gandhi's room, here in Mumbai, it was very telling that the only objects in the room were a mat and a spinning wheel and some sandals and a few papers. And this is a man who changed history like probably no one else in the 20th century in terms of the number of lives that he affected. And he had nothing, except an indomitable spirit.

So everyone has a role to play. And those of you who are planning to go into business, I think it's wonderful that you're going into business and you should pursue it with all your focus and energy. Those of you, though, who are more inclined to teach or more inclined to public service, you should also feel encouraged that you are playing just as critical a role. And whatever occupation you choose, giving back to the community and making sure that you're reaching back to help people, lift up people who may have been left behind, that's a solemn obligation.

And by the way, it's actually good for you. It's good for your spirit. It's good for your own moral development. It will make you a happier person, knowing that you've given back and you've contributed something.

Last point I would make -- I think this is another thing that India and the United States share, is there's a healthy

skepticism about public servants, particularly electoral politics. In the United States, people generally have -- hold politicians in fairly low esteem -- sometimes for good reason, but some of it is just because the view is that somehow government can't do anything right. And here in India, one of the big impediments to development is the fact that in some cases the private sector is moving much faster than the public sector is moving.

And I would just suggest that I hope some of you decide to go ahead and get involved in public service -- which can be frustrating. It can be, at times, slow -- you don't see progress as quickly as you'd like. But India is going to need you not just as businessmen but also as leaders who are helping to reduce bureaucracy and make government more responsive and deliver services more efficiently. That's going to be just as important in the years to come. Because otherwise you're going to get an imbalance where some are doing very well but broad-based economic growth is not moving as quickly as it could.

Excellent question.

I'm going to go boy-girl-boy-girl, or girl-boy-girl-boy, just to make sure it's fair. Let's see. This young lady right there -- yes.

Q: Hello. I actually wanted to ask you -- you mention *Mahatma Gandhi* a lot usually in your speeches. So I was just wondering how exactly do you implement his principles and his values in your day-to-day life, and how do you expect the people in the U.S. to live in those values? Thank you.

The President: Well, it's a terrific question. Let me say, first of all, that he, like *Dr. King*, like Abraham Lincoln, are people who I'm constantly reading and studying, and I find myself falling woefully short of their example all the time. So I'm often frustrated by how far I fall short of their example.

But I do think that at my best, what I'm trying to do is to apply principles that fundamentally come down to something shared in all the world's religions, which is to see yourself in other people; to understand the inherent worth and dignity of every individual, regardless of station, regardless of rank, regardless of wealth, and to absolutely value and cherish and respect that individual; and then hopefully, try to take that principle of treating others as you would want to be treated and find ways where that can apply itself in communities and in cities and in states and ultimately in a country and in the world.

As I said, I often find myself falling short of that ideal. But I tend to judge any particular policy based on, is this advancing that spirit; that it's helping individuals realize their potential; that it's making sure that all children are getting an education -- so that I'm not just worrying about my children; that I'm thinking, first and foremost, about the United States of America, because that's my responsibility as President, but I'm also recognizing that we are in an interrelationship with other countries in the world and I

can't ignore an abuse of human rights in another country. I can't ignore hardships that may be suffering -- that may be suffered by somebody of a different nationality.

That I think more than anything is what I carry with me on a day-to-day basis. But it's not always apparent that I'm making progress on that front.

One of the other things I draw from all great men and women, like a Gandhi, though, is that on this journey you're going to experience setbacks and you have to be persistent and stubborn, and you just have to keep on going at it. And you'll never roll the boulder all the way up the hill but you may get it part of the way up.

This gentleman in the blue shirt. Do we have a microphone? Oh, here we go. Thanks.

Q: Good afternoon, *Mr. President*.

The President: Good afternoon.

Q: It's an honor to question you. What my question would be is, when you were being elected as President, one of the words you used a lot was "change." After your midterm election, the midterm -- it seems that the American people have asked for a change. The change that you will make, how exactly is it going to affect young India, people from my generation?

The President: That's an interesting question.

Q: Thank you.

The President: The United States has gone through probably the toughest two years economically as we've gone through since the 1930s. I mean, this was a profound financial crisis and economic shock, and it spilled over to most of the world. India weathered it better than many countries. But most of the work that I did with Prime Minister Singh in the first two years in the G20, we were focused on making sure that the world's financial system didn't collapse.

And although we've now stabilized the economy, unemployment in the United States is very high now relative to what it typically has been over the last several decades. And so people are frustrated. And although we're making progress, we're not making progress quickly enough.

And one of the wonderful things about democracy is that when the people are not happy, it is their right, obligation, and duty to express their unhappiness, much to the regret sometimes of incumbents. But that's a good thing. That's a healthy thing.

And my obligation is to make sure that I stick to the principles and beliefs and ideas that will move America forward -- because I profoundly believe that we have to invest in education, that that will be the primary driver of growth in the future; that we've got to invest in a strong infrastructure; that we have to make sure that we are taking advantage of opportunities like clean energy.

But it also requires me to make some midcourse corrections and adjustments. And how those play themselves out over the next several months will be a matter of me being in discussions with the Republican Party, which is now going to be controlling the House of Representatives. And there are going to be areas where we disagree and hopefully there are going to be some areas where we agree.

Now, you asked specifically, how do I think it will affect policy towards India. I actually think that the United States has an enormous fondness for India, partly because there are so many Indian-Americans and because of the shared values that we have. And so there is a strong bipartisan belief that India is going to be a critical partner with the United States in the 21st century. That was true when George Bush was President. That was true when *Bill Clinton* was President. It was true under Democratic and Republican control of Congress.

So I don't think that fundamental belief is going to be altered in any significant way. I do think that one of the challenges that we're going to be facing in the United States is at a time when we're still recovering from this crisis, how do we respond to some of the challenges of globalization? Because the fact of the matter is, is that for most of my lifetime -- I'll turn 50 next year -- for most of my lifetime, the United States was such a dominant economic power, we were such a large market, our industry, our technology, our manufacturing was so significant that we always met the rest of the world economically on our terms. And now, because of the incredible rise of India and China and Brazil and other countries, the United States remains the largest economic and the largest market but there's real competition out there.

And that's potentially healthy. It makes -- Michelle was saying earlier I like tough questions because it keeps me on my toes. Well, this will keep America on its toes. And I'm positive we can compete because we've got the most open, most dynamic entrepreneurial culture; we've got some of the finest universities in the world; incredible research and technology. But it means that we're going to have to compete.

And I think that there's going to be a tug of war within the United States between those who see globalization as a threat and want to retrench, and those who accept that we live in an open, integrated world which has challenges and opportunities and we've got to manage those challenges and manage those opportunities, but we shouldn't be afraid of them.

And so what that means, for example, is on issues of trade, part of the reason I'm traveling through Asia this week is I believe that the United States will grow and prosper if we are trading with Asia. It's the fastest-growing region in the world. We want access to your markets. We think we've got good products to sell; you think that you've got good products to sell us. This can be a win-win situation.

So I want to make sure that we're here because this will create jobs in the United States and it can create jobs in India. But that means that we've got to negotiate this changing relationship. Back in the 1960s or '70s, the truth is the American economy could be open even if our trading partners' economies weren't open. So if India was protecting certain sectors of its economy, it didn't really have such a big effect on us. We didn't need necessarily reciprocity because our economy was so much larger.

Well, now, things have changed. So it's not unfair for the United States to say, look, if our economy is open to everybody, countries that trade with us have to change their practices to open up their markets to us. There has to be reciprocity in our trading relationship. And if we can have those kinds of conversations, fruitful, constructive conversations about how we produce win-win situations, then I think we'll be fine.

If the American people feel that trade is just a one-way street, where everybody is selling to the enormous U.S. market but we can never sell what we make anywhere else, then people in the United States will start thinking, well, this is a bad deal for us. And that could end up leading to a more protectionist instinct in both parties -- not just among Democrats, but also among Republicans. So that's what we have to guard against.

All right, it's a young lady's turn. This young lady with the glasses -- yes.

Q: A very warm welcome to you to India, sir.]

The President: Thank you so much.

Q: I'm from H.R. College of Commerce and Economics. We were the privileged college to host Mr. Otis Moss this January. Sir, my question to you is why is Pakistan so important an ally to America, so far as America has never called it a terrorist state?

The President: Well -- no, no, it's a good question. And I must admit I was expecting it. (Laughter.) Pakistan is an enormous country. It is a strategically important country not just for the United States but for the world. It is a country whose people have enormous potential, but it is also, right now, a country that within it has some of the extremist elements that we discussed in the first question. That's not unique to Pakistan, but obviously it exists in Pakistan.

The Pakistani government is very aware of that. And what we have tried to do over the last several years, certainly -- I'll just speak to my foreign policy -- has been to engage aggressively with the Pakistani government to communicate that we want nothing more than a stable, prosperous, peaceful Pakistan, and that we will work with the Pakistani government in order to eradicate this extremism that we consider a cancer within the country that can potentially engulf the country.

And I will tell you that I think the Pakistani government understands now the potential threat that exists within their

own borders. There are more Pakistanis who've been killed by terrorists inside Pakistan than probably anywhere else.

Now, progress is not as quick as we'd like, partly because when you get into, for example, some of the Northwest Territories, these are very -- this is very difficult terrain, very entrenched. The Pakistani army has actually shifted some of its emphasis and focus into those areas. But that's not originally what their armed forces were designed to do, and so they're having to adapt and adjust to these new dangers and these new realities.

I think there is a growing recognition -- but it's something that doesn't happen overnight -- of what a profound problem this is. And so our feeling has been to be honest and forthright with Pakistan, to say we are your friend, this is a problem and we will help you, but the problem has to be addressed.

Now, let me just make this point, because obviously the history between India and Pakistan is incredibly complex and was born of much tragedy and much violence. And so it may be surprising to some of you to hear me say this, but I am absolutely convinced that the country that has the biggest stake in Pakistan's success is India. I think that if Pakistan is unstable, that's bad for India. If Pakistan is stable and prosperous, that's good.

Because India is on the move. And it is absolutely in your interests, at a time when you're starting to succeed in incredible ways on the global economic stage, that you [don't] want the distraction of security instability in your region. So my hope is, is that over time trust develops between the two countries, that dialogue begins -- perhaps on less controversial issues, building up to more controversial issues -- and that over time there's a recognition that India and Pakistan can live side by side in peace and that both countries can prosper.

That will not happen tomorrow. But I think that needs to be our ultimate goal.

And by the way, the United States stands to be a friend and a partner in that process, but we can't impose that on India and Pakistan. Ultimately, India and Pakistan have to arrive at their own understandings in terms of how the relationship evolves.

Okay. I've got time for one more question. It's a guy's turn. This young man right here, in the striped shirt.

Q: Good afternoon, *Mr. President*. It's an absolute honor to hear you, and I must say this, that one day I hope I be half as good as a leader as you are today.

The President: Well, you're very kind. Thank you.

Q: Mr. President, my question relates to your Afghanistan policy. In light of your statements that the troop withdrawal would start in 2011, there have been recent developments that would indicate that USA has been in talks with Taliban so as to strike out a stable government in Afghanistan as

when you withdraw. Now, does this point to the acceptance of the inevitability of the U.S. to fulfill the vision which they had, with which they invaded Afghanistan in 2001? Does it point out to their inability to take a military control of all the southern regions so that we can install a stable government? You notice that in Iraq where there's a lot of instability now. So does it point to a sort of tacit acceptance of U.S. inability to create harmony in Afghanistan?

The President: First of all, I want to just unpack some of the assumptions inside the question because they were broadly based in fact, but I want to be very precise here.

I have said that starting in the summer of next year, July 2011, we will begin drawing down our troop levels, but we will not be removing all our troops. Keep in mind that we ramped up significantly because the idea was that for seven years we had just been in a holding pattern; we'd had just enough troops to keep Kabul intact but the rest of the countryside was deteriorating in fairly significant ways. There wasn't a real strategy. And my attitude was, I don't want to, seven years from now, or eight years from now, be in the exact same situation. That's not a sustainable equilibrium.

So I said, let's put more troops in to see if we can create more space and stability and time for Afghan security forces to develop, and then let's begin drawing down our troops as we're able to stand up Afghan security forces.

Now, in fact, it turns out that in Iraq -- you mentioned Iraq as a parallel -- in Iraq, we have been relatively successful in doing that. The government is taking way too long to get formed, and that is a source of frustration to us and I'm sure to the Iraq people. Having said that, though, if you think about it, it's been seven months since the election, and violence levels are actually lower in Iraq than they've been just about any time since the war started -- at a time when we pulled back our forces significantly. So it shows that it is possible to train effective, indigenous security forces so that they can provide their own security. And hopefully politics then resolves differences, as opposed to violence.

Now, Afghan, I think is actually more complicated, more difficult, probably because it's a much poorer country. It does not have as strong a tradition of a central government. Civil service is very underdeveloped. And so I think that the pace at which we're drawing down is going to be determined in part by military issues, but it's also going to be determined by politics. And that is, is it possible for a sizeable portion of the Pashtun population in Afghanistan that may be teetering back and forth between Taliban or a central government, is it possible for them to feel that their ethnicity, their culture, their numerical position in the country is adequately represented, and can they do that within the context of a broader constitutional Afghan government.

And I think that's a worthy conversation to have. So what we've said to President Karzai -- because this is being initiated by him -- what we've said is if former Taliban

members or current Taliban members say that they are willing to disassociate themselves with al Qaeda, renounce violence as a means of achieving their political aims, and are willing to respect the Afghan constitution so that, for example, women are treated with all the right that men are afforded, then, absolutely, we support the idea of a political resolution of some of these differences.

Now, there are going to be some elements that are affiliated to the Taliban that are also affiliated with al Qaeda or LT or these other organizations, these extremists that are irreconcilable. They will be there. And there will need to be a military response to those who would perpetrate the kind of violence that we saw here in Mumbai in a significant ongoing way -- or the kind that we saw on 9/11 in New York City.

But I think a stable Afghanistan is achievable. Will it look exactly as I might design a democracy? Probably not. It will take on an Afghan character.

I do think that there are lessons that India has to show not just countries like Afghanistan but countries in sub-Saharan Africa. I mean, some of the incredible work that I saw being done in the agricultural sector is applicable to widely dispersed rural areas in a place like Afghanistan and could -- I promise you, if we can increase farmers' yields in Afghanistan by 20 percent or 25 percent, and they can get their crops to market, and they're cutting out a middleman and they're ending up seeing a better standard of life for themselves, that goes a long way in encouraging them to affiliate with a modern world.

And so India's investment in development in Afghanistan is appreciated. Pakistan has to be a partner in this process. In fact, all countries in the region are going to be partners in this process. And the United States welcomes that. We don't think we can do this alone.

But part of our -- and this is probably a good way to end -- part of my strong belief is that around the world, your generation is poised to solve some of my generation's mistakes and my parents' generation's mistakes. You'll make your own mistakes, but there's such incredible potential and promise for you to start pointing in new directions in terms of how economies are organized, in terms of how moral precepts and values and principles are applied, in how nations work together to police each other so that they're not -- so that when there's genocide or there is ethnic cleansing, or there are gross violations of human rights, that an international community joins together and speaks with one voice; so that economic integration isn't a source of fear or anxiety, but rather is seen as enormous promise and potential; where we're able to tackle problems that we can't solve by ourselves.

I went to a lower school -- do you call them high schools here? It's sort of a high school. And Michelle and I saw this wonderful exhibit of global warming and the concerns that these young people have -- they were 14, 15. And their energy and their enthusiasm was infectious. And I asked

them, which one of you are going to be scientists who are going to try to solve this problem? And all of them raised their hands. And I said, well, this is hugely important for India. And they said, no, not for India -- for the world.

You see, their ambitions were not just to be great scientists for India. Their ambition was to be a great scientist for the world -- because they understood that something like climate change or clean energy, that's not an American problem or an Indian problem -- that's a human problem. And all of us are going to have to be involved in finding solutions to it.

And as I listen to all of you, with your wonderful questions, I am incredibly optimistic and encouraged that you will help find those solutions in the years to come.

So, thank you very much for your hospitality. Thank you, everybody. (Applause.)

Source: Nov 8, 2010/Mumbai/[The Hindu](#)

Ringling out the old

Some universities are considering eliminating large lecture hall courses entirely and replacing them with online content and smaller group sessions. helena pozniak looks at how technology is reshaping learning

DISTANCE learning via video conferencing has been described as about as inspiring as watching bad TV. So when universities and colleges vie to promote their use of technology in teaching, you might be forgiven a sceptical sneer.

In fact, educational technology has moved on, in both quality and availability. It's no longer about merely transferring information to digital form. Institutions are getting to grips with its vast potential for collaborative learning; from interactive "real life" medical emergencies to revision chat rooms, live "webinars" with worldwide experts and online personal tutorials. Students who've never known life without technology now have the access and aptitude to adapt to flexible learning. "Education has shifted emphasis; we've realised what a great resource student/teacher collaboration is," says Professor Andrew Middleton, senior lecturer and part of Sheffield Hallam University's academic innovation team. "We're using technology to encourage that interaction."

While more adventurous tutors might use virtual environments such as Second Life to engage students, bringing round more entrenched academics to the value of new technologies can be a challenge, not to mention expensive, says Middleton. But almost every college and university has already rolled out a virtual learning environment; an online interactive space shared by tutors and students, rich with resources and interactive content. After 10 years of experience, institutions have grown more adept at exploiting their potential; from collaborative projects, peer reviews, tracking work and assessments and much more. They even allow tutors to check for plagiarism.

Further education becomes less daunting with clever use of technology, educationalists agree. Studies report that disengaged students feel more motivated when using mobile technology. Many universities, the Open University in particular, contribute to resources such as Apple's iTunes U, which offers free educational material for downloading. "We are trying to make the jump to formal education less formidable," says the OU.

But it's distance learning in particular that is pushing boundaries and benefitting from improved delivery and scope; the OU has seen an unprecedented rise in young distance learners this year. Traditionally, remote students used to be more likely to drop out than those on campus; their studies lacked a social dimension.

Now several UK universities are investing in the latest collaboration technology, and entire new campuses are being built around a remote learning module. Distance learning is cheaper and more accessible, says James Quarles, general manager of the public sector at Dell, which provides education-specific technology to UK universities; almost all students have access to computers and increasingly, webcams. "Field specialists can teach at more than one institution at once when the classroom is virtual, and students can watch a lecture via laptops or mobile phones."

"We're giving students what they need as individuals, when they need it," says Duska Rosenberg, Professor in information and communication technologies at Royal Holloway, University of London. She's currently piloting a video technology from Cisco Tandberg enabling collaborative research and learning. "Full-time students will become a rare breed. We're wasting huge potential if we don't seek to engage people from a broader base. We need technology sophisticated enough to be able to recognise each other, like each other, laugh together, do all the things you'd do face to face."

Some universities are even considering whether they can eliminate large lecture hall courses entirely, says Quarle, replacing them with online content and smaller group sessions. "Students will come to expect that education is a holistic, open experience, tailored to their own requirements," he says.

Source : Nov 9,2010/New Delhi/ [The Statesman](#)

National Education Day: Vice President Calls for Focus on issues Highlighted by Mid-Term Plan Appraisal

The Vice-President, Shri M. Hamid Ansari has stated that specific issues highlighted by the Mid Term Appraisal of the Eleventh Plan need to be focused upon. He said, "First, systemic issues such as teacher absenteeism, single teacher schools and multi grade teaching need to be resolved; Second, we need to address equity concerns of the disadvantaged, vulnerable social groups and urban deprived groups with regard to access and retention; and

Third, all quality issues impacting on the learning outcomes of children must be addressed as a priority." He was speaking at the National Education Day function held here today.

While the Vice-President highlighted the achievement of near universal access, and the landmark legislation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, he pointed out that problems remain. The impact of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in areas listed in Schedule V and VI of the Constitution, among SCs and STs, Muslim concentration areas and slums has not been very significant, he said. While the issues of access has been largely addressed, the huge drop out rate at the elementary level of over 43 per cent is a cause of concern, he underlined.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, said that though the country's education system can boast of outstanding scientists, technologists, doctors, academics, economists, writers and philosophers, we cannot afford to be complacent. He said, "We need a paradigm shift in the way our children are taught. Education should be child-centric instead of being exam-centric as it seeks to mushroom each child's genius."

The minister underlined that the educational system should help the child to choose a discipline that builds upon the child's particular personality traits. It is therefore, necessary to provide the child the possibility of vocational training and experience along with academic learning, he said. He added, "This of-course should happen after the child is familiar with knowledge of basic disciplines essential for holistic education. This will help the child to choose, guided by teachers and the environment at home. This is indeed a necessity in a fundamentally changed world, where the requirements of globalization necessitate learning of the kind that allows the child to be globally competitive."

Shri Sibal said that the quality of teaching and the quality of teachers are fundamental in the evolution of the modern education system. Pointing out, "Good teachers are costly, yet bad teachers cost much more," he emphasized on the need for society to invest in quality teachers

Mr. Davidson Hepburn, President, General Conference of UNESCO, Mr. David Willets, Minister of State for Universities and Science, UK, Dr. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for Human Resource Development,. Smt. Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, Higher Education, also addressed the gathering.

Source: Nov11, 2010/[PIB](#)

Promote education among women: President

President Pratibha Patil on Saturday underlined the need for strong economic growth for achieving the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDG). She

stressed the need to promote education among women, as it was a powerful driver of health and childcare.

Addressing the 'International Conclave on 2010 Partners' Forum: Innovation and Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health,' Ms. Patil said the global economic recovery would help in achieving two major goals of MDG — poverty alleviation and maternal health.

“So far as India is concerned, our economy has shown resilience and is expected to grow by over 8 per cent this year and then further accelerate,” she said, pointing out that the country had played a major role in reducing global poverty.

Major contributor

“India has been major contributor to poverty reduction... this has been acknowledged in the U.N. Secretary-General's report on MDG.”

Stating that India recognised its burden of maternal, newborn and child mortality as one of the highest in the world, the President said: “The curative aspect of healthcare is very important, but along with it, a broad approach that looks at the entire range of health care from preventive to rehabilitation should be adopted, which can result in a higher dividend in terms of healthy individuals.”

She said the relationship between poverty, lack of education and limited access to health services was well recognised. “India has recently enacted a Right to Education Act, under which all children in the 6-14 age group will receive free education. When fully realised, this will have a profound impact on health indicators as well,” she added.

Union Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said that for ensuring a rapid reduction in maternal and child mortality, the government had identified 250 backward and inaccessible districts accounting for one-third of the population.

The conference was organised by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health — an alliance of governments, U.N. agencies, professional bodies, non-governmental organisations and civil society groups, which was launched here five years ago to support global health efforts.

Source: Nov 13,2010/New Delhi/ [The Hindu](#)

NIOS to Step up Vocational Learning; to Focus on States with Low Literacy Levels

The National Institute of Open Schooling should look at the role it can play in the area of vocational education. This was stated by Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal while chairing the 19th General Body Meeting of the NIOS society here today. The Minister asked NIOS to look at attempting to have a

vocational degree in addition to their normal class XII degree. Skills education with an element of formal education can be the basis for this vocational degree in Class XII. The architecture of the programme could be such that a student can move back from vocational educational to the normal schooling degree if he wants to, he added.

Shri Sibal also advised NIOS to have a Special strategy for States that need the maximum support. He asked NIOS to restructure its policy so as to target the States where the education level is poorest rather than having a standard strategy for the entire country. He said that the penetration level in these states must be much greater. The minister suggested to the NIOS to look at having twice the number of centres in these States, so that literacy levels in these states can be enhanced.

The Chairman, NIOS in a presentation gave an account of the activities undertaken by the NIOS. He said that new initiatives include:

- Revision of Course material at XII Std.
- Initiative in Revising Course materials at X Std (Expected to Complete by July 2011)
- Plan the Launching of 24X7 TV Channel in collaboration with CIET.
- Establishment of Community Radio station & networking with other community radio stations.
- Integration of Life Skills at X std.
- Launching of New need based Vocational Paramedical, Lab technician Courses.
- Creation of e-learning Platform & Development of Other Education Resources (OER)
- Creation of Research & Development Cell (UNESCO Support)
- Collaboration with Sakshar Bharat Mission
- Support to RTE for enhancement of Academic & Professional Qualifications of Teachers.
- Supporting RMSA for out-reach Programme (15 per cent of RMSA goals are to be covered through Open schooling.
- Promotion of Open Schooling in every major state to meet the Challenge of RMSA

Source: Nov 16, 2010/[PIB](#)

A programme that enriches lives of Indian students in U.S.

It truly enriched lives of students from India who visited U.S.: Hillary -

The United States and India this week reaffirmed and celebrated an important partnership in the field of education — the Nehru-Fulbright Educational Exchange Programme.

At an event hosted by the Indian embassy here, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said via a televised message that she was “delighted to commemorate the 60th anniversary

of the Fulbright scholarship programme with India,” adding that it was a programme that had truly enriched and transformed the lives of students from India who had come to the U.S.

Noting that Fulbright student exchanges had led to lasting relationships developed during the course of the programme, Ms. Clinton said that there were more than 15,000 Fulbright alumni from India, notable among them being External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna.

Speaking to *The Hindu* at the event Sashikala Sriram, a Fulbright Scholar and Principal of Bala Vidya Mandir school in Chennai, India, said that the programme had given her a rare opportunity to understand educational practices in the U.S. and she intended to take some of those insights back to her school when she graduated.

In particular Ms. Sriram said that after extensive visits to the U.S. schools across the country she had been impressed by the strong emphasis on reading as opposed to mere lecturing. She added that she was intrigued by the concept of “cooperative learning” and through her interactions with teachers and students here she had developed some ideas in this area that she would use in the Bala Vidya Mandir.

On the occasions the State Department also issued a statement recalling that during his recent trip to India, President Barack Obama had noted that education was one of the key pillars of the U.S.-India partnership and even as far back as 1950, the Fulbright Program “played an essential role in nurturing established ties and building new relationships by providing opportunities for discourse between the people of the U.S. and the people of India.”

More recently, in 2008 the U.S. and India signed an historic agreement making the two countries full partners in the governance and funding of the Fulbright Program, and in November 2009 President Obama and Prime Minister Singh announced a significant expansion of the Fulbright-Nehru scholarships under the U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue, the State Department statement noted.

Speaking at the event India's Ambassador to the U.S., Meera Shankar, said that from being a U.S. funded programme, this Agreement had been converted into a scholarship programme implemented by the governments of both India and the U.S. as full partners. There had also been an increase in the total scholarship amount awarded annually to \$ 4.6 million, a 100 per cent increase from the existing level, she added.

Touching upon the broader impact of the programme the Ambassador said, the Nehru-Fulbright Education Exchange Programme “which nurtured educational cooperation at a time when political ties were not so robust, has contributed to transforming the relationship between our two countries.”

Source: Washington, November 18, 2010/[The Hindu](#)

We want youngsters to take to S&T in a big way'

The Hindu N.R. NARAYANA MURTHY: 'We have a number of problems in this country. So our researchers will have to open their eyes towards what is happening around them.' – Photo: G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR - Interview with N.R. Narayana Murthy, Chairman and Chief Mentor, Infosys Technologies.

Established last year, the Infosys Prize is an annual award to honour outstanding achievements in five branches of natural and social sciences.

Shortly after this year's recipients of the prize were announced on October 25, N.R. Narayana Murthy, Chairman and Chief Mentor, Infosys Technologies, spoke to N. Gopal Raj, Science Correspondent of The Hindu, about the importance of promoting high-quality research in order to secure India's scientific future. China and other developing countries are rapidly striding ahead in research and development, and India must not be left behind, he maintained.

In an article you wrote in *The Hindu* last November, you observed, “While India is uniquely positioned to use technology for progress, it has in the recent past lagged behind considerably in the quality and speed of scientific research.” From the perspective of someone from a high-technology industry in India, why is such scientific research important?

Science is about unravelling nature. Engineering or technology is all about using the power of science to make life better for people, to reduce cost, to improve comfort, to improve productivity, etc. Therefore, any country that has made advances in prosperity has invariably depended on science. If England became a world power, it was because of the industrial revolution. If the U.S. became the undisputed superpower that it is today, it was primarily because of its technology, whether it is in transportation, agriculture, high-tech industry, medicine, etc. Therefore, for a country like India to solve its problems of nutrition, healthcare, shelter, etc. we need technology

Are we slipping behind in scientific research when compared to other nations?

Yes we are, because other countries are progressing faster. It is not that we have slowed down too much, I don't think so. We have done reasonably well compared to our own past performance. But that doesn't suffice. You are always compared with other people. So if you look at China, South Korea, Singapore, Brazil and other developing countries, they have all gone past us. That's the reason.

You mentioned China. Now, China has grown in leaps and bounds, not just in terms of its economy but also in terms of its research and development (R&D) capabilities. China's spending on R&D as a share of GDP has doubled in the last decade and it is now the world's third biggest investor in R&D after the U.S and

Japan. It has also emerged as the world's leading high-technology exporter, displacing the U.S. How is that going to affect the competitiveness of Indian industry in the global marketplace in the coming years? Will it be seriously affected?

If you look at the world ranking of universities, of institutes; India doesn't have one university or institute in the top 300 of the Shanghai Index (*Academic Ranking of World Universities compiled by the Shanghai Jiaotong University*). On the other hand, China has two in the top 40. If you look at the top 100, China has six or seven. China's telecom company Huawei is a big competitor in communications to Cisco and many other international companies. In other words, it has become a global level company. While we have several global players as well, we need more players who can go out of India and say, 'We will compare with the best.' Yes, there is Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), etc. in one area. But China has become a leading global player in several areas. And for that to happen, you need new ideas, you need innovation, and ideas and innovation come only with education, with original thinking. That is where I believe that higher education and research become extremely important. One good thing is that a recent newspaper report said that between 1998 and 2007, while China was ahead of India in the number of research papers published, Indian research papers received greater number of citations. This is something we must encourage and build on.

A couple of years back, Bill Gates remarked that jobs in the U.S. would go where the engineering talent is and that other jobs around it would follow. If China continues its progress and India is not able to accelerate its scientific growth, does that mean that Indian companies would face a similar sort of issue, moving to where the scientific talent is?

At some level, it would. Areas where we would need researchers, areas where you need original thinkers, those areas would move to countries where there is an abundance of talent in these areas. There is no doubt. On the other hand, there will be areas where you don't need such people and those areas will continue to be in the country that has not achieved this. It is inevitable.

What do you see as the key steps that must be taken to ensure India's scientific competitiveness in the years ahead?

I think we need to embrace autonomy, meritocracy and enhance interaction between our universities and universities outside, particularly those that have performed much better than we have. We need exchange of faculty, we need exchange of students. We want students from those places to come and spend maybe a few months or a semester here. We want students from here to go spend a semester there. We want our researchers to submit more and more papers in global conferences. We want our people to become more patent-minded. We need a system

that will rank our universities based on some universal parameters so that our youngsters can have an informed choice.

That would be in the area of education basically, isn't it? What about in the area of research?

We have a number of problems in this country. So our researchers will have to open their eyes towards what is happening around them. There are lots of problems that need to be solved. For example, we have to come out with mechanisms that can easily detect and plug the stealing of electricity that happens. We have to find solutions to ensure our roads, where a significant percentage of money goes as corruption, are built to last. We need to reduce carbon emissions of our automobiles. We need to increase the productivity of agriculture. There are umpteen problems. We need our researchers to look at these problems.

Industry finances about 75 per cent of the R&D in Korea and Japan, 70 per cent in China and 65 per cent in the U.S. In India, by contrast, the government finances more than 80 per cent of our R&D expenditure. In a recent report, the Science Advisory Council to the Prime Minister noted: "Except in sectors like pharmaceuticals and drugs, our industry does not appear to be making major investments in and demands on Indian science." Shouldn't Indian industry, especially the high-technology sectors, be doing more to create and drive domestic R&D?

I think it works both ways. While the Indian industry has to show more interest in collaborating with the Indian academic community, it is necessary for the Indian academic community to show more interest in working with industry. Let me give you a very simple example. Every year, I receive a number of visitors from several International universities like Cornell University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Cambridge, University of Michigan, etc. etc. The professors from these universities are so keen on solving our problems. I would be very happy to also receive professors from our own institutions like the Indian Institute of Science, the IITs, and others. Our academicians must be interested in solving our problems.

Many multi-nationals have established R&D facilities in India. Do you think India's Information Technology industry is doing enough by way of creating R&D capabilities for itself?

We at Infosys have our software engineering and technology laboratories where there are 600 people working on issues that are relevant to our needs. So those are huge research laboratories. I think there are other companies too, which have such things. So therefore the answer is yes.

The best students will always go to where they get the best jobs and pay, and that is to be found in industry these days. A research career on the other hand,

means protracted training and less remuneration. So how does one make such a career attractive to young people?

I have suggested several times to various institutions that for every paper that is produced in a world-class refereed journal, they could give Rs. four lakh. So that if you produce four papers in a year, then you have got Rs. 16 lakh. Add to that a salary of Rs. six or eight lakh a year, then you have got a decent sum.

What is the thinking in Infosys behind the establishment of the Infosys Science Foundation?

Well, the objective in establishing the Infosys Science Foundation is to create recognition and respect for role models in science and technology.

Unlike many established awards, which recognise achievers almost towards the end of their careers, the aim is to recognise and reward younger researchers, to enable them to leverage the full benefit of the prize and contribute to their work. We want youngsters in the country to take to science and technology in a big way. And that is going to happen only if we can create a positive environment for these people. Therefore we said we will have prizes of Rs. 50 lakh, which is not bad.

Is the Foundation going to do more than just award the Infosys Prize? Are there other plans that you have in mind?

No, I think at this stage, we will focus on this. This itself takes a lot of effort.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Nation faces massive task of creating new schools, colleges: Kapil Sibal

Speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit, Minister For Human Resource Kapil Sibal said on Friday that improving the education system of India was a very complicated issue but we are moving in that direction. He also said that the whole nation must come together and work towards improving the quality and quantity of education in India and thus empower the country.

Explaining the complicated nature of the problem, Sibal said that access to education in India had different hurdles at different places like in the North East, in the Naxal affected areas, villages etc. However, the problem of access was not there in some urban centers where it was available to all.

Speaking about improving the quality of education in the country, the minister said that it depends on the kind of students we want to produce in our institution. He said to improve education we need to change the change the curriculum and for that we need to train the teachers. He said that the problem was different at the higher level as many of the training institutions in the field of medical, engineering etc were private ones and many of them were

not of very good quality. He also expressed the need for change in people's mindset for improvement in the quality of education.

Explaining the magnitude of the problem, the minister said that about 220 mn people go to schools in India out of which only about 13 million reach college. As we don't have a critical mass of students going to college, we don't get enough intangible wealth of knowledge. So it is important that a critical mass of people go to school and also a critical mass of students go from elementary to higher level of education.

The minister further said that all this was not an easy task but we are moving in the direction and hope that from the present about 13-14 mn million students about 45 million students will go for higher education by 2020.

Here, he pointed out the need of private help. The minister said that there was a need to increase online education in a big way and for that the country needs more broadband and for that a huge investment. The minister said once that happens any child can take any course in India and can also choose the teacher he wants even if he is in a different city.

After explaining his plan till 2020, the minister said that still about 150 million students won't go to college in India.

To meet this problem, Sibal said that the nature of education must change and we should put in place National Vocational Policy Framework. He said that CBSE will give vocational certificates and teach vocational courses to students between class VIII and XII.

Explaining the magnitude of the problem, the minister said there was a need for the civil society, NGOS and many other such organisations to come together on education to empower India

Source: New Delhi, 19 Nov, 2010/[Hindustan Times](#)

PM says India needs ever-expanding pool of human resources

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said that, as India modernised, grew and played a larger role in world affairs, the country would need an ever-expanding pool of human resources of the best quality.

"We will need global leaders in education, entrepreneurship, technology and management," he said in his address at the 29th convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Puttaparthi University in Andhra Pradesh.

"We are a nation of young people. We must create systems and opportunities where they will acquire the skills to enable them to excel not just in India, but also increasingly on the global stage," he said.

Dr Singh said that Indian scientists and technicians had already achieved renown in several areas such as

information technology, pharmacological sciences and biotechnology, space and nuclear technology.

"If we are to sustain and expand this, it is vitally important that our universities become more prolific in research on a much larger scale. At one level, of course, our university education needs to shape students who will meet the needs of a modern, rapidly growing economy and a fast changing society," he stressed.

He said that, at another level, India was now emerging in the forefront of the innovative world and needed researchers and inventors who would create the technologies and systems of the future.

Dr Singh said that while there was need for emphasis on scientific research, there was also need for research in humanities, history, literature, philosophy, economics and in the realm of culture and ideas.

"No society can be complete without an understanding of itself, its past and its present. That is what the humanities help us illuminate. Our thirst for vibrant research institutions that produce ever growing numbers of PhDs in diverse areas should be unquenchable," he said.

Dr Singh said he was happy that the convocation coincided with the 85th birthday of Shri Sathya Sai Baba, which made it even more special.

He said the changes that had taken place in the institute, since he last visited in 1995, were phenomenal.

"Modern societies and economies have found the ability and understanding to provide better livelihoods for our people and improve the quality of life for millions who are or were once mired in poverty. At the same time, accelerating technological and social change has put new pressures on individuals and society leading to great and urgent challenges. Today, we cannot succeed without providing value based education to our youth. In this endeavour, you are breaking new ground; others would do well to follow in the path that you have charted, to make both learning and character building universal in the realm of education," he said.

The Prime Minister also took note of the work being undertaken by the institution in water supply, education and health in the surrounding areas.

"This achievement is all the more commendable since the areas are in deep forests and are affected by Naxalite violence," he said.

He said it was heartening that all these services were rendered free to people. "This is a commendable commitment, and a determination to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and the needy with a spirit of giving that is unfortunately all too rare. Such benevolence and philanthropy should be an example to the many in our country who have the means, but are yet not able to emulate it," he said.

Dr Singh told the students who passed out today that they should remember that many around them did not have the privileges they had enjoyed.

"You have been exposed to fine minds. You have had access to excellent libraries. You have imbibed time-tested values. Above all, you have been able to think for yourselves, to achieve your full potential and you have the opportunity to become better human beings. But your lives will not be complete or successful if you do not reach out in whatever way you can to those less fortunate than you.

"As you chart your course in life, truly give thought to and do what you can to help those who have been less fortunate and less privileged than you. I am not talking about charity, I have in mind the idea of sharing, of giving of yourselves, your abilities and skills, to lend a helping hand where nobody else stands ready," he added.

RESOURCE

Friend indeed?

Because 38 per cent doctors, 12 per cent scientists and 36 per cent of NASA employees in America are Indians, Obama's grudging admiration for Indian students might be a camouflage to deprive us of jobs in BPO and other sectors.

We need to put a college education within reach of every American. That's the best investment we can make in our future. ~ Barack Obama

EDUCATION is power, and power education, especially in today's high-tech world. So thinks Barack Obama, the sixth US president to visit India. Education, according to him, stimulates innovation — the key to America's ascendancy as an economic superpower. In his recent speech at the University of Texas, he rued the sharp drop in US college graduates aged 25-34. A College Board report says America occupies the 12th position among 36 developing nations despite boasting 2,000 universities awarding undergraduate and another 1,100 awarding both undergraduate (Bachelor) and graduate (Master or Doctoral) degrees. The country ranks 21st and 25th in science and mathematics and lags behind in marketing and selling products to the world.

It may be recalled that in his 2006 State of the Union message, then President George W Bush urged his countrymen "to bolster mathematics and science education and to nurture corporate innovation". About the same time Chinese President Hu Jintao stressed the need "for building an innovation-oriented society" while Atul Khekade, COO of India's Brain Reactions LLC, predictably wondered whether India, would be "the next innovation giant."

Higher investments on education, Obama envisages, will churn out more college graduates by 2020 which, in turn, will give American companies a competitive edge: "I don't

want solar panels and wind turbines and electric cars made in Europe or made in Asia. I want them made here in the United States of America with American workers". He is afraid that unless the people wake up to this realisation, its economy will follow a downward trajectory.

Obama's aggressive American chauvinism and insularity reflect his concern that the country has fallen from its number one position both economically and educationally. So he dreams of "an America where every citizen — not just some, but every citizen — have the skills and the training to compete with any worker in the world. We can't allow other countries to outcompete us." There's a joke doing the rounds that the White House is now cooking millions of jobs for Americans. His India visit conceived "to pry open markets for American businesses" lends some credence to this contention.

But what ails American education today? Ellen Schrecker's recent book *The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, the Assault on Academic Freedom, and the End of the American University* published by The New Press outlines the factors taking the gloss off America's highly acclaimed higher education system. These include economic downturn, indiscreet budget cuts, adjunctification of the faculty, decline of the liberal arts and humanities, assault on academic freedom greater than McCarthyism in the 1950s and "watering down of academic standards." But the book's main focus, according to its author, is on "the damage that the 'casualization' of the academic labour force is doing to academic freedom and the quality of higher education." Obama has, therefore, been repeatedly exhorting his people to try to assert America's pre-eminence in global education.

What worries Obama most is that America's economic supremacy is under threat with countries like India and China, backbenchers in economy for years, having started breathing down America's neck. Resurging with their "vibrant, up scaled and diversified economies" they are also poised to emerge as formidable challengers in the "education arms race to lead the global economy". Can such a development be music to the ears of any US president? Obama, therefore, lambasted the opposition Republican for proposing cuts in the education budget at a time when China, South Korea, India and Germany did not cut education spending.

Obama finds to his dismay that while Indian and Chinese students "are working harder than ever, and doing better than ever" American students are sitting pretty without trying to compete with their counterparts. He urged them to remember that "your success in school is not just going to determine your success, it's going to determine America's success in the 21st century."

Expectedly, his comments set tongues wagging in India. Law minister M Veerappa Moily boasted: "We could create a world class infrastructure in the IT Sector in Karnataka. And today our export is more than 18,000 crore softwares

per annum". He remarked, although tongue-in-cheek, "If at all, the US President (Barack) Obama is afraid, he is afraid of Bangalore. I think he is not visiting Bangalore this time."

Much to our disbelief and amazement many US academicians, too, have high regard for the Indian education system, Bruce Miller being one of them. Presenting his paper on "American Approach to Technical Education" during Eklavya, a two-day international seminar on innovations in pedagogical approaches to secondary, technical, vocational education and training organised recently by the Toc H Institute of Science and Technology at Arakkunnam, Kochi, in collaboration with the National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research in Chennai, the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology and the Association of British Scholars, he said that despite being "outmoded" India's education system as well as its pedagogy, is "much above the standards of what is there in America".

Doesn't his observation seem incredible and highly flattering considering the fact that not a single Indian university could make it to the top 100 in three recent world university rankings – the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Academic Ranking of World Universities compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the QS World University Rankings? Although many academicians had reservations about these rankings dominated by US universities. Back home, there are admirers of the Indian education system, the whipping boy of most educationists, teachers and students, like former President APJ Abdul Kalam who thinks Indian universities are "powerhouses of knowledge" that "hold great potential for preparing India's next generation to face the upcoming challenges." But Kalam nurtures a dream a bit different from Obama's when he says that apart from focusing on employment generation, the universities should excel "in knowledge and performance" and "help make India technologically self-reliant."

One wonders why President Obama was accompanied by an entourage of presidents from several US universities during his three-day visit to India. It would be too simplistic to say that the arrangement was made only in anticipation of "possible" ties with India that has decided to throw its doors open to foreign institutions.

By now India's disillusionment with Obama is complete, and ironically, former President George Bush is now being seen to be more India-friendly. Obama's plan to transform America into a "nation that educates its children the best" in order to lead "the global economy in the 21st century" does not harm us. But his grudging admiration for Indian students might be a camouflage to deprive Indians of not only jobs in BPO but also in other fields. And his recent pronouncements "demonizing" India as grabbing American jobs might also culminate in an Australia-like situation where Indian students have been facing the worst-ever ethnic violence. He should not forget that 38 per cent

doctors, 12 per cent scientists and 36 per cent of National Aeronautics and Space Administration employees in America are Indians whose safety depends on his policies. His dream of building "a brighter future... where the American Dream is a living reality" should not be a nightmare for India. His recent statements project him as a typical American president but an unwelcome global leader.

Source: Nov 9, 2010/New Delhi/ [The Statesman](#)

Children wait for RTE to deliver on promise

Dilapidated buildings, overcrowded classrooms, shortage of teachers and parents' reluctance — there are hurdles galore before the right to education Act can be implemented in its true spirit. It's been eight months since RTE was enforced across the country, but its effect is yet to be seen. Children — most of whom still struggle to access formal education — are anxiously waiting for the proper implementation of the right.

Ask 13-year-old Bano Khaton about the changes she would like to see under RTE and she comes with the reply. "There are many child labourers in our area. Parents do not send them to study because the nearest school is three kilometres away. Children have to cross a stream and walk on the highway to reach the school. Girls are even teased and passersby often snatch away the lunch boxes of children," said Bano, who worked at her father's tea stall earlier but is now a student of class VIII.

She added that since going to school is not "safe", parents prefer to make them work and augment family income. RTE stipulates that there should be a school within three kilometres and Bano is hopeful that things will change. "As part of our children's group, we convince parents to send children to school. But there is a long way to go, specially for girls. I still have only 10 girls in a class of 70," she said.

Bano was one of the six children — from rural areas of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh — who came together in the city on Thursday to narrate their experiences at school. Brought together by Child Rights and You (CRY) organisation, the stories shared by these children proved that RTE is the need of the hour. All of these children were also the office-bearers of local bal panchayats which have shown the way for setting things right.

Class XI student, Mahendra Singh, president of Birothi Bal Panchayat in Rajasthan, held a chakka jam two years ago to draw the attention of the district collector towards the acute shortage of teachers in his school. "There were 500 students and just three teachers in our school. We stopped traffic in our area. The collector took notice and now we have seven teachers. We have our own letter pad on which we write to local authorities whenever we have any grievances," Mahendra said. "But children in our school

still have to pay a fee for education though RTE assures free and compulsory education till class VIII," he added.

Sunil Sendelkar and Vinod Parmar from Madhya Pradesh also did their bit to help students access schools and improve the infrastructure. "Boys have to go to a far off school after class V but bus operators refused to drop us to school as we couldn't pay. We negotiated and convinced them to give us a free ride. Government gave free bicycles to girls but what about boys?" Sunil wondered.

Vinod added, "We had to stop the district collector's car to bring him to school and show him how there was no boundary wall and villagers tied their cattle on the premises. He finally sanctioned a boundary wall for our school. Now, we also need more teachers."

Source: 12 Nov, 2010/New Delhi/ [The Times of India](#)

Anti-ragging hotline a failure

- **Student calls up to say he's getting death threats Call centre emails principal, forwards complaint to**
- **UGC a week later**
- **UGC sends letter by post to college, makes no call to check on student**

The ragging menace

- Year after Aman's death, 2009-10 academic session witnessed 164 ragging cases (double than earlier year) and 19 ragging-related deaths (against 12 previously)
- UP tops charts, accounting for 26 of 164 cases; Andhra Pradesh has 18, TN 14, Kerala 13 and WB 11
- Most deaths in Maharashtra (4); WB (4) and Punjab (3)
- 42 pc ragging incidents happened in engineering and medical colleges; 56 pc cases in hostels

July 24, 2009: A Kerala Law Academy College student calls up HRD Ministry / UGC's anti-ragging helpline (18001801805522) to complain of repeated death threats by one Binu KC of final year. Call centre sends email to principal and forwards complaint to the UGC on August 1, saying it sends complaints to the UGC only on a weekly basis. UGC dispatches letter by post to college. Its response is still awaited. No call made to check on student though he gave his mobile number.

July 31, 2009: Student of IIRM Campus, Tagore Marg, Mansarovar, Jaipur calls up. He says seniors were forcing juniors to strip and sexually abusing them. He offers to identify the culprits. EdCIL, which runs the call center, e-mails the principal and writes to the UGC on August 8. College response awaited, no call made to student.

August 8, 2009: Student of Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya, MP, complains that teachers Bharat Mishra and Yadav sir were indulging in ragging. EdCIL messages college principal but no verification of what happened to the student.

August 15, 2009: Girl student of Techno India College of Technology, WB, complains that seniors were threatening her, sexually abusing her and touching her all the time. She says she can identify the seniors. No monitoring by EdCIL, except one e-mail to the college principal.

August 20, 2009: A student of NIT Srinagar calls up saying seniors slap and kick them, beat them up with sticks, mock them and have shaved their heads. EdCIL emails director. Again, no follow up with the student.

Twenty months after Aman Kachroo's tragic and preventable ragging death in Tanda Medical College, the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the University Grants Commission have not learnt their lessons. They may revel in having set up a call centre to operate the much-hyped national anti-ragging helpline but investigations by The Tribune reveal the absolute mockery this helpline is making of the urgency that Supreme Court had attached to the issue.

Nineteen more ragging-deaths have been reported across the country since Aman's demise.

The apex court had asked the HRD Ministry to run a "crisis hotline" for students, create a database by getting electronic affidavits from students at the time of registration and appoint an independent agency to monitor ragging complaints to the helpline. Neither of this has been accomplished.

The student database prepared so far is sketchy and not electronic affidavit based, as the Ministry has settled for hard copies of affidavits to be signed by the oath commissioner. These are then to be retyped into computers by respective colleges -- a mighty proposition given India's 40 million student strength. The proposal of the NGO appointed by the UGC is more research based than monitoring based.

And here's what the so-called crisis hotline has done: it got 1.5 lakh calls from June to December last but registered only 300 complaints. Several complaints were returned as they were either not made by "blood relations" of victims or were not accompanied by the e-mail address of the college principal, V-C or college postal address. E-mails were sent to college authorities but no phone calls were ever made to check if these e-mails reached the right people and if the complainants got justice. In over 70 per cent cases, the authorities' response was awaited as late as December last, months after the complaints were made. Call centre operators say that they don't have the power to make calls and so they make none, though they keep raising the matter with the UGC.

Justice is further being defeated by the bureaucratic approach to anti-ragging. EdCIL, the PSU which HRD Ministry has engaged to run the call center, forwards complaints on a weekly basis to the UGC, which makes files of them and then decides which case is fit for a written reference. The UGC in this age of Internet then sends letters through post (out of 300 complaints, it sent 180 letters) to colleges and universities for action. The action taken is not known because the call centre project approach that the SC approved never took off the way it was designed. The Ministry of Human Resource and Development simplified it because it was in a hurry to launch the helpline after Aman's death and the Supreme Court's order.

The Tribune has accessed minutes of the May 22, 2009, meeting in the UGC on anti-ragging where EdCIL chief Anju Banerjee admits: "Initially, the MHRD had directed EdCIL to prepare a project report for anti-ragging taking inputs from Dr Rajinder Kachroo. This mechanism, comprising an affidavit, data collection and call centre operation, would have ensured a feedback loop for complaint closure and would have enabled closed monitoring though it would have taken longer.

Later, on May 5, 2009, Secretary Higher Education (then RP Agarwal) desired that the helpline be made operational by June 15, 2009 and should be a simple system with a toll-free line. Accordingly, the system was simplified as the implementation of the earlier concept was expected to take longer. The new system allows speedy implementation but doesn't ensure complaint closure in an objective manner."

Source: Nov 15,2010/New Delhi/[Tribune News Services](#)

Indian students skip US for UK

A popular wisecrack goes that Indian students -- particularly engineers -- would, immediately after their graduation ceremony, board the flight out to the United States for higher education. There's always been some truth in that humorous exaggeration; from 2000, particularly, there have been more Indian students on US campuses than from any other country. But in 2010, China upstaged India on campus.

Indeed, Chinese students in the last couple of decades have been seesawing with their Indian counterparts on this score -- in the late '90s it was Chinese students who dominated the foreign student population in the US. Data released by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) reveals that after a year of zero growth, when American universities saw no rise in the number of foreign students, international enrollments have gone up marginally. But the largest contributor has been China, not India.

The CGS data shows that in 2009 and 2010, fresh enrollments from India fell sharply. This year, the United Kingdom seems to have replaced the US as the favourite education destination for Indians; the UK issued 57,500

visas to Indian students, which is almost double the 32,000 visas issued by the US.

Findings on fresh admissions reveal that both offers of admission to prospective students from India as well as admissions have fallen in 2010, the former by 5% and the latter by 3%. The council's findings on fresh annual enrollments are different from those released by the International Institute of Education -- the latter maps all the total international students on campuses in the US, irrespective of their year of arrival. But it is CGS's figures that give the real indication of annual student movement to the US. According to CGS, China, India, South Korea and the Middle East, and Turkey, in that order, now make up the key student-sending countries to the US.

"While first-time graduate enrollments declined 3% for both South Korean and Indian students in 2010, the free fall that occurred last year has slowed," the report notes. But even after three consecutive years of decline in first-time enrollment numbers from India, there are more Indian students in US graduate schools today than there were in 2005.

In fact, the dropping enrollments forced the IIE to conduct a survey on Indians' perceptions of the US as an educational destination. The weaknesses listed included the soaring cost of tuition, cost of school application process and the fact that the US was further from home as compared to the UK.

WRITING ON THE WALL

No. of foreign students on US campuses

Year	India	China
2009	1,03,260	98,235
2008	94,563	81,127
2007	83,833	67,723
2006	76,503	62,582
2005	80,466	62,523
2004	79,736	61,765
2003	74,603	64,757
2002	66,836	63,211
2001	54,664	59,939
1995	31,743	39,403

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

China Surges Past India as Top Home of Foreign Students

The number of Chinese students studying in the United States surged 30 percent in the 2009-10 academic year, making China the top country of origin for international students, according to "Open Doors," the Institute of International Education's annual report.

From China, to Study

The number of college students from China surged this year.

	COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM EACH COUNTRY, 2009-10 ACADEMIC YEAR	CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
China	127,628	+29.9%
India	104,897	+ 1.6
South Korea	72,153	- 3.9
Canada	28,145	- 5.2
Taiwan	26,685	- 4.9
Japan	24,842	-15.1
Saudi Arabia	15,810	+24.9
Mexico	13,450	- 9.4
Vietnam	13,112	+ 2.3
Turkey	12,397	+ 2.0

Source: Institute of International Education

The report found that a record high of 690,923 international students came to the United States last year — nearly 128,000 of them, or more than 18 percent, from China. Over all, the number of international students at colleges and universities in the United States increased 3 percent for the 2009-10 academic year.

India, which in recent years had been in the top spot, increased its numbers only slightly, to 104,897 last academic year.

"The number of students from China is booming, because of that booming Chinese economy," said Peggy Blumenthal, executive vice president of the institute. "But India, which also has a booming economy, is only up 1.6 percent. I think one factor is the great number of Chinese families with disposable income, two working parents and only one child, and a determination to invest their money to make sure that child receives the best education possible."

David B. Austell, director of the Office for International Students and Scholars at New York University, said the Chinese undergraduates came primarily from the large urban areas on China's coast. Because they are not eligible for the same financial aid as Americans and usually pay full tuition, he said, their growing presence is an indicator of just how many Chinese families are financially strong.

At the University of Southern California, Tony Tambascia, executive director of the Office of International Services, said the number of Chinese students grew substantially last year, but surpassed the number of Indian students for the first time just this fall.

"We're getting more Chinese master's students, and dramatically more freshmen," he said.

According to the report, which is supported by the State Department, the number of students coming to the United States from Saudi Arabia increased almost 25 percent last year, to 15,810, reflecting the Saudi government's generous aid for studies abroad.

But not all countries sent more students to the United States last year. The number coming from Japan declined



15 percent, and Mexico, Indonesia and Kenya each sent 7 percent to 9 percent fewer students than in the previous year.

Still, Allan Goodman, president of the institute, said the United States continued to host more international students than any other country. And according to the Commerce Department, such students contribute nearly \$20 billion to the economy.

While the majority of Chinese students in the United States are still graduate students, the recent growth has been strongest among undergraduates.

Last year, there were 39,921 Chinese undergraduates studying in the United States, a 50 percent increase from the previous year, and more than four times as many as five years earlier.

The Indian experience has been quite different; that country sent 15,192 undergraduates last year, fewer than five years earlier. And the number of Indians coming to the United States for graduate study dropped by almost 4 percent last year

“The educational-advising people say that the job market is so hot in places like Mumbai and Bangalore that students thinking about grad school decide it’s not worth it,” Ms. Blumenthal said, “since they can just go out and get a good engineering job.”

As in past years, the report found that California, with 94,279 international students, hosts far more students from abroad than any other state. The University of Southern California is the institution with the most international students, 7,987 last year.

The report also tracks Americans studying abroad, although those numbers come from a year earlier. In the 2008-9 academic year, 260,327 American students studied abroad, down slightly from 262,416 the previous year.

While Britain, Italy, Spain and France remain the leading destinations, the study found, all four hosted fewer students, with the declines ranging from 2.5 percent to 10.8 percent.

But nontraditional destinations outside Europe gained popularity. Chile, Peru and South Korea all had increases of more than 26 percent, and China, Australia, Costa Rica, Japan, Argentina, South Africa, Ecuador, Brazil and New Zealand all hosted more American students than in the previous year.

Source: November 15, 2010/[New York Times](#)

US sees an Increase in International Student Enrollment

The increase in international student enrollment in 2009-2010 showed that students from China had the largest impact.

The recent academic year demonstrated an increase of enrollment of international students by 3 percent to colleges and universities in the United States. Enrollment of Chinese students has been the main drive behind the growth, increasing by 30 percent, also demonstrating that the Chinese student population accounts for more than 18 percent of the number of international students.

Findings were released by the annual survey report published by the Institute of International Education (IIE) with support from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The survey also showed that China is in the lead of countries sending students to the United States, followed by India, the Republic of Korea, Canada, Taiwan, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Vietnam and Turkey.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) has an estimated 40,000 participants annually. These programs promote international mutual understandings through a variety of different academic avenues; cultural, professional, as well as sports exchange programs.

The ECA program engages many participants in the United States and in more than 160 countries, in a variety of fields from youth, students, educators, artists, athletes and emerging leaders.

The U.S. Department of Commerce has stated “international students contribute \$20 billion to the American economy, while they enrich U.S. campuses and communities with their knowledge, talents and diverse perspectives.”

Promoting academic and intellectual exchange between the United States and other nations should reflect positively with mutual understanding and promoting U.S. security and economic wellbeing.

If you are interested in Visas to USA, contact Migration Expert for information and advice on which visa is best suited to you. You can also try our visa eligibility assessment to see if you are eligible to apply for a visa to the United States of America.

Source: [USA Emigration News](#)

IIE Publications and Research Reports

IIE’s research reports and policy papers serve as a rapid response to the changing landscape of international education.

Open Doors 2010 was released on November 15, 2010. For more information, visit the links below.

[Open Doors Data](#)

[Open Doors 2010 Fast Facts](#)

[FAQs on Open Doors](#)

[Custom Data Reports](#)

[Economic Impact of International Students](#)

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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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