



Announcements

ASERF has instituted **Dr Sty 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 2011. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Education Society announces the opening of Apeejay Sty University

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

Apeejay Sty University offers a diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the academic session 2011-12. 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

Get Involved

International Two-Year Teaching Fellowship

The Apeejay Sty University invites applications for its two-year teaching fellowship in India. Applicants would be based in Sohna, Gurgaon, Haryana India, and take up to three classes in the subject of their proficiency. Fellows would gain experience in teaching in another culture, within an extremely innovative university system.

Please visit our website for more:
<http://apeejay.edu/asu/getinvolved/fellowships.php>

Partnership

Dear Partners,

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

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

Editor

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh

CONTENT

Aspect

Imperiling public education

News

1. B-schools to remove 'variable' pay from final salaries, IIM-A to bring in new system
2. Only 11% youth go for higher
3. Puducherry tops in elementary education
4. Satyanarayanan R-led Indus World raised its first round of funding from Gaja Capital in 2008.
5. Australian varsities see dip in entry of Indian students
6. MBA remains top choice for Indian students
7. B-schools to contest rule
8. Round Table on "National Vocational Education Qualification Frame Work for Media & Entertainment Industry"
9. Anti-tobacco curricula in schools soon
10. HC: Use of contributions to promote education entitled to I-T benefits
11. Revamp of B-school norms planned
12. Kerala boards students groan as World Cup nears
13. BITS Pilani Signs MoU With Indian Army
14. CBSE announces promotion policy for Class 9 students
15. For laterals, IIM pay packets take vertical route
16. Microsoft Chooses Everonn Education as MASP in India
17. Laureate Hospitality Education targets over 350 Indian students annually in the next 5 year
18. Dreaming of BE? Score more in PU
19. No hike in cet application fee
20. Everonn Edu to earn Rs 40-50cr from Microsoft tie-up
21. Nod to foreign tech schools
22. India Infoline launches financial literacy programme
23. India won't outpace China without a few miracles
24. Bridge gap between EWS & well-off, Sheila tells schools
25. Skipping Rote Memorization in Indian Schools
26. Delhi HC issues notice to schools for violating RTE admission norms
27. Indian varsities fuel Mauritius' 'knowledge hub' dream
28. Govt. should focus on investment in education
29. 'Fine arts teaching is lagging in universities'

Analysis/Opinion/Innovative Practice

1. Geosciences need integration into secondary, tertiary education
2. Evaluation scheme a social equaliser, says CBSE chief
3. Educational institutes must lay the base for inclusive society: N. Ram
4. RTE Rules to be notified in March, education secy tells NGOs
5. Follow the rules
6. Education to become borderless in coming years, IGNOU VC
7. Majority of innovations come from economically disadvantaged regions'
8. How faculty mentoring among Indian b-schools can improve their standing on the world stage

Resources

1. Elementary Education in India; Progress towards UEE: DISE Flash Statistics: 2009-10
2. India's higher education sector needs 8 mn seats in next 3 years to sustain economic growth
3. Shri Kapil Sibal Inaugurates NPTEL National Video Server
4. Open School to Supplement RTE & RMSA; 20th General Body Meeting of the National Institute of Open Schooling Held
5. Pre Budget Expectations 2011-12: Anagram Research



ASPECT**Imperiling public education**

Most private schools are not elite at all, contrary to public perception, and the Right to Education Act will let them run amok at the expense of the public education system.

The economics of owning and running a Ration Shop, the familiar name for the outlets in our Public Distribution System (PDS), are such that under normal business terms, the shop-owner could never make a profit. Yet, whenever the government announces that new permits for ration shops will be given out, there is a frenzy in the market to grab one of these. Why? The answer is obvious: the business is not for the honest and if one knows the ropes, there is a fortune to be made.

What are these tricks of this trade?

- Getting fake names into the user list is the most obvious option; the State seems to be waging a losing battle against this practice, judging by the endless efforts to weeding out bogus ration cards.
- The next is to get the 'right customers' on the list, not just more customers. These are people who are registered but who do not have any interest in drawing on their entitlements. In a system where caste and income certificates are for sale, it is not difficult to 'produce' these documents for mutual benefit. Receipts are duly made in their names, and the rations thus 'drawn' are siphoned off into the open market. The sale price of an item like rice makes clear the underlying economics - it costs Rs.8 in a ration shop while in the latter it is Rs.30 or above. There are also customers who would rather exchange their entitlements for hard cash at the beginning of the month.
- As the degradation progresses, the shop keeper, in collusion with the official machinery, manages to withhold effectively the entitlements from even the genuine beneficiaries, and diverts them to the open market. The targeted group is usually not in a position to assert itself to get its due.

And thus one has all the 'ingredients' of a good PDS business. Now let us turn to the public schools. The first thing to notice is that in education too, like in distribution of food grains, the State has devised a piece of legislation, whose course may run very closely to the above - incontrovertible for its intent and equally liable for exploitation at the hands of those who hold the strings.

To begin with, it is clear in today's societal conditions that running an educational institution could be (and often is) a very remunerative venture, undertaken for profit. There are very honorable exceptions to this rule, and I have the deepest regard for them, but that does not make the above statement any less true. This truth that has set in deeply at the level of college-level education, and in my opinion, is poised to infiltrate primary and high Schools through the Right to Education law.

A windfall for many schools

The Act provides for 25 per cent reservation of seats as State Quota in private schools at the cost of the public exchequer. On the face of it, it does look very attractive; one gets a vision of kids from 'deprived sections of the society' trooping into private schools in the neighborhood to avail of quality education that has so far been denied to them. However the reality is very different. The 'aspirational' school found in many urban settings is in fact in a small minority. Instead, the typical private school is usually a teaching shop that employs grossly unqualified and untrained teachers.

Still, such schools are able to wean away students from the public education system (PES). There are two reasons for this: the packaging/marketing of the product, and the lack of discerning ability on the part of the parents. The latter becomes more relevant in rural areas where parents totally lack the ability to judge a school, and therefore succumb to display of superficial frills, or to peer pressure. A detailed study of the pattern of choice among the High Schools in the School District in which Sikshana operates proves the validity of this assessment. Parents have, more often than not, opted for private schools with a distinctly poorer academic record than government schools in the same vicinity.

We need to examine the implications of the RTE Act in the context of this ground reality. To start with, an announcement that the parents are free to admit their kids in a neighborhood private school can create a rush which is neither justified nor sustainable; this will have serious detrimental impact on the PES in the short term with a major drop in new enrollments. The system can live with this, but not with the distortions that all such public interventions bring in - which is essentially the theme of this article.

Look at the mushrooming 'grey market' private schools to find out the enormous damage that the Act is likely to cause to the PES. The RTE Act provides for reservation of seats as above, with a mandated reimbursement for these admissions at a rate equivalent to that incurred by the PES. In most rural private schools, however, the cost of 'educating' a child is however far less than that incurred by the State.

While good data is hard to come by, I have observed that many of the private schools charge Rs.200 per month or even less. Compare this with the PES, in which the State spends Rs.800 or more per child each month. Inducting students on State Quota into these schools with reimbursements as above will actually prove to be a windfall income for these schools at State expense.

The PDS future for schools

What else will this parallel system do now, apart from availing the above windfall? The answers are not dissimilar to the ration shop scenario. Shady ventures will aggressively market their goods based on aspirational or

perceptual choices and draw away students who would otherwise have opted for public schools. The State will in effect be funding the education of these students - and indirectly the private school system - at the cost of the public exchequer and to this extent, its own schools will be deprived of badly needed funds. These private schools will also inevitably increase their sanctioned intake of students over a period of time in order to avail of the state handout.

Further down the road come all the other distortions that afflict the PDS today; fake entries, absentee students and parents cashing in upfront the subsidy offered to the schools. The incentives being what they are, the day will not be far off when the enrollment in the schools increase and the actual number of students in the class room decline. Does it all look familiar now?

The focus is not on the poor kids who rarely occupy the neighbourhood space; it is the bureaucracy and the middle classes who will usurp these seats in premium schools in a metropolitan environment, notwithstanding all the conditional clauses in the Act. In a country where birth and caste certificates are up for sale, the fine print is not going to be a great deterrent.

It is unfortunate that the significant debate about RTE thus far in the public domain has had little to do with the path-breaking recommendations for the PES; instead it is centered on the above proposal to reserve a percentage of seats in private schools for underprivileged kids. The chief argument against it is based on a scenario where the elitist private schools are swamped by the unwashed from the streets.

To get at the truth, one has only to follow the money trail. The cost incurred by a typical premium school is bound to be far in excess of the Rs.800 under the PES and hence any reservation at state expense will be highly unattractive for them; this accounts for much of the furore. As far as educating the children of the country is concerned, this is strictly a non-issue as the number of seats feasible under the scheme will be minuscule compared to the millions of kids knocking at the doors of the system every year.

Over-centralised legislation

We are indeed paying a heavy price for making Education a concurrent subject under the Constitution. The vision of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, who drafted this legislation, does not seem to extend far beyond the Model Schools and the Kendriya Vidyalayas; and the children in Delhi schools. The conditions of the millions of kids under the State Systems do not appear to figure under their radar. Ironically, it is the latter that form the backbone of the educational system in our country.

It would be far wiser, and more practical to allow the States to set the legal and operational norms for educating their children. Different models would emerge, and their successes and failures could be learned from. An overarching, single scheme that is tailored for the Delhi environment is bound to fail in other parts of the country.

How many times have we heard the refrain under the erstwhile SSA, that funds remain unspent year after year because the States are unable to raise their share of the amount needed under the Center/State sharing formula? This is only going to get immensely worse with the huge budgets envisaged under RTE; State governments are already demanding that the Center bear the costs of this law fully. And without the capacity for absorbing these funds in the PES, the chances are that they will now get spent towards funding private schools instead. After all, that is where the action is right now, and the power of the lobbies too.

Source: [India Together](#)/2011

NEWS

B-schools to remove 'variable' pay from final salaries, IIM-A to bring in new system

Crore-plus salaries offered on B-school campuses will be tempered through a new system that proposes to segregate guaranteed pay from fringe benefits. The system will make packages appear slimmer, forcing corporate recruiters become more realistic while enticing MBA grads with puffed-up offers.

The placement standards prepared by the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad will remove performance-linked compensation like variable pay and annual bonus and fringe benefits like employee stock options and club memberships while reporting final salaries.

The institute also plans to appoint an auditor to independently assess packages on offer and compare domestic and foreign salary packages by using the scale of purchasing power parity instead of the currency exchange rates. Also, salaries of different students will be equated on the basis of the roles offered, sectors and locations.

IIM-A will announce the new system this week and implement it for its placement season starting February 12. It will also seek consensus among other IIMs and B-schools to set new benchmarks for the country's B-school placements.

"Salaries will significantly come down (by up to 40%) and corporates will be forced to restructure packages. But variable pay will continue to exist and get higher as one climbs up the organisational ladder," says Sunil Goel of Global Hunt.

The variable pay offered to management graduates would comprise 15-30% of their total salary. If fringe benefits are added, the non-guaranteed component of the salary that depends on market condition and business performance can be as high as 40%. If the non-guaranteed components are done away with, salaries will be slashed, says the director of the Delhi-based executive search firm.

"Our average salaries will be lowered, but we are ready to take the hit. We will ensure that a genuine picture is

projected at the end of our placement process," says Saral Mukherjee, chairperson of IIM-A's placement committee. Mukherjee has prepared the draft along with his colleague Biju Varkey and two students.

"There will be difficulties in comparison because different companies have different salary structures. Also, there is some concern among recruiters about disclosing salary components. It is possible that companies may not show willingness to share their compensation details," Amit Dhiman, chairperson (placements), IIM-Calcutta said.

"The proposal seems interesting. Students will be able to compare an apple with an apple which was not possible earlier," says Wipro's GM (consulting operations) Vasudev Murthy S. "Performance-based salary varies with seniority and roles. The new proposal will be beneficial for students and they will get more realistic figures," he said adding that salaries will be the same, but companies will express them differently.

The new standards also aim at comparing salaries offered by various B-schools.

Various IIMs disclose average salaries offered to their students at the end of the placement season. However, each institute employs a different formula to arrive at the mean pay figures. Students privately accuse other institutes of inflating them. During the last placements, average salary offered at IIM-A was Rs 15 lakh while that at IIM-Calcutta was Rs 15.32 lakh.

Source: 02 February 2011/New Delhi/[The Economic Times](#)

Only 11% youth go for higher

With just 11 per cent of the 110 million youths of India in the age group of 18-24 enrolled in higher education, principals of prominent colleges from across the country have expressed deep concern.

"This certainly calls for a serious re-look," said EV Miranda, principal of St Edmund's College, Shillong at the inaugural function of the two-day 17th National Conference of Indian Colleges Forum (ICF) on Higher Education in India: The Developing Dynamics. The conclave was organized by the Meghalaya College Principals' Council (MCPC) in collaboration with the New Delhi-based Society for Economic and Educational Development (SEED) at Union Christian College at Barapani, near here on Thursday.

"Even a cursory look at the state of higher education in India would reveal that on many counts it has lost the edge it once enjoyed. With little innovation; thanks to the too little investment that has been a major bane, with its ill-devised regulatory framework, and with lack of life skill relevant course material, higher education in India warrants substantial reforms," Miranda stressed.

Stating that entry of private operators in the domain of higher education has significantly altered the scenario though with "certain unwarranted developments", he said

the issues of accessibility, quality and equity assume importance since the perception shift of treating education as "purchasable commodity" and therefore affordable to only those who can pay evolved as a matter of serious concern.

North Eastern Hill University (Nehu) pro-VC David Syiemlieh pointed out that ever since World Bank and IMF begun funding higher education in India, there has been a gradual withdrawal of state patronage in this field. "Government funding is presently large but it is drying out and there is concern that privatization will come at a social cost and foster inegalitarianism," he said.

Source: February 3, 2011/[The Times of India](#)

Puducherry tops in elementary education

The union territory of Puducherry yet again leads the country in educational development index (EDI), reveals the 2009-2010 statistics released by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA).

The tiny territory with adequate infrastructure, better pupil-teacher ratio and gross enrolment ratio has claimed the numero uno position in elementary education in the country for the second successive year.

Other regions such as Lakshadweep, Kerala and Andaman and Nicobar islands closely followed Puducherry while Tamil Nadu retained its fifth rank in the index.

The EDI index was computed using a set of 21 indicators which are regrouped as four sub-groups access, infrastructure, teachers and outcome. The access was computed based on the availability of schools per 1,000 children and the ratio of primary to upper primary schools, while infrastructural facilities were gauged by the student-classroom ratio, schools with drinking water facility, common toilet and girls toilet.

On the teaching fraternity, the indicators were based on the percentage of female teachers, pupil-teacher ratio and the presence of teachers without professional qualifications.

With regard to outcome index, several criteria including gross enrolment ratio, gender parity in enrolment, participation of Scheduled Castes, repetition rate, drop out rate, transition rate from primary to upper primary level and percentage of students securing 60 per cent and above marks were taken into consideration.

Puducherry ranked first in the infrastructure index, second in teachers index and also in outcome index in primary level education but lagged behind in access index as it finished 21st in the list. Similarly, the union territory ranked first, third and fourth in teachers index, outcomes index and infrastructure index respectively in the upper primary level education but was placed 15th in the access index.

The average number of teachers per school in Puducherry was the fourth best in the country, next only to Chandigarh, Delhi and Lakshadweep. Similarly Puducherry was one of the states that deposes negligible number of teaching

faculty members for non-teaching assignments, while states like West Bengal, Assam, Goa, Kerala, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Punjab, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Daman and Diu depute one-fifth of their teaching staff members for non teaching assignments.

Retention rate at primary level was negligible in Puducherry, Kerala, Delhi and Chandigarh.

Bihar, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh were languishing at the rock bottom in the EDI table.

Source: 4 February 2011/ Puducherry/[Times of India](#)

Satyanarayanan R-led Indus World raised its first round of funding from Gaja Capital in 2008.

India's largest mortgage lender Housing Development Finance Corp. (HDFC) is picking up a stake in Indus World Schools for Rs 50 crore, a chain promoted and run by education firm Career Launcher (CL). Private equity firm Gaja Capital Partners, an existing investor, is also co-investing in this round.

Career Launcher Education Infrastructure & Services, which operates Indus World Schools, opened the first school in 2005 at Hyderabad and the second one in 2006 at Indore. Since then the School chain has grown to eleven in 2010 with schools in the NCR, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Raipur, Ahmedabad, Aurangabad and Jalgaon. New schools are expected to come up in Karnataka, Haryana and a second school at Hyderabad.

Indus World Schools also partnered with realty firm Shriram Properties last year to open 25 schools in townships being developed by the latter in cities like Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata and Visakhapatnam.

HDFC has actively made investments in companies across stages. In September 2010, it invested in Tyfone Inc, a mobile payments solutions company. It has also picked up stakes in Jerry Rao's Value & Budget Housing Corporation and outsourcing firm Rural Shores. HDFC also invested in IL&FS Education and Technology Services, which is involved in primary education and vocational training, where India Equity Partners invested Rs 172 crore last year.

Satyanarayanan R-led Indus World raised its first round of funding from Gaja Capital in 2008. The PE firm also invested \$8.25 million in the flagship group firm Career Launcher India, which provides test preparation services. Gaja also has exposure to education through Educomp and its school education subsidiary EduSchools.

“Education and Housing are core needs of India's emerging consumers. This partnership between two sector leaders will leverage complementary strengths to help address the huge and immediate unmet demand for K12 education from India's quality seeking consumers,” said Gopal Jain, Managing Partner of Gaja Capital.

There have been several investments in the school managements business since last year. Reliance Equity Advisors, the PE arm of Anil Ambani's Reliance Capital, invested Rs 100 crore in Pathways World School in its debut deal last year. New Silk Route invested up to \$25 million in Hyderabad-based Sri Chaitanya Educational Group, one of the largest network of private schools and junior colleges.

India's K-12 segment is a \$20-billion market growing at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14%, said a report by education-focused PE firm Kaizen Management Advisors. Factors like large and growing population, inefficient public system and preferences for private schools and colleges is driving this sector.

Education sector has seen investments of \$190 million across 23 deals in the calendar year 2010, according to VCCEdge. This compared to 10 deals worth \$128 million in the entire calendar year 2009.

Australian varsities see dip in entry of Indian students

The enrolment of Indian students looking to pursue higher education in Australia has suffered a significant fall since late 2009.

Statistics from Australian Education International, the international arm of the Australian government's department of education, employment and workplace relations, show that overall enrolment for higher education of Indian students dropped from 1,20,913 in 2009 to 1,00,236 in November 2010. Enrolment of Indian students for vocational education institutes in Australia had also dropped with 79,200 registered in November 2009. The numbers subsequently fell to 75,884 during the corresponding period the following year.

Attributing the decline to a combination of factors, Harvinder Singh of IDP Education India Private Limited, said: "Primarily, this is because the Australian dollar has gained in strength due to which the cost of higher education has gone up. Also, the visa norms were made stricter by the Australian High Commission from September 2008. It became difficult for parents to show financial support with these norms in place. Thirdly, there were incidents of Indians being targeted in Australia and that might have contributed to the fall in numbers."

Speaking on the sidelines of an education fair involving 14 Australian universities here on Sunday, Singh said the vocational education sector in Australia, parts of which were primarily immigration-driven, had taken a beating as well. "As far as students from the south are concerned, most of them are going to pursue their PhDs. States like Punjab and Gujarat were impacted by the slump in the vocational education sector," he said.

University representatives at the fair said they had not received any queries from students on the security issue. "Before coming to Chennai we have done road shows in Kochi, Kolkata and Bangalore. We were surprised that no

one asked us about security issues in Australia. Students are well-informed and come to us with course-specific questions," said Ashini Malhotra, marketing manager, South Asia and Middle East, Griffith University.

According to Jamal Qureshi, South Asia regional marketing manager, Western Australia trade office, students' queries focussed on employment opportunities after the course and accommodation. "Social networking websites have made our job a lot easier because students interact with peers living in Australia and get information. The Australian government has taken stringent steps to ensure students' safety such as increased patrolling, installing more CCTV cameras, and having the local sheriff speak to students about do's and don'ts in Australia. While these systems have always been in place, there is greater emphasis on them now," he said.

Source: February 7, 2011/[The Times of India](#)

MBA remains top choice for Indian students

MBA continues to remain the top choice for Indian students who visited the two-day Education UK exhibition 2011 being held at hotel Taj Coromandel on Monday.

L Dhansekaran, Head Education UK (South India), said that on day one of the UK exhibition, more than 800 students visited the exhibition and 58 UK universities had participated. During the two-day conference which will be held on Tuesday too, the students will get the opportunity to meet the UK delegates face to face, enquire about the courses, cost of living, scholarships and other clarifications, said Dhansekaran.

He said that in the last few years, the field of applied sciences has seen many takers among the Indian students.

The exhibition caters to undergraduate, postgraduate and research studies in a range of subjects.

They are having seminars on topics such as MBA or MSC, Biotechnology and other subjects. The exhibition will be held from 2 pm to 7 pm and the entry is free. One can also register at www.educationuk_in.org.

Source: 8 February 2011/Chennai/[Express Buzz](#)

B-schools to contest rule

Unaided B-schools will next week challenge in the Supreme Court a directive of the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) that made invalid some entrance tests to the institutes.

Representatives of around 100 private management institutions met today to discuss their course of action to prevent the regulator from implementing its "arbitrary" directive.

In December last year, the AICTE had directed the management institutes to admit students only from merit lists of the Common Admission Test (CAT), the

Management Aptitude Test (MAT) and entrance tests to be conducted by state governments.

There are at least five entrance tests conducted by the management institutes or their association

Besides CAT and MAT, the other tests are the Xavier Aptitude Test, AIMS Test for Management Admission (ATMA) and the Joint Management Aptitude Test (JMAT). State governments now do not conduct entrance tests for management institutes.

Besides, there are scores of private institutions which take students without conducting entrance tests.

The AICTE had also directed that the postgraduate diploma in management be made a two-year course.

"The AICTE directive is unjustified and arbitrary. It will affect the quality of management education. We are moving the Supreme Court by February 14 to challenge the directive," said H. Chaturvedi, president of the Education Promotion Society of India (EPSI), a body of private management institutions.

Chaturvedi said delegations of EPSI and Association of Indian Management Schools have already lodged their protest with human resource development minister Kapil Sibal.

Source: 8 February 2011/New Delhi/[The Telegraph](#)

Round Table Conference on "National Vocational Education Qualification Frame Work for Media & Entertainment Industry"

To develop the contours of a vocational educational qualification frame work, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is organising a series of sector specific round table conferences to discuss the present scenario of soft and technical skills of the existing workforce in the age group of twenty to twenty five and contemporary requirement of industry. In this series, a Round Table on Media & Entertainment Industry was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister Human Resource Development, and Communication & Information Technology here, last evening. The workshop was attended by 126 representatives of the Media & Entertainment Industry. After extensive discussions, it was decided to constitute a committee to prepare the draft curriculum for vocational education for this sector. The committee includes Shri S.S. Mantha, Chairman, AICTE, Shri Anurag Batra, CEO, Exchange for Media and members from different sectors of the media. Five sub-committees have also been constituted to prepare the draft curriculum for the different sectors such as TV, advertising, theatre, print, support sector for the media.

Two big concerns of employers today are finding good workers and training them. India has a large population base of 1.14 billion with demographic shift in favor of working age group (15-59 years). While the overall population is projected to grow at 1.4% over the next five

years the working age is expected to grow at 2.15%. For this majority group, access to secondary education and vocational education and training (VET) is very crucial. There is a need to increase VET responsiveness to changing labor market demands, increasing the effectiveness of VET outcomes in improving the match between education and training demand and supply. Effective skill based technical education for employment is the key enabler for innovation.

There is a felt need for Vocational Education on account of water tight educational entry and exit levels, increasing drop outs, social non acceptance to vocational education as an alternate to higher education, loss of productive youth, mismatch between qualifications and industry needs and need to provide seamless integration between vocational education and regular higher education for enhancement in GER. Formal VE in India is implemented at senior secondary school level, and funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. Total enrolment in VE courses of these schools is roughly 6, 00 000 at present.

Automobile sector, IT, ITES and telecom sector, media and entertainment sector hospitality and tourism sector, construction and infrastructure sector, financial services, retail services, banking and insurance sector are some of the potential vocational education receptors. AICTE also intends to organize Future round table conferences in the Construction sectors and Banking & Finance.

Source: 10 February, 2011/[PIB](#)

Anti-tobacco curricula in schools soon

India is planning to introduce a comprehensive anti-tobacco curriculum and teachers' guide at school level across the country to reduce the growing dependence of students on nicotine.

The move is part of the National Tobacco Control Programme which is set for a major expansion through the coverage of school students whose addiction to tobacco as well as exposure to second-hand smoke through contact with smoker parents is increasing.

The teachers' manual, complete with worksheets for children on the A to Z of tobacco - its extent, how it impacts the physical and psychological health of users, how it kills, what are the laws governing tobacco use in India; the motive behind pictorial warnings on tobacco packs; the adverse effects of smokeless tobacco like gutka, and the best ways quitting tobacco - is ready for circulation to all the CBSE, ICSE and state board schools.

The manual, developed by the Ministry of Health, also carries chapters for parents who tend to affect their children's health by smoking in their presence. The chapter is named, "Effects of second-hand smoke and what the parents need to do" and comprises joint tasks with children.

Interestingly, the Ministry has said in the manual that those instructing students in the anti-tobacco curricula should themselves be non-smokers and non-tobacco users. Asked how they would ensure this requirement, a health ministry official said, "We expect the schools to respect the contents of the manual considering we and the school authorities have a shared objective — that of reversing the alarming trend of increasing tobacco use among our students." The manual would be included in the school system under the ongoing School Health Programme, currently underway in 27 states.

It is inspired by the growing evidence of more and more students becoming regular tobacco users. The latest Global Tobacco Youth Survey for India reveals a rise in the number of tobacco-addicted students from 13.7 per cent in 2006 to 14.7 per cent now.

The addiction has been reported for both smoking (cigarettes and bidis) and smokeless (gutka, areca nut, khaini, zarda) forms of tobacco, with the prevalence of smoking among boys being three times higher than that among girls, who are more addicted to smokeless tobacco forms.

Moreover, the percentage of students who initiated smoking before the age of 10 years has been increasing, much to the discomfort of policy planners. It was 26 in 2006 and is 45.4 per cent now. The percentage of boys exposed to second-hand smoke is 29.3 per cent while that of girls is 22.4.

The findings of the Youth Survey were most recently corroborated by those from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey which showed that boys aged 15 to 24 years were smoking 5 cigarettes a day while girls of that age were smoking 9 sticks a day. That means girl students in India are more nicotine dependent than boys though the average tobacco use continues to be higher for the boys.

Source: 12 February 2011/New Delhi/[The Tribune](#)

HC: Use of contributions to promote education entitled to I-T benefits

The Delhi high court has ruled that the use of contributions by educational institutions to promote the cause of education without any profit motive would enable them to claim the benefit of deduction under the provision of the Income Tax Act.

"In our opinion, section 10 (22) of the IT Act should not be given a restrictive meaning and so long as the income is used for fulfilling educational purpose, the exemption should be available," ruled a high court bench. The court rejected the plea of the Revenue Department which had said that if the donations received by the educational institutes are not voluntary, then the dominant intent is to earn the profit.

Merely, non-distribution of such contributions to the members of the institutes or use of such amount for the educational activities would not be sufficient to claim

exemption under section 10 (22) of the Act of 1961, the department had said.

The court, however, said: "It cannot be lost sight of that if an institution has to expand, additional infrastructure has to be created, quality education has to be imparted, all these activities require funds. There may be an original corpus of the society but thereafter the corpus for such activity can be created only through voluntary donations either from any philanthropist or through collection of funds in the process of admission."

The court said: "We are not concerned with the morality of the issue while deciding whether exemption has to be granted under section 10 (22) of the IT Act as all that is required is the absence of profit motive." The department had denied the exemption claimed by the assessee, Shanti Devi Progressive Educational Society for assessment year of 1993-94.

The assessing officer had zeroed in on three components of the school— the admission fee of Rs 7, 12, 000, the corpus fund of Rs 17,24,085 and the loan from the parents of the students amounting to Rs 10,85,000. It were treated by the department as the income of the assessee. Aggrieved, the school had approached the CIT (A).

It dismissed the appeal. The assessee then filed appeal before the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT). There were difference of opinion among the two members of the quasi-judicial body. Then the matter was referred to the third member of the ITAT. The tribunal then in its majority order had ruled in favour of the assessee. Aggrieved, the Revenue Department had come to the high court.

Source: 14 February 2011/New Delhi/[The Economic Times](#)

Revamp of B-school norms planned

The basics a teacher for 15 students and the quantum of consultancy work will no longer be enough for a technical college. If B-schools want their accreditation renewed, they will have to look into the qualitative inputs from teachers.

Under a new proposal, the [National Board of Accreditation](#) (NBA) is planning to look into this aspect before assessing the education programme.

NBA chairman B C Mazumdar said, "The quality of teachers, their academic leadership, experience and interpersonal skills will matter. We will consider the outcome of their work and whether it is adding value."

Earlier the NBA was under the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), recently it was converted into an autonomous body as per the mandate of the Washington Accord. While accreditation programmes will still be voluntary, the team has designed a new set of processes. Members visited NITIE at Powai to discuss the preliminary draft with various academic stakeholders in western India.

M A Khan, member of the management accreditation and evaluation committee, said, that for the first time different

parameters were drawn up for business management courses. Earlier NBA used a common scale for engineering and other technical programmes. "The new process will be in line with the standards set by international bodies like EQUIS, ACBSP, AMBA, AACSB (all international accreditation accrediting bodies)," said Khan.

NBA member-secretary Dinesh Paliwal added, "We will discuss the draft with the industry too. Their views are equally important."

Colleges are expected to prepare a self-assessment report and apply for accreditation. An expert committee will visit the institute and send observations to the NBA; the executive council of the body will finally decide on granting accreditation to the course.

The institutes have an option of filing an appeal against the NBA's accreditation. "If a course gets 60%, it will be accredited for two years; if it scores above 75%, it will be accredited for five years," added Mazumdar.

Mazumdar observed that a trust enters into the education sector to start one college. Later it invests the money earned into expansion and starts offering several new educational courses and sets up multiple colleges. Within a few years it is transformed into a massive educational empire. "But it's time we start investing into quality," he said.

Mazumdar observed that a trust enters the education sector to start one college and then invests the money earned into expansion and soon starts offering several new courses and sets up multiple colleges. Within years it is transformed into an educational empire. "But it's time we start investing into quality. Let's think differently have just one college. But make it the best one."

Source: 13 February 2011/Mumbai/[The Times of India](#)

Kerala boards students groan as World Cup nears

How does it feel to have the entire universe conspire against you? For an answer, ask any Class 10 or 12 student in Kerala who will have to miss the cricket World Cup as the dates overlap with the state and central board exams.

"My parents have declared that there will be no matches for me. They are getting ready to pack the TV into a box and it will be opened only after my exams are over. They have decided to take leave alternatively during my exams," rues J. Ashwin, a Class 12 student here.

But not everyone is giving up without a fight. Class 10 student Allan Varghese has his battle plan ready.

"Me and my parents have worked out a plan. They have agreed to allow me to watch a bit of the live matches. I have told them that only study and no leisure will not be good for me. Watching TV, especially cricket, will ease my exam tension," he said.

The much-awaited cricketing extravaganza begins on Feb 19 and continues till April 2. Being hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, cricket fans are in for a treat spread over 49 one-day matches. Fans, except these students, that is.

Beginning March, hundreds of thousands of Class 10 and 12 students of state boards as well as the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) and Indian School Certificate (ISC) will appear for their make or break board exams.

One can almost hear their collective wail, especially as parents in the state are known to put a lot of stress on academics.

An estimated 1.2 million students are set to appear for the Kerala board exams. The parents and teachers, meanwhile, are in no mood to relent.

"In no way can the students afford to take exams in a relaxed manner because it could well alter the course of their future. Parents are in the best position to guide their children in a proper manner during this period," K. Varghese, principal of a premier school here, said.

The situation for Class 12 students, in fact, is Shakespearean in its tragedy. No sooner have they done with board exam than they will have to face gruelling entrance exams for various professional courses like engineering and medicine.

"Our son will have to be mentally prepared that he will not be given permission to watch TV because World Cups will come and go, but entrance exams are serious business where one mark less means hundreds of ranks behind," said a doctor mother in Kochi.

Chacko Mathew, a farmer whose son is appearing for his Class 10 exams, is not worried at all. Why? Because he cannot afford a dish TV connection, and his local cable does not air pay channels!

"In a way, it is a relief for us because I am told that barring India matches, nothing else will be relayed on the national network. So I have made it clear to my son that he will be given time to watch only the highlights of India's matches.

"He will be free on the 26th of next month and can watch the semi-finals and final and a portion of one quarter final match which happens on the day his exam gets over," said Mathew.

Source: 15 February 2011/Thiruvananthapuram/[IANS-Sify News](#)

BITS Pilani Signs MoU With Indian Army

Birla Institute of Technology (BITS) Pilani has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army under 'Project Samarth' in order to provide higher technical education to service personnel. As per sources, under the programme army will sponsor its serving personnel for on-campus and off-campus educational

programmes at a 'Centre of Excellence' set up in collaboration by the Army and BITS, Pilani.

According to the statement issued by an Defence Ministry official, besides, promoting exchange of information on educational programmes, the Centre would also promote research in areas of mutual interest like safety and security, information system, robotics, material, pharmacy, psychology and communication studies. He also added that as a part of the MoU, faculty members and students from BITS would also visit and spend time at the army establishment to work on live projects.

BITS has campuses at Pilani in Rajasthan, Goa, Hyderabad and Dubai. In collaboration with the Army, it would also identify off-campus 'Work Integrated Learning' programmes in order to offer bachelor and master degrees in different streams to the service personnel. Professor B N Jain, Vice-Chancellor, BITS Pilani has said the signing of this MoU heralds a new beginning in the history of their institution, as they partner with the Indian Army offering our resources, programme and services.

Source: 15 February 2011/New Delhi/[Highereducation](#)

CBSE announces promotion policy for Class 9 students

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced its promotion policy for students of Class 9 this year. In a circular addressed to school principals, the CBSE has spelt out various points to be kept in mind while assessing a child under the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) system for promotion.

The year-end subject wise grades of a student in Class 9 are to be calculated on the basis of performance in all formative assessments and summative assessments in scholastic as well co-scholastic areas. Total grade points earned by any student will be calculated by adding grade points for all co-scholastic areas. The grades obtained in different co-scholastic areas will be converted into grade points. The marking scheme in co-scholastic areas will be, in life skills A+ =5, A= 4, B+ = 3, B =2, C =1 and in all other co- scholastic areas A+= 3, A = 2, B =1.

The students who get total grade points in the range of 34-42, will be awarded the next higher grade in two subjects in scholastic areas and those who score in the range of 19-33, get the next higher grade in one subject in scholastic areas. If a student gets less than 19 total grade points in co-scholastic areas, the teacher write a separate remark for improvement but that should not affect the student's promotion to the next class.

The achievements of students who have won or participated in state, national and international level competitions by a body recognised by the state/central government /CBSE will be considered for co-scholastic grades.

For promotion to the next class, a student has to get a qualifying grade D or above in all subjects, excluding the

6th additional subject. A student getting E1 or E2 grade in scholastic areas in one or more subjects will have to improve his/her performance in one subsequent attempt to obtain qualifying Grade D in these subjects. If a student fails to obtain qualifying grade D in one or more subjects, even after adding grade points from co-scholastic areas and availing one improvement chance, he/she will be required to repeat the same class during the next academic year.

Source: 15 February 2011/New Delhi/[Hindustan Times](#)

For laterals, IIM pay packets take vertical route

IIMs across the country have reported up to a 25% increase in salaries offered to experienced professionals this year. The highest salary in the lateral placements process so far this year is Rs 70 lakh (\$150,000), offered to a student at the Indian Institute of Management , Kozhikode (IIM-K), by commodities trading company Olam International.

Olam has also offered this salary to students at IIM-Bangalore, IIM-Calcutta and the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT). In some cases, lateral placements, which mark the beginning of the placements process at IIMs every year, have also reported up to 75% increase in the number of offers this year, over 2010.

Although the older IIMs — including the top three of Ahmedabad , Bangalore and Calcutta — declined to share figures, the biggest gainers as of now appear to be the new institutes. IIM-K, for instance, has reported an increase of 20-25% in the average salary being offered by companies across sectors such as consulting, FMCG, financial services and IT.

The highest domestic package on offer is Rs 30 lakh, up from Rs 28 lakh last year, while the highest international package is Rs 70 lakh. Several firms such as Fujitsu, Lenovo, [Thomas Cook](#) , SunTec, EXL and the Manipal Group have offered senior managerial positions to candidates with as little as three years of experience.

“With the economy looking up, placement offers have been much better this year,” IIM-K Placements Committee Member Nikhil Rawat said. “Students have been able to secure profiles of their choice, and salaries have been significantly higher.” [ICICI Bank](#) and Deloitte Consulting have hired 16 students each from IIM-K this year, while Cognizant Business Consulting has picked up 13.

Deloitte’s Chief People Officer Dhananjay Bansod said the company is offering 10-15% higher salaries at the IIMs this year, which works out to anywhere between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 13 lakh. The firm is looking to increase its manpower to 15,000 this year, about 3,000 more than the March 2010 headcount. “We expect a growth rate of 15% in India this financial year,” he added.

“This year 85% of the companies will be hiring fresh, according to our survey. This means there is a renewed

competition amongst companies to get the best of talent from across institutes, on the back of a revived economy.

They have to even compete with international companies for candidates. It’s natural for them to offer competitive such salaries,” says Shamita Chatterjee, business leader, information products and solutions, Mercer India.

IIM-Indore has seen a 10-25% rise in salaries for experienced candidates this year, with pay packets ranging between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 25 lakh.

Consulting and IT have been major recruiters with firms such as Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, PwC, Cognizant Business Consulting, Infosys, Wipro Consulting, HCL and TCS picking up candidates. Besides these, companies such as [Reliance Power](#) , L&T, RIL and Adani Group have also recruited from IIM, Indore.

Salaries across IIMs had plunged by 25-30% after the global economic crisis hit the world in 2008-09. However, 2009-10 onwards, salaries started recovering by 10-20%.

At IIM-K, for instance, average salary in 2007-08 was Rs 14.83 lakh, which fell to Rs 10.19 lakh in 2008-09 and rose to about Rs 12 lakh in 2009-10.

IIM-Calcutta, which is just a month into the process, has already received 225 offers, including pre-placement ones. This is an increase of 75% from last year. “With more than 50 firms participating in the process this year, international companies such as Barclays, Olam International , McKinsey & Co, BCG, Bain & Co, AT Kearney, Google, Microsoft and Amazon have notched up an unprecedented number of hires.

Some of them had hired very few people, or given the institutes a complete miss during the slowdown,” said IIM-C External Relations Secretary Abhijeet Kamath.

IIM-Bangalore, with a batch size of 348, has already received 96 offers from 31 companies. IIM-B career development services head Sapna Agarwal cautioned that though the number of lateral offers is higher this time than during the corresponding period last year, this could also be because of a larger batch size.

Microsoft Chooses Everonn Education as MASP in India

Microsoft has been focused on skill development and initiatives towards increasing employability in India. One such initiative is the Microsoft IT Academy programme. This is a platform for educators and students to learn and get certified on Microsoft technologies. Microsoft has chosen Everonn Education Limited, the largest VSAT education network in the world, as the Microsoft Academy Service Partner (MASP) for the country.

As a MASP, Everonn will engage with Microsoft IT Academy colleges to help maximize IT Academy programme benefits. This includes, training their students using Microsoft official curriculum, in-campus certified trainers, onsite testing and certification amongst others.

Through this partnership, the combined objective is to train and certify over 300,000 students in 3 years.

Everonn has been a Certified Partner for Learning Solutions (CPLS) for Microsoft for 3 years, and with this agreement, the partnership becomes a more strategic one. The MASP perfectly gels with the Everonn's basket of offerings across higher education, as well as the K-12 segments. Everonn plans to bring out a maximum number of certified IT professionals through this programme, to improve the employable work force availability in the country and ultimately enhance the skill sets of the upcoming talent pool to be able to face increasing global challenges.

Announcing the tie-up, Ms. Susha John, Director of Everonn Education, said, "It is a great honour for us. As the education sector in India witnesses a boom, the involvement of global majors like Microsoft is extremely important to enhance the service levels to ensure that the country is not left behind. Everonn crosses yet another major milestone with this tie-up with Microsoft in our pursuit towards excellence as provider of education solutions."

Ms. Irina Ghose, Director - Education, Microsoft India, said, "We are very happy to take the partnership with Everonn to the next level. We are highly impressed with the passion, dedication and the missionary zeal with which Team Everonn functions; and we are confident that as an MASP, Everonn will scale new peaks."

The stock closed the day at Rs.545.45, up by Rs.9.50 or 1.77%. The stock hit an intraday high of Rs.559.90 and low of Rs.533.40. The total traded quantity was 2.31 lakhs compared to 2 week average of 2.98 lakhs.

Source: [Equity Bulls](#)

Laureate Hospitality Education targets over 350 Indian students annually in the next five year

Laureate Hospitality Education (LHE), which runs hospitality schools across Switzerland, Spain, China, Australia and the US targets to receive over 350 students annually from India in the next five years. Michael Huckaby, Senior Vice President, Global Marketing & Admissions, Laureate Hospitality Education and Design said, "We receive 100 students from India annually at our institutes in Switzerland, 40 students in Australia, 20 in the US and five in Spain. In the next five years, we expect 350-400 students from India across our institutes."

The LHE schools offer a broad range of undergraduate, postgraduate and master programmes in all sectors of the hospitality industry. All Laureate Hospitality Institutions offers hands on learning, theory as well as professional internships throughout the world.

The major advantage of the LHE schools is that student can opt for international transfer possibility. "For instance students can start their education in Switzerland and then move to Australia or the US for one or two semesters. In

addition, students are able to explore the world during their internships as our institutions have contacts with over 15,000 hiring managers in more than 75 countries. On an average, each student receives three job offers after completing graduation. Over 90 per cent of our students have an employment contract signed within three months after graduation," explained Huckaby.

"The Indian hospitality industry is growing exponentially and is expected to create exciting career opportunities for students across various segments of the industry including hotels, restaurants, transportation, entertainment, spas, corporate offices, hospitals, sports, conferences and many more," said Huckaby.

LHE is a global group of institutions that provides hospitality, tourism, event, sport and entertainment management education to students from over 100 countries. It has eight institutions in five countries across the four continents. The schools are Glion Institute of Higher Education in Switzerland; Les Roches International School of Hotel Management in Switzerland; Les Roches International School of Hotel Management in Spain; Les Roches Gruyère University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland; Les Roches Jin Jiang International Hotel Management College, Shanghai in China; Kendall College, Chicago in the US; Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School and Australian International Hotel School in Australia.

Source: Saturday, February 19, 2011, [Hospitalitybizindia](#)

Dreaming of BE? Score more in PU

Starting this year, the minimum eligibility for a four-year engineering course will be 50% in II PU with Physics and Maths as compulsory subjects, along with Chemistry or Biotechnology or Biology. Last year, the eligibility cut-off was 45%. According to the 2011 approval manual of the All-India Council for Technical Education, students who have opted for information science and computer science will not be eligible for BE programmes.

The sudden move of the apex regulator is likely to spur a protest from BE aspirants who were not informed of the changes well in time. The cut-off for reserved category candidates, too, has been revised from 40% to 45%.

Karnataka has decided to implement the revised eligibility criteria starting with the [Common](#) Entrance Test (CET) 2011 scheduled for April 27 and 28. Releasing the itinerary for admission to professional colleges here on Friday, higher education minister [V S Acharya](#) said candidates have to appear for the National Aptitude Test in Architecture, conducted by the Council of Architecture, to be eligible for the five-year B.Arch course.

"Candidates can have up to three attempts at the exam and the best of three will be considered at the time of deciding eligibility. [NATA score](#) will be added to PU marks to draw up the merit list. Minimum eligibility will be 40%," Acharya said.

No hike in cet application fee

There will be no increase in the CET application fee this year. For general category students, the CET brochure will cost Rs 650. SC/ST candidates will shell out Rs 500, while those applying directly to the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) will pay Rs 750 (including postal charges). Sale of applications will start from March 5. April 5 will be the last date to receive applications.

Counselling in more cities

KEA has extended seat-selection process to two more cities -- Belgaum and Chitradurga -- this year. Counselling will start on June 2. KEA exam results are likely to be announced on May 25. Like last year, counselling will be held in [Bangalore](#), Gulbarga, Hubli, Shimoga and Mangalore.

Source: Saturday, February 19, 2011/[The Times of India](#)

Everonn Edu to earn Rs 40-50cr from Microsoft tie-up

Susha John, Co-Founder Director, Everonn Education in an interview with CNBC TV-18's Anuj Singhal and Latha Venkatesh said, "This partnership with Microsoft is a unique one and is specifically for the academia. In this partnership, we take these Microsoft certified courses directly to the colleges, thereby, increasing the employability of the students."

The company expects to fetch around Rs 40-50 crore from this unique academia tie-up in the next few years, she added.

Below is the verbatim transcript of the interview. Also watch the accompanying video.

Q: *What will you be doing, will you be teaching the academic courses to various entities, how much money do you make in that case?*

A: This partnership with Microsoft is a unique one and is specifically for the academia. This is the reason why it is called the Microsoft Academy Service Partner. In this partnership, we take these Microsoft certified courses directly to the colleges thereby increasing the employability of the students.

As you are aware the employment skill level for students coming out either of engineering colleges are only about 26%. These kind of courses, which we will deliver to the students while they are in college will make them industry ready as soon as they pass out of college.

Q: *The point is you make money per student, is that the way it works?*

A: Yes, we make money per student. In certain cases, it is just the college, which pays for it. So, the money we would be making will be about Rs 40-50 crore within the next few years.

Q: *It is a three-year contract, so this Rs 40-50 crore – will it be evenly spread or will it be backended, how will this be split?*

A: Initially, it will be a little less and then it will keep increasing every year. So it is not evenly in each year.

Source: Thursday, Feb 17, 2011/[Money control](#)

Nod to foreign tech schools

India's technical education regulator has come up with a policy that allows foreign institutions to set up campuses anywhere in the country even before a law to allow them entry has been enacted.

The new AICTE provisions, however, pack stiffer conditions that include registration as not-for-profit organisations and deny foreign institutes permission to offer their own degrees.

The new norms, which replace a 2003 policy, come at a time a proposed law on entry of foreign education providers is pending with a parliamentary committee.

Under the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation and Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010 — which the government introduced in the Lok Sabha last May — foreign institutes can offer their own degrees.

They also don't need to register as a society or a trust or Section 25 company as the revised AICTE policy mandates.

Although the foreign education law is yet to be enacted, sources said the revised AICTE norms would allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India.

"The revised policy gives a roadmap for enhancing collaboration between Indian and foreign institutions in teaching and research. It also lays down guidelines for foreign institutions to set up campuses in India. Foreign institutions can set up campuses after being registered as a society or trust or a Section 25 company," a top source in the All India Council for Technical Education told *The Telegraph*.

Societies, trusts and companies registered under Section 25 of the Company's Act, 1956, are not-for-profit institutions. They can generate surplus from education activities but have to plough back the profit for the growth of the institution.

After being registered as a society or trust or a Section 25 company, a foreign institution will have to submit a detailed proposal for approval from the AICTE to run a course. The institute needs to have the required land in its lawful possession before applying.

Another condition is foreign institutes have to be affiliated to an Indian university and offer degrees of the university they are affiliated to.

Under the proposed foreign education bill, foreign institutes will not have to get affiliated to any Indian university and can offer their own courses.

An AICTE official said the revised norms were too tough. "It may not be easy for a foreign educational institute to get registered as a society, trust or a Section 25 company. The foreign ministry will have to allow the foreign institutes to be registered as a society, trust or a Section 25 company."

Asked about the revised policy, George Joseph, assistant secretary for international affairs at Yale University, said it was not immediately relevant to the US institute. "Yale has no plans to open a campus or to offer degrees in India. As such, the policy is not immediately relevant to our institution," he said in an email.

An AICTE official said the new norms were clearer than the 2003 policy, which said foreign institutes could operate and collaborate with Indian institutes but did not clarify how. "The original policy did not have clarity on many things, including eligibility of institutions for such partnerships. That is why the response from foreign institutions for collaboration has been poor."

Source: New Delhi, Feb. 17/[The Telegraph](#)

India Infoline launches financial literacy programme

Brokerage firm India Infoline (IIFL) on Friday said it has launched a financial education and awareness initiative called FLAME (Financial Literacy Agenda for Mass Empowerment), with an aim to improve financial literacy across over 1,000 cities in India.

The company has a budget of Rs 25 crore for its initiative towards the corporate social responsibility, IIFL said in a statement.

"We shall leverage our network of 3,000 locations, 15,000 employees and 1 million customers across the country to reach out to small towns as well as under-privileged sections of the society. We have set aside a budget of Rs 25 crore, in addition to efforts of a crack team of 500 from the company," IIFL Chairman Mr Nirmal Jain said.

The company's programme will comprise a mass media campaign, an online portal, a helpline, ground level financial awareness workshops, connecting with students at B-schools, books and training via expert sessions on financial literacy, the statement added.

FLAME was launched by Reserve Bank of India's Deputy Governor Mr K C Chakrabarty and HDFC Chairman Mr Deepak Parekh.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr Parekh said "India cannot grow at a sustained high pace without greater financial inclusion and hence a significant investment in financial literacy is no longer a policy option, but a compulsion."

As a part of this new initiative, IIFL will setup a helpline to answer queries pertaining to financial services, which will be manned by the company's trained professionals, the statement said.

Source: February 18, 2011/[The Hindu Business Line](#)

India won't outpace China without a few miracles

Several recent economic reports glowingly predict that by 2013-15, India will start outpacing China's stunning annual GDP growth rate of 8.5-9.5%. A number of trends in India lead to this conclusion, including a young, increasingly educated labor force, relatively few retired people to care for, India's high savings rate, the massive structural reforms the Indian government continues to undertake, and increased infrastructure spending.

The UN estimates that India's age dependency ratio (the number of working age people supporting children and the elderly) will improve substantially, from 55.6% in 2010 to 47.2% in 2025. China, by contrast, has already reaped the benefit of a large working age population, which will soon begin to age and decline: its dependency ratio will rise from 39.1% in 2010 to 45.8% in 2025. India alone will contribute 26% of the total rise in the world's entire working age population over the next 10 years, thus -- the argument goes -- adding a large number of skilled workers, who will have larger savings, which can in turn be invested in their economy.

India will only be able to take advantage of this "demographic dividend," however, if it can educate its people, move more quickly on long-delayed business reforms, and tackle the environmental consequences of an even larger population.

The Indian government has taken promising steps to improve its inadequate education system, but an enormous amount of work remains. Only 74% of Indian men and 48% of Indian women are literate, compared to 96% (men) and 88% (women) in China. India's much-touted knowledge economy employs only about 2.23 million Indians out of a 750 million strong working population.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government is aware of these deficiencies and has started to implement a series of reforms, including setting aside \$60 billion over the next several years to augment the primary education system, tabling bills that allow foreign education providers to operate in India, and others that will facilitate private sector investment in Indian education. Thanks to these reforms, the number of children out of school has dropped from 18 million in 2000 to 5.6 million in 2005, and dropout ratios in primary schools have improved as well.

Obstacles to growth

Even with these promising developments, however, the challenges ahead are daunting: at present, only 12% of India's citizens enter higher education, and the government hopes to increase this to 21% by 2017. The Indian Institutes of Technology -- a group of universities focused

on engineering and technology -- are world-renowned, but offer only a miniscule 7,000 places to students each year. The Indian government has identified a skills gap in between 240 -- 250 million persons in the next ten years. Current vocational and technical training schools unfortunately only have the capacity to absorb 1.1 million students a year. Kapil Sibal, the talented and energetic Minister for Human Resource Development has a herculean task ahead.

Indian corporate sector reforms are also only half complete. Despite Prime Minister Singh's admirable efforts, the legendary "license raj" -- the elaborate red tape required to set up and run businesses in India -- is still much in evidence. Again, the government has taken some steps in the right direction: it is actively working to simplify the byzantine tax code, and many new sectors have been opened to foreign direct investment. In spite of these promising steps, India still ranks a low 134 out of 183 countries on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. For example, the per capita cost of setting up a warehouse in India -- which involves the acquisition of permits and licenses as well as obtaining necessary utilities connections -- is slightly more than four times higher than in China.

Indians are increasingly frustrated at the slow pace of reforms, which the Congress-led government has now promised for the past six years. Speeding up their pace is critical both to make local businesses more efficient, and attract foreign direct investment (which lags far behind foreign investment in China and sank by over 30% in 2010).

Finally, before we celebrate a "demographic dividend," can the Indian subcontinent (and the world) sustain 1.4 billion Indians? Calcutta's population is more than twice as dense as that of New York City. Food inflation currently plagues the Indian economy: onion and other vegetable prices (staples for most poor Indians) are up 71% since last year. Streamlining the agricultural supply chain can help to relieve immediate food shortages, but in the long run, environmental degradation will make it difficult to vastly increase crop yields.

Global warming and the "atmospheric brown cloud" -- a dense smog that permanently hangs over much of India from burning diesel, wood, and dung -- negatively impacts crop yields already. To compound the problem, India suffers from chronic electricity shortages of about 8%. And with a growing middle class buying more TVs, air conditioners and the like, the situation will only get worse. India is already the world's third largest-emitter of greenhouse gases, and that is with its current low per capita emissions rate. One American currently creates almost 13 times as much CO2 per year as one Indian. Combine a more carbon intensive, prosperous economy with a rapidly growing population, and the environmental problems India faces look even more overwhelming than its education and economic challenges.

As desirable as Indian economic growth is -- are India and the planet ready for 1.4 billion more prosperous Indians?

Source: February 18, 2011/ [Money.cnn](#)

Bridge gap between EWS & well-off, Sheila tells schools

NEW DELHI: Principals and teachers of nearly 100 schools in the city came together to discuss the 'emerging changes and challenges in education' at the 38th annual meet of National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) that began on Thursday at the India Islamic Centre. Chief minister Sheila Dikshit inaugurated the two-day conference while entrusting schools with the responsibility of bringing together children from different sections of the society.

Referring to the new right to education and its provision to implement 25% quota for the economically weaker section in all schools, Dikshit said schools needed to bridge the gap between students belonging to the economically weaker section of the society and those from comparatively well-off families.

Professor Dinesh Singh, vice-chancellor of Delhi University, delivered the keynote address at the conference. He emphasized on the inclusion of technology in school education.

The chief minister and the vice-chancellor also felicitated Padmashree awardee, founder member of NPSC and chairperson of Springdales Education Society, Rajini Kumar, at the conference.

Source: Feb 18, 2011/[The Times of India](#)

Skipping Rote Memorization in Indian Schools

The Nagla elementary school in this north Indian town looks like many other rundown government schools. Sweater-clad children sit on burlap sheets laid in rows on cold concrete floors. Lunch is prepared out back on a fire of burning twigs and branches.

But the classrooms of Nagla are a laboratory for an educational approach unusual for an Indian public school. Rather than being drilled and tested on reproducing passages from textbooks, students write their own stories. And they pursue independent projects -- as when fifth-grade students recently interviewed organizers of religious festivals and then made written and oral presentations.

That might seem commonplace in American or European schools. But such activities are revolutionary in [India](#), where public school students have long been drilled on memorizing facts and regurgitating them in stressful year-end exams that many children fail.

Nagla and 1,500 other schools in this Indian state, Uttarakhand, are part of a five-year-old project to improve Indian primary education that is being paid for by one of the country's richest men, Azim H. Premji, chairman of the information technology giant [Wipro](#). Education experts at his Azim Premji Foundation are helping to train new

teachers and guide current teachers in overhauling the way students are taught and tested at government schools.

For Mr. Premji, 65, there can be no higher priority if India is to fulfill its potential as an emerging economic giant. Because the Indian population is so youthful — nearly 500 million people, or 45 percent of the country's total, are 19 or younger — improving the education system is one of the country's most pressing challenges.

“The bright students rise to the top, which they do anywhere in any system,” Mr. Premji said over lunch at Wipro's headquarters in Bangalore, 1,300 miles south of Uttarakhand. “The people who are underprivileged are not articulate, less self-confident, they slip further. They slip much further. You compound a problem of people who are handicapped socially.”

Outside of India, many may consider the country a wellspring of highly educated professionals, thanks to the many doctors and engineers who have moved to the West. And the legions of bright, English-speaking call-center employees may seem to represent, to many Western consumers, the cheerful voice of modern India.

But within India, there is widespread recognition that the country has not invested enough in education, especially at the primary and secondary levels.

In the last five years, government spending on education has risen sharply — to \$83 billion last year, up from less than half that level before. Schools now offer free lunches, which has helped raise enrollments to more than 90 percent of children.

But most Indian schools still perform poorly. Barely half of fifth-grade students can read simple texts in their language of study, according to a survey of 13,000 rural schools by Pratham, a nonprofit education group. And only about one-third of fifth graders can perform simple division problems in arithmetic. Most students drop out before they reach the 10th grade.

Those statistics stand in stark contrast to China, where a government focus on education has achieved a literacy rate of 94 percent of the population, compared with 64 percent in India.

Mr. Premji said he hoped his foundation would eventually make a difference for tens of millions of children by focusing on critical educational areas like exams, curriculum and teacher training. He said he wanted to reach many more children than he could by opening private schools — the approach taken by many other wealthy Indians.

Mr. Premji, whose total wealth Forbes magazine has put at \$18 billion, recently gave the foundation \$2 billion worth of shares in his company. And he said that he expected to give more in the future.

Those newly donated shares are being used to start an education-focused university in Bangalore and to expand and spread programs like the one here in Uttarakhand and a handful of other places to reach 50 of India's 626 school districts.

The effort's size and scope is unprecedented for a private initiative in India, philanthropy experts say. Even though India's recent rapid growth has helped dozens of tycoons acquire billions of dollars in wealth, few have pledged such a large sum to a social cause.

“This has never been attempted before, either by a foundation or a for-profit group,” said Jayant Sinha, who heads the Indian office of Omidyar Network, the philanthropic investment firm set up by the [eBay](#) founder Pierre Omidyar.

Although the results in Uttarakhand are promising, they also suggest that progress will be slow. Average test scores in one of the two districts where the foundation operates climbed to 54 percent in 2008, up from 37.4 percent two years earlier. (A passing mark is 33 percent or higher.) Still, only 20 of the 1,500 schools that the foundation works with in Uttarakhand have managed to reach a basic standard of learning as determined by competence tests, enrollment and attendance. Nagla is not one of the 20.

“We are working with the kids who were neglected before,” said D. N. Bhatt, a district education coordinator for the Uttarakhand state government. “You won't see the impact right away.”

The Premji Foundation helps schools in states where the government has invited its participation — a choice that some educational experts criticize because it seems to ignore fast-growing private schools that teach about a quarter of the country's students, including many of India's poor.

Narayana Murthy, a friend of Mr. Premji and chairman of [Infosys](#), a company that competes with Wipro, said he admired the Premji Foundation's work but worried it would be undermined by the way India administers its schools.

“While I salute Azim for what he is doing,” Mr. Murthy said, “in order to reap the dividends of that munificence and good work, we have to improve our governance.”

Mr. Premji says his foundation would be willing to work with private schools. But he argues that government schools need help more because they are often the last or only resort for India's poorest and least educated families.

Mr. Premji, whose bright white hair distinguishes him in a crowd, comes from a relatively privileged background. He studied at a Jesuit school, St. Mary's, in Mumbai and earned an electrical engineering degree at Stanford.

At 21, when his father died, Mr. Premji took over his family's cooking oil business, then known as Western Indian Vegetable Product. He steered the company into information technology and Wipro — whose services

include writing software and managing computer systems — now employs more than 100,000 people. He remains Wipro's largest shareholder.

While the foundation has been welcomed by government officials in many places, the schools in Uttarakhand provide a glimpse of the challenges it faces.

After visitors left a classroom at Nagla school, an instructor began leading more than 50 fifth-grade students in a purely rote English lesson, instructing the students to repeat simple phrases: Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening. Good night. The children loudly chanted them back in unison.

Another teacher later explained that the instructor was one of two "community teachers" — local women hired by a shopkeeper to help the understaffed school. Although under government rules Nagla should have nine trained teachers for its 340 students, it has only four.

Underfunding is pervasive in the district. But so are glimmers of the educational benefits that might come through efforts like the Premji Foundation's.

Surjeet Chakrovarty, now a 15-year-old secondary school student, is a graduate of Nagla and still visits his old school regularly. The son of a widower who is a sweeper at a local university, Surjeet aspires to become a poet and songwriter — something he attributes to the encouragement of his former teachers at Nagla.

"My teachers here gave me so much motivation to write," he said.

One of those Nagla teachers, Pradeep Pandey, shared credit with the Premji Foundation, and its assistance in developing new written and oral tests.

"Before, we had a clear idea of the answers and the child had to repeat exactly what we had in mind," Mr. Pandey said. "We can't keep doing what we did in the past, and pass them without letting them learn anything."

Source: Feb 17, 2011/[NYTimes](#)

Delhi HC issues notice to schools for violating RTE admission norms

The Delhi High Court today issued notices to six unaided private schools in the Capital for violation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and directed the Director of Education to hold inquiry into the allegations made by a student of the economically weaker section (EWS).

Notices were issued to Father Agnel School, St Anthony Senior Secondary School, Manav Bharati India International School, Delhi Police Public School, Apeejay School and Laxman Public School.

Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw also directed the Director of Education to submit report on March 11, the next date of hearing.

Kanishka, a student, had filed petition seeking quashing of the draw of lots conducted by these schools as no mandatory seats were reserved for EWS students like her.

She also sought directions to schools for conducting fresh draw of lots for admissions, including seats for EWS students.

Her counsel Ashok Agarwal contended that being unaided, private schools under clause (iv) of section 2(d) of RTE Act, 2009 were obliged to provide 25 per cent to children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in nursery class.

The OBC petitioner belongs to the disadvantaged group within the meaning of section 2(d) of RTE Act, 2009 and therefore, entitled to be considered by schools under 25 per cent quota, he added.

Source: United News of India / February 18, 2011 / [netindia](#)

Indian varsities fuel Mauritius' 'knowledge hub' dream

Private Indian universities setting up campuses in Mauritius are helping the island nation off the African coast realise its vision of transforming into a knowledge hub.

Two of the largest private universities in India, the DY Patil Medical College and Amity University, are in the process of setting up their campuses in Mauritius. The JSS Mahavidyapeetha (JSSMVP), a Karnataka-based educational foundation, established the JSS Academy of Technical Education in Mauritius in 2006.

As private universities in India seek to expand to foreign shores, Mauritius is an obvious choice for its proactive plans for expanding higher education in the country.

The government in the Indian Ocean island nation, with a population of 1.3 million, has placed a strong focus on education. Education is free till the college level and is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 12 years.

Amity University's director of international affairs Gen R.K. Dhawan told IANS: 'The Mauritius government has very good policies on higher education. It is the objective of the Mauritius leadership to have one graduate in every family by 2020. With this type of commitment to education, the policy is very supportive of higher education.'

By attracting foreign universities to open new campuses in Mauritius, the government plans to increase the enrolment in tertiary education within the country as well as attract foreign students. The presence of large, dynamic private universities like Amity and DY Patil will help bring in foreign students from African countries as also other parts of the world. This would help to make Mauritius a knowledge hub in the African region.

All three educational groups are among the larger private educational institutions in India. The DY Patil Group has three deemed universities in India, at Navi Mumbai, Pune and Kolhapur. A fast-growing university, Amity has the

experience of opening campuses in Dubai, Singapore, Britain and the US.

JSS Academy is located in a sprawling eight-acre campus in Bonne Terre, Vocoas, and aims to be the centre of excellence in technical education in the region.

Amity will begin enrolment for its campus in Mauritius this year. The Amity campus in the Ebene area will eventually offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the fields of management, finance, hospitality and tourism, engineering and sciences, amongst others.

The DY Patil post-graduate school of medicine was started in 2009 at Quatre-Bornes, with 28 local and foreign students. It is partnered with the University of Technology, Mauritius, (UTM) and the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital for clinical training of the students. The medical college offers specialties such as general surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, orthopaedics, general medicine, paediatrics, dermatology and anaesthesiology.

The number of African students taking admission in Indian educational institutions too has been showing a steady increase in the past few years. 'The main reasons for choosing India is the quality education at relatively lower costs as compared to other countries and a familiar educational system,' explained Usha Negi of the Association of Indian Universities.

The maximum number of students from Africa studying in India are from Ethiopia, followed by Kenya, Sudan, Mauritius and Tanzania. Under a hundred students each come from Eritrea and Somalia, while a few of them come from Ivory Coast, Lesotho and Liberia. According to some unofficial estimates, around 35,000 African students are enrolled in Indian institutions of higher learning.

The Mauritius government believes that good educational facilities would make Mauritius a preferred choice for the thousands of African students who go abroad to study. Minister Rajesh Jeetah of the new ministry of tertiary education, science, research and technology has talked of creating 'an education hub in Mauritius where 100,000 foreign students can come to study.'

Mauritius has actively sought foreign investment in higher education by offering attractive investment opportunities in the education sector in line with the rapidly growing education demands in the region and in Mauritius. Mauritius expects significant growth in sectors such as communication technology, outsourcing, hospitality, financial services and healthcare.

Source: Feb 17 (IANS)/Sify.com

Govt. should focus on investment in education

Infosys CEO Kris Gopalakrishnan today pitched for simplifying service tax and income tax procedures and hoped investment in education, infrastructure development and improving e-governance will get focus in Budget 2011-12.

"My request to the government is to focus on development of infrastructure, including education and improvement of governance in the coming budget," Gopalakrishnan said at the launch of its second technopark campus in the city.

He added the service tax and income tax problems faced by companies should also be resolved by making processes simpler, so that business friction was reduced.

The Infosys CEO said India would become the important centre for IT services in the next five to ten years.

"We have a growing pool of engineering talent. If ten years ago, we had four lakh engineers coming out annually, the number now is 14 lakh," he said.

Source: Thursday, 17 February 2011(PTI)/Silicon.India

Fine arts teaching is lagging in universities'

With very little attention given to arts education in Indian universities, the country's classical art forms could end up as the biggest casualty, according to experts.

Even while India boasts of a magnificent variety of classical dance forms, they are under threat of Western dance invasion as children are taking to salsa, hip hop and other dances 'that look like mass drill on stage', said one of the participants at the National Conference on Relevance of Fine Art Education in 21st Century held here.

The conference called for standardising course contents and teaching methods to ensure that 'our achievements and developments in music, arts and other forms are not out of sync with global demands.'

Traditional systems need to be integrated with modern technological inputs, the delegates said.

The event, organised by Agra's Kirti Kala Sansthan and supported by the union ministry of human resource development, focussed on the state of arts education in Indian universities in a globalised scenario.

The delegates felt that not enough was being done and there was a definite lack of will at all levels to upgrade and modify age-old teaching methods and syllabi.

'While other disciplines were receiving state patronage and support of all kinds, music and fine arts departments in most universities lagged behind and were treated like backwaters,' Lovely Sharma, convener of the conference, told IANS.

Sharma is an internationally acclaimed sitarist and music therapist and author of a dozen books.

She said that the quantity of output was increasing at the cost of quality and there was general deterioration in standards.

A large number of fine arts teachers and artistes from Chennai, Bangalore, Mysore, Darbhanga, Indore, Udaipur, Kanpur, Patna and dozens of other universities participated in the conference.

According to Jyoti, a dance teacher from the Central Hindi Institute, 'Indian classical dance forms are under threat from Western dance invasion. Children are taking to Salsa, hip-hop and other variants including what looks like mass drill exercises on the stage.'

Indu Joshi, another participant, said in order to make fine arts teaching relevant in a globalised world, it was necessary to update and adapt course contents with use of modern pedagogical tools and equipment, and integration of information and communication technology to facilitate students market their art works.

Ritambhara Ranawat of Udaipur felt that the syllabus of fine arts all over India definitely needed drastic changes.

'An aptitude test must be made compulsory to ensure that only those who had the required level of interest and passion got enrolled. The 21st century requires a broad spectrum approach to the relevance of fine arts in the micro and macro systems of our educational, social and cultural heritage,' said Ranawat.

Manisha Dohre of Agra College said a new framework was being constructed for the 'consumption and interpretation of fine arts. This has both a colonial legacy and a transnational future.'

Darbhangha's Lawanya Kirti Singh Kabya said the 'credit for establishing music in India as an independent discipline goes to Vishnu duo Pandit Vishnu Digambar Palushkar and Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, who held music is not only for recreation but is an art par excellence.'

Indira Agarwal of Aligarh said 'making students understand the grammar of visual language and making them appreciate its potential must definitely be one of the most important goals of an art academy.'

According to Sadhna Singh, 'the most basic requirement of art appreciation is the awakening of the observant eye to enable it to see differences in styles. Once the eye is trained, art appreciation becomes easier.'

'To achieve this, all attention must be diverted from the subject matter to the form. True appreciation of art is nothing but the discovery of how an artist expresses his ideal of beauty through his vision of form,' she said.

Baroda University's A.S. Pathan said the age-old guru-shishya parampara system was undergoing a change in view of new methodology of teaching and introduction of technology.

Mysore's Padmavati Narasimha discussed the relevance of Rasas with reference to contemporary music and dance.

Rohit from Chandigarh said music therapy is now gaining acceptance the world over after it has been proved to have beneficial effects on the state of health. Therefore there was a need to promote research and develop teaching modules on scientific lines.

Debasis Chakrobarty, secretary of the Kriti Kala Sansthan, said this conference proved a big success as the interaction and recommendations have helped draw up a general framework within which the fine arts education in the whole country must proceed.

'We will shortly be circulating our recommendations and perspectives on this important subject,' he said.

Source: Feb 17 (IANS)/Sify.com

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Geosciences need integration into secondary, tertiary education

Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari on Friday underlined the need to integrate geosciences into secondary and tertiary education.

Vice President Ansari said that the existing and developing geoscientific information and knowledge should be harmonised to enable better decision making regarding the exploitation of resources, ensuring environmental sustainability and better risk management, and bringing about the resultant wellbeing of all citizens."

"We need to develop more sophisticated geoscientific data generation and management systems, create and constantly deepen our pool of S and T manpower, and harness information technology to develop Geoinformatic applications capable of integrating multiple disciplines," he said after presenting the 'National Geoscience Awards-2009' at a function here.

The Vice President further said Geoscientists are critical for data collection, interpretation and policy formulation on mitigation and adaptation and for the larger goal of diversifying our energy portfolio.

"Geoscience should be central to our energy and climate change policies. We live in a world, which is moving towards reduction of our carbon footprint and leading to increased efficiency of energy production, utilisation and transmission," said Vice President Ansari.

"We need to enhance public recognition that earth processes need to be better understood for their links to a variety of natural hazards including earthquakes, cyclones, floods, landslides etc. Geoscientists can help us to monitor earth processes, undertake risk assessments and be better prepared for tackling natural, and even man-made, disasters," he added.

Vice President Ansari on the occasion presented lifetime achievement award to Professor Ashok Sahni for popularising science among school children.

Source: 4 February 2011/New Delhi/Sify news-ANI

Stay calm, manage time

With the Board examinations round the corner, those appearing for the examinations are a bundle of nerves. But

the key to overcome stress and tension in the crucial days before the examinations is to stay calm and manage time wisely, said principals. "Students should consolidate whatever they have

learnt and manage their time properly. I would advise students to make bullet points of whatever they have studied, so that they can revise the lessons quickly without having to go through the whole chapter," said Ameeta M Wattal, principal of Springdales School, Pusa Road.

Wattal also said that students should not start any new chapter. "Let go whatever you have not studied till now. There are lots of choices, so prepare the chapters that you have studied till now well," she said.

She also advised students to time themselves while answering questions. According to her, if they think they are running out of time, they should just answer the questions in points, and not whole sentences, which will fetch them some marks.

Studying with friends should be avoided now, she said. "This is just not recommended, as it ends up making the students tensed when they compare themselves with what their friends have studied," added Wattal.

Most principals also said taking break in between studies was very important. "Studying continuously for long hours does not help. Students should study for two hours and then take an hour-long break before resuming studies. This also helps them retain the lessons they learn better," said Madhulika Sen, principal of Tagore International School, Vasant Vihar.

"Relaxing is very important. Catching up on their favourite TV programmes, spending time with family or a brisk walk can relieve them of stress," she said.

Source: 8 February 2011/New Delhi/[Hindustan Times](#)

Evaluation scheme a social equaliser, says CBSE chief

Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) scheme is a social equaliser, wherein the CBSE is trying to ensure equal opportunity for all the students, said the CBSE Chairman Vineet Joshi. He was in Ludhiana today to attend interactive sessions with different schools.

When asked about the bias of the schools that "allocate streams" to the students in Class XI as per their grades achieved under CCE, he said all affiliated schools have been categorically asked to give preference to their students instead of admitting students with higher percentage from other schools.

An average student interested in opting for medical, non-medical or commerce streams in his own school will have the right to do so, as the CBSE has already given instruction for the same, clarified Vineet Joshi.

"We also ask the parents to give us a feedback so as to strengthen the CCE system. Also 2,000 school principals

and teachers from across the country have been trained to monitor the system," said Joshi.

The CBSE website has a chapter, "interact with the chairman" wherein parents of the school students from across the country have listed 8,000 queries in last one year and 6,500 have already been answered to, he said.

When asked about the criticism on the discontinuation of the Class X board examination, Vineet Joshi said, "The schools, teachers and the parents used to link everything with the board examinations thereby stalling every innovative move, as a result the students were the sufferers.

Thus, doing away with the board examinations had to be the first step towards academic evolution," he said.

Emphasising upon the other reforms implemented by the board, the chairman said the principals of the CBSE schools have been asked to give admission to the children with physical and mental disabilities under inclusive education programme.

On the "arbitrary fee hike" by some CBSE-affiliated schools in Ludhiana and the state, he said if the fee is increased without consulting the parents, people should forward a complaint against the school and the board will take action.

Source: 12 February 2011/Ludhiana/[The Tribune](#)

Educational institutes must lay the base for inclusive society: N. Ram

The foundations for an inclusive society, which presupposes a secular, democratic and progressive outlook, must be laid in schools, colleges and universities, Editor-in-Chief of *The Hindu*, N. Ram said here on Sunday.

Delivering the chief guest's address at the Eleventh Graduation Day of Bannariamman Institute of Technology (BIT) here, he reminded the youth that India was a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-political and multi-cultural society that required an inclusive approach for development.

Pointing out the danger to secularism and democracy from communalism and caste divisions, Mr. Ram said: "I have touched on the theme of social inclusiveness to remind you that young people who have stepped out of academic institutions to pursue a variety of careers cannot escape engagement with these social issues."

Stressing the need for more progress on the social justice front, he also cautioned that campaigns for this should not allow vested interests and backward-looking social forces to confuse the people.

Society too must invest wisely, cost-effectively and on enough scale in education. Otherwise, the comparative advantage the nation had now would erode quickly.

"This brings us to the heart of the educational challenge in India. It is, I believe, the challenge of striking a balance

between, or reconciling, two great objectives – the pursuit of quality and excellence on the one side, and, on the other, the imperative need to make education at all levels accessible in a progressive, modern sense,” he said.

Quality and accessibility, excellence and affordability, aiming high and throwing the doors wide open must not be seen as contradictory, conflicting goals, even if it was easier to reconcile these goals in principle than in practice.

“The tension between these two great goals defines the nature of all serious intellectual and cultural endeavours in a society that strives to excel while being non-elitist, truly democratic in a contemporary sense and just. Emphasise one objective too much, and the endeavour gets into trouble,” he said.

While talking of accessibility, Mr. Ram appreciated the efforts of BIT in providing quality higher education to students in a rural area.

Several factors went into achieving excellence in education. In addition to curriculum, teaching methods, quality and commitment of faculty, transparent admission system and quality of infrastructure, industry-institution linkage played a vital role.

Mr. Ram said research had found that contributions made to the development of the country's software industry and exports came from the burgeoning sector of private engineering colleges in the four southern States and Maharashtra.

He handed over degree certificates to the new graduates and certificates and medals to rank-holders and outstanding students.

Chairman of BIT S.V. Balasubramaniam exhorted the new graduates to set yearly goals and do stock-taking at the end of every year in order to excel in their career.

“Once out of college, you may not be accountable to others. But, be accountable to yourselves in order to succeed in what you do,” he said.

Governing Council member of BIT and Principal Adviser to Confederation of Indian Industry Y.S. Rajan also handed over degree certificates. Other members of the Council and members of the Bannariamman Educational Trust were present.

Source: 13 February 2011/[The Hindu](#)

RTE Rules to be notified in March, education secy tells NGOs

School education secretary D Jothi Jagarajan has informed a coalition of civil society organisations that the final Rules for the Right to Education Act will be notified in March.

According to a press release from Campaign Against Child Labour - Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (CACL - TN & PY), a five-member delegation met the secretary on Friday and

requested that the Rules be notified with immediate effect so that students could avail themselves of the benefits of the Act in the academic year beginning in June.

The delegation, including convenor P Joseph Victor Raj and former state convenor Virgil D'Sami expressed apprehension that the enforcement of the Act could be delayed due to a delay in the notification of rules or due to the announcement of the assembly elections and the Code of Conduct coming into effect.

Jagarajan said the Act was in effect since April 1, 2010 and all its provisions should be followed by schools. The state Rules would only include information on the authorities who would take action in case of violations. The Rules would be notified during the first week of March, the release added.

According to the terms of the Act, all schools should admit children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups to the extent of 25% in class I. No school should collect any capitation fee or subject the child or parents to any screening. No child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment.

Source: 15 February 2011/Chennai/[The Times of India](#)

Follow the rules

In order to bring about transparency and put an end to erratic capitation fees, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has decided to regulate post graduate diploma in management (PGDM) programmes in India. As per the new guidelines, the fee and curriculum would be decided by committees and councils of the respective state governments. In a move to standardise the admission criterion, selection of candidates will be made through common entrance tests such as CAT/MAT and other state-conducted examinations.

The regulations are likely to affect over 500 AICTE-approved institutions offering a one-year certificate/diploma programme in management. Says Prabhat Kumar Sahoo, regional director, AICTE, Western region, "There is no reason to think that the state government is taking over. They will just regulate the fees and the admission process to ensure transparency. Common admission tests demand a CAT high standard and that is good for students."

However, H Chaturvedi, alternate president, Education Promotion Society of India (EPSI) is of the contrary view. He says, "The AICTE regulations are likely to stifle management education at a time when it is heading towards globalisation. Also, the Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have already notified that a chunk of the students will be from the respective states."

Calling the proposed directives as regressive in nature, Pranabesh Ray, dean (academics), XLRI Jamshedpur, says, "There is a need to segregate the top-10 management institutions and give them the freedom to prove their autonomy. We have established ourselves as a brand. We will lose that once the admission is controlled by the state-government."

According to Bakul H Dholakia, former director, IIM-Ahmedabad, "Autonomy and quality go hand in hand." He adds that out of the 390 institutions that impart the PGDM course, more than half are misusing the power in the name of autonomy. However, he reiterated that a one-size-fits-all approach is unwarranted and the directive would damage the credibility of the institutions that have been doing a good job.

It is easier to monitor the progress once everything comes under a regulatory authority, but the quality of students remains a national concern. "It will probably be easier for students to focus on their institution of choice by restricting the number of entrance exams. Exams like CAT are recognised globally, so the selection process can be made more centralised. But the issue of fees can be debated upon as resources are needed to ensure quality faculty, exchange programmes, and modern infrastructure," says Devi Singh, director, IIM-Lucknow.

Shobha Mishra Ghosh, director, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), points out that any regulatory move should be facilitating in nature. "A fixed fee structure might restrict B-schools from providing adequate resources to students to maintain academic excellence."

With the institutions sceptical about the regulations, bodies like Association of Indian Management Schools (AIMS) and Education Promotion Society of India (EPSI) are ready to approach the Prime Minister to apprise him on the matter and win government support.

"If the matter is not resolved soon, we may resort to the legal route and approach the Supreme Court," Chaturvedi concludes.

Source: 14 February 2011/New Delhi/ [The Times India](#)

Education to become borderless in coming years, IGNOU VC

"India's education sector is going to witness a sea change in coming years," said IGNOU vice-chancellor Rajsekharan Pillai.

He was addressing the students and academicians during an international conference on 'Impact of foreign universities on India's management education' organised by Shri Sai Shikshan Sanstha's NIT Graduate School of Management on Saturday.

Sanstha secretary Salil Deshmukh, faculty Rajesh Waigaonkar, CMD of Sunil Hi-tech Sunil Gutte, and NIT GSM director Mohit Kumar shared the dais.

The IGNOU VC pointed out that the profiles of educational institutions all over world are witnessing a sea change and there will be complete metamorphosis in this sector in India as well. "Globalisation is the order of the day. Not just physical mobility but also virtual mobility of an educational institute is important in today's world," he explained.

Saying that the 11th five year plan was termed as education plan, he observed, "Around 100 renowned international management institutions are planning to set up their bases in India. The planning commission has opened a website where they are getting good responses from colleges all over world."

Pillai guided the audience about few strategic challenges in the Indian education sector. He said that the most important challenge in front of institutions is to enhance the quality of education. "India is a developing country facing many challenges. The students here must get the same degree given in foreign country vis-à-vis their foreign counterpart," he said.

He emphasised that along with upgradation education should be affordable too. "Technological facilitation can help the foreign university to be virtually present in India making education borderless in years to come. Even the corporate sector is entering into the education sector in a big way with as many as 900 colleges proposed across all faculties," he informed. The IGNOU VC applauded NIT GSM's work in the field of management studies by bringing international courses to India and also collaborating with the Melbourne University.

Kumar in his inaugural speech stressed on the role the foreign universities will play in the Indian education sector. "Proper regulatory framework is required to monitor the foreign universities setting up campuses in India. It will act as a catalyst for the Indian students to raise their level at par with their international counterparts."

He added that it will help in bridging the gap between education standards in Indian and foreign universities. "It will propel institutions here to raise their level and become competitive with those of foreign universities," Kumar pointed out.

A souvenir was released by Pillai along with other the dignitaries. Later two technical sessions were held on 'Opportunities and challenges' and 'Future road map'.

Source: 13 February 2011/Nagpur/[The Times of India](#)

Majority of innovations come from economically disadvantaged regions'

Innovation has always come from the community that has been through unfavourable conditions as the situations, be it economic, social or climatic, act as a trigger. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad, professor Anil K Gupta feels that education does not play a very positive role in triggering or sustaining innovations. In an e-mail interview, Gupta tells DNA that there is no relation between education and innovation and spells out what drives rural innovators.

Gupta is best-known for fostering innovations, especially by rural folk, across India. He is actively involved with the National Innovation Foundation (NIF), Honey Bee Network, Society for Research & Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies & Institutions (SRISTI) and the Grassroots

Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN), all of which he either established or helped found.

While travelling across the Indian hinterland, you have come across several interesting ideas. Do their creators have a purely utilitarian motive or an economic one too?

The triggers of grassroot innovations are being studied by a senior colleague and Ph D scholar Riya Sinha Chokakula. It is apparent from the initial findings that innovators have wide range of motivations which includes being purely utilitarian. Only in some cases, they have economic aspirations. In most cases, technologies are at the proof of concept stage and therefore have to travel a long distance before taking the form of a product. There are a large number of innovators who have solved problems of third parties or communities without any expectations of returns. However, the paradox is that their generosity, many a time, is the reason for their poverty. It should not be so. And therefore, NIF decided to invest in their ideas to improve their quality of life.

Is it fair to say that we are seeing innovation at the bottom of the pyramid?

There are wide variety of innovations and traditional knowledge-based innovative practices discovered by the knowledge-rich and economically poor class. I don't like the phrase "bottom of the pyramid" too much because it is very obvious that the poor are not at the bottom of all pyramids. They are only at the bottom of economic pyramid but not of the ethical, institutional, cultural or innovation pyramid. While there are innovations attempted by medium-class farmers or artisans, the majority of the innovations are from the under-class.

Does an unfavourable economic condition, which goads one to strive harder, or a healthy financial scenario, which gives one the comfort and resources to ideate, drive innovation?

The innovations at the community level are generally triggered by stress which includes economic, climatic, ecological or social. The urge to overcome the problems faced by oneself or by the community manifests much more among less prosperous people, though there are well-off farmers growing cash crops who have developed plant varieties or farm machinery.

But, given the pattern, one can say unequivocally that the majority of the innovations have come from economically disadvantaged regions or ecologically stressed regions. Even in Gujarat, the largest number of innovations has come from the drier regions. Perhaps, comfort and resource surplus do not create a desire to develop solutions. Voluntary suffering and frugality perhaps are necessary in our context to innovate. Even if one has more resources, it might be a good idea to create an artificial scarcity or stress to be creative.

NIF's example is so eloquent in this regard. After its establishment in 2000, NIF's budget went down every year

and its data and knowledge base rose. For SRISTI, the stress was even higher though it gave rise to GIAN, NIF, MVIF (Micro Venture Innovation Fund) and techpedia.in besides numerous other initiatives such as Sattvik, the Traditional Food Festival and Shodh Yatras through which we learn about the grassroots genius on foot.

Which areas will come up with more innovations and why?

We get innovations from all sectors. The rural farm and non-farm sector is obviously much more represented in our knowledge base. Thus, farm machinery, household utilities, energy generation and conservation, herbal drugs for human and animal use, plant protection, i.e., herbal pesticides and growth promoters, plant varieties, transport, food and agro processing are reasonably well represented in our knowledge base.

The general perception is that an ideator in a city has an edge over his/her counterpart in the hinterland, maybe because of better education opportunities in particular and better exposure in general. Do you agree with this?

In the world of ideas, the city has in fact a disadvantage except among children. If people from city having higher educational opportunities were better ideators, then most of the awards that NIF has given in the last 10 years should have gone to them. In the over 300 awards, cities have played a very small role. Metropolitans are actually negligible. Perhaps education debilitates and desensitises people though that does not mean that one doesn't need education. It only implies that we need a different kind of education.

Greater exposure sometimes makes one less curious. Many of the innovators have gone through the cycle of isolation while generating ideas. Too much of connectedness may help in diffusion but not in ideation. The tendency to seek reinforcement invariably becomes stronger in highly networked communities. Innovators don't seek much reinforcement because they are aware that they might instead get ridiculed. Only in a few cases, city may have an advantage like where fabrication facilities are required at low cost. Even here, small cities have an advantage over larger cities. In the case of children, because of our limitations in reaching rural schools, we get far more entries in the IGNITE competition organised by NIF from cities. However, whenever we organise an idea competition in rural areas and villages, we do get many ideas from children.

How big a role does education play in innovation?

Education does not play a very positive role in triggering or sustaining innovations except in the high-tech sector. We have mapped more than 1,00,000 engineering projects at techpedia.in pursued by 3,50,000 students from all over the country. One can find for oneself. Still, some of the very creative projects had been pursued in polytechnics rather than in IITs and NITs. The mindset the current education system creates is that of conformity rather than creativity.

Tell us of some of the interesting ideas that you've come across.

Piyush Agarwal, a class 11 student from Jharkhand, thought about a problem that most mothers have faced. When they dry clothes on the roof and it rains suddenly, they go and collect the clothes before they get wet. He has designed a sensor-based motorised cloth line which will wind itself to bring the clothes under the shade.

To control noise pollution, a class 12 student, Mani Bhushan, also from Jharkhand, developed an idea of infrared, another sensor based systems, by which a person will get a small sound or light signal when the vehicle behind so triggers it. There are a large number of other innovations such as the pressure cooked-based coffee-making machine by Rozadeen from Champaran in Bihar, which deserve attention.

Source: 15 February 2011/Mumbai/[DNA](#)

How faculty mentoring among Indian b-schools can improve their standing on the world stage

The quality of education among India's business schools has not been able to keep up with their growth in recent years. But if each 'good' b-school mentors the faculty of five lower-rung b-schools in its local region with IIMs taking the lead, vast improvements can be made in the general quality of Indian b-schools, says Prof Suresh Ghai, Director of the KJ Somaiya Institute of Management and Research, Mumbai and former President, Bombay Management Association.

Management education is more than a hundred years old in the world. In India it took wing in the late 1950s and the first IIMs at Ahmedabad and Calcutta were established under mentorship with the Harvard Business School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Today we have 11 IIMs. Despite more than 50 years of existence and heavy support from government and their foreign partners, the IIMs have only now begun to find their names among the top 100 b-schools of the world. There could be many valid reasons for their exclusion, but the fact is that they are not on the high table. However, admissions to IIMs, especially to Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Calcutta is the most difficult in the world. They probably have the highest applications to admission ratio in the world.

Today there are almost 3,000 b-schools in the country, out of which about 2,500 are approved by AICTE and remaining (ranging from the prestigious ISB to the dubious IIPM) conduct unapproved programmes. All these Institutes produce about 200,000 management graduates per year.

Outside the IIMs, very few b-schools attract really good students, the most well known being the Indian School of Business (ISB), XLRI Jamshedpur, FMS Delhi, MDI Gurgaon, the IITs, NITIE Mumbai, IIFT Delhi, NMIMS Mumbai, KJ Somaiya, IMI Delhi, IMT Ghaziabad, TAPMI Manipal and perhaps some more.

It is common knowledge that quality standards of education differ significantly among Indian b-schools. If you looked beyond the IIMs and a few other institutes mentioned above, there is strong need for quality improvement in the more than 2,000 b-schools before they can come upto a reasonably acceptable level. Even among the different IIMs and the next level of b-schools, there is a wide quality gap. Shortage of qualified faculty, quality of curriculum and shortcuts for course completion are some of the ailments. Thanks to the government regulators, the availability and quality of infrastructure has considerably improved in the last few years.

As b-school Deans and Directors, we frequently discuss among each other as to why the Government supports only the IIMs. Can the 3,000 MBAs produced by the IIMs fulfill India's aspirations of being a fully developed country in the next 20 years or so? Why is it that there isn't enough government or sectoral support to improve the standards of teaching (and we are not talking about research, which is much worse) in the next level of b-schools?

Stray efforts have been made by some of the IIMs, the regulators and others to train the faculty of other b-schools through long and short term faculty development programmes and quality improvement programmes. However this has not really helped much, as the number of faculty that such 'expensive' and long term programmes at IIMs can accommodate has been limited. Though the AICTE provides some limited grants to b-schools for this purpose, most institutes are just unaware of it or find it too cumbersome and feel uncertain about the benefits of applying for these grants. Secondly, the trained faculty does not pass on the learning gained to their colleagues. The reading material, case studies, simulation games, videos, exercises and teaching methodology etc remain confined to a few. The problem gets compounded when faculty members with family commitments feel reluctant to be away for long periods for such faculty development programmes. B-schools too feel reluctant to let their faculty go to such training sessions as replacement faculty is not available in most cases, compounded by the acute faculty shortage faced by most institutes.

Multi-level Diffusion

The author has been proposing a 'multi-level diffusion model' of mentoring Indian b-schools. I have suggested that each mature IIM should mentor the next level of 5 b-schools in their region. Non-IIM b-schools can send their faculty to the IIMs for a period of 2-10 weeks. The faculty will attend classes, may take some classes along with IIM faculty, interact with them and understand their practices and imbibe their teaching methodology and pedagogy. The salary of this faculty will continue to be paid by his/her mother institute. The IIMs may provide family guest accommodation to these trainees which will also be paid for by the source Institute along with all travel and local expenses. Similarly, the IIMs can send one or two faculty members to the interested / attached institute for a period of

2-10 weeks; the IIM faculty may teach a course or part of a course and interact and mentor local faculty in teaching methodology, case method, pedagogy, writing of research papers etc. The salary of the visiting IIM faculty will be paid by the local Institute and it will also make arrangements for lodging, boarding, travel and local transport. So the IIMs will have no financial obligation. In turn this non-IIM institute will mentor 5 institutes of next level and so on.

The advantage of this model is that there is no financial burden on host institutes or the IIMs and the arrangement is at their convenience. The learning is informal and widespread and can be diffused easily. It is expected that by this method at least 500 b-schools can improve their quality of teaching and research and stand a chance to compete in international rankings.

Cooperative localized learning

Local level Faculty Development Programmes at state capital level can be organized for a group of b-schools by a better group of b-schools having reputed and experienced faculty. This can be facilitated by local management associations, organizations like AIMA and its local management associations or chapters, AIMS and other regional and national forums of management schools. The local programmes will have the advantage of faculty not having to leave their family for long periods and lower costs. The costs for these programmes can be shared by the beneficiary b-schools.

The AICTE or its yet to be born avatar 'National Commission for Higher Education and Research' (NCHER) may give credit to institutes which mentor other institutes, and if possible fund these programmes.

I feel that such models can improve the quality of management education across a large number of b-schools in the next five years and improve the standing of Indian b-schools on a world stage.

Source: 17 February 2011/ Paglaguy.com

RESOURCE

Elementary Education in India; Progress towards UEE: DISE Flash Statistics: 2009-10

DISE Flash Statistics: 2009-10, Progress towards UEE were released by Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, during a meeting of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Executive Council, here today. These statistics are based on the data collected during the year 2009-10 with 30th September 2009 as its date of reference. Data for the year 2009-10 is received from 1.3 million recognized schools imparting elementary education from across 635 districts spread over 35 States and Union Territories of the country. The Publication is being brought out by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi.

NUEPA has created a comprehensive database on elementary education in India known as District Information System for Education (DISE), under one of its most prestigious projects. The project covers both primary and upper primary schools/sections of all the districts of the country. The MIS Units are now operational both at the district and state levels and are equipped with necessary hardware and software. The DISE software is also operational in all the districts of the country and is providing vital information for policy formulation and preparation of district elementary education plans. To further improve the quality of data, it has now been made mandatory for all the states to check the data on five percent random sample basis through an independent agency each year.

DISE 2009-10: School-Based Indicators

With the improved coverage, the number of schools/sections imparting elementary education dealt with under DISE increased many-fold. From 8,53,601 schools in 2002-03, their number has increased to 11,96,663 schools in 2006-07 and further to 12,50,775 schools in 2007-08. In 2008-09, as many as 12,85,576 schools imparting elementary education across 633 districts of the country are covered under DISE compared to which 13,03,812 schools from 635 districts were covered during 2009-10.

Of the total schools, about 87.13 per cent schools are located in rural areas. During the same period, the number of primary schools increased from 6,01,866 to 8,09,874. Category-wise distribution of schools reveals that majority of the schools (62.12 per cent) are independent primary schools. The increase in the number of schools is also reflected in the Ratio of Primary to Upper Primary Schools/Sections which clearly shows the impact of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan under which a large number of schools have been opened in the recent past. This ratio for the year 2008-09 is one upper primary school/section for every set of 2.23 primary schools/sections compared to 2.45 in 2006-07 and 2.41 schools/sections in 2007-08 and 2.27 in 2008-09. Most of the states have the ratio equivalent to almost two, all of which suggests that by and large schooling facilities have been created and are available across the country. Despite significant improvement in the ratio, there are a few states, such as Arunachal Pradesh (3.93) and West Bengal (5.53), where the ratio still needs to be improved significantly.

DISE 2009-10: Facility Indicators

The preliminary analysis of a selected few indicators suggest significant improvement in all facility indicators which is true for both states as well as the country as a whole. As on 30th September 2009, 2,45,672 schools imparting elementary education have been opened which is about 18.84 per cent of the total schools in 2009-10 in the country and about 90 per cent of these new schools have school buildings. Opening of new schools is also reflected in the ratio of Primary to Upper Primary schools/sections which stood at 2.23 in 2009-10 compared to 2.27 Primary schools/sections per Upper Primary school/section in 2008-09.

The average number of instructional rooms in Primary schools has also improved to 3.2 in 2009-10 from 3.1 in the previous year. Not a single state has less than 2 classrooms in Primary schools. The average number of classrooms in case of Bihar is 2.1 as compared to 12 in Chandigarh and Delhi. The improvement in average number of classrooms is also reflected in the improvement in student-classroom ratio which has improved to 32 students per classroom in 2009-10 from 35 students in the previous year.

About 92 of the 1.3 million schools that impart elementary education in the country now have drinking water facility in school. All the schools in Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, Delhi, Lakshadweep, and Pudducherry have been provided with the drinking water facility in the school. 87.77 per cent schools had drinking water facility in 2008-09.

About 54.31 per cent schools in the country now have access to common toilets in 2009-10. About 59 per cent of total 1.3 million schools have girl's toilet compared to 53.60 per cent in the previous year i.e. 2008-09.

About 16.65 per cent schools have computer in the schools with percentage of such schools as high as 90 per cent in Chandigarh, 82 per cent in Delhi,

DISE 2009-10: Enrolment-Based Indicators

With the increased coverage of schools under DISE, enrolment both at the primary and upper primary level of education has also increased significantly. The enrolment increased from 128.81 million 2002-03 to 179.36 million in 2006-7 and further to 187.72 million in 2008-09 but slightly declined to 187.87 million in 2009-10. The GER at primary level, based on the DISE data is estimated to be 115.63 per cent, corresponding to 98.28 per cent NER. A few states are near achieving the goal of universal primary enrolment. Over a period of time, enrolment in upper primary classes has also shown consistent increase. From a low of 37.72 million in 2004-05, it has increased to 54.47 million in 2009-10 (GER 75.80 per cent).

Gender Parity Index (GPI)

Percentage of girls' enrolment in primary and upper primary classes reveals that there is consistent improvement both in GPI and girls' share in enrolment. The average of 635 districts in 2009-10 indicates a GPI of 0.94 in primary classes and 0.93 in case of upper primary classes.

Source: Feb 1, 2011/[PIB](#)

India's higher education sector needs 8 mn seats in next 3 years to sustain economic growth

The Parthenon Group's Education Centre of Excellence projects that India's higher education sector needs an additional 8 million seats over the next 3 years in order to sustain economic growth. The Parthenon Group, a leading strategic advisory firm with deep experience in global education industries, released key findings from

presentations made at the firm's Global Education Seminar held in Mumbai on 27th January 2011. The Mumbai event was the fourth in a series of global education conferences held in New York City, London, and Dubai.

Speakers from Parthenon shared analysis on various hot topics in the Indian education sector such as growth and investment opportunities in higher education and school sectors, and the scalability and success of private schools in India, among others. Robert Lytle, Partner and Co-Head of Parthenon's Education Centre of Excellence, presented findings on how foreign universities can help solve India's higher education crisis. Karan Khemka, Partner and Head of Parthenon's Asia Office, shared perspectives in the supply-demand gap and scalability of private primary and secondary schools in India.

Robert Lytle said: "We have hosted four education conferences in the past two weeks – in New York City, London, and Dubai; but, we saved the biggest and best for where the education market, issues, and challenges are the most dynamic – right here in India. Even here, in India, where demand for quality education seems insatiable, choosing the wrong value proposition or wrong business model will condemn you to failure. Conversely, informed choices allow you to build enduring, self sustaining, and expanding [education] institutions."

Increasing higher education enrolment is central to India's ability to compete in a global economy, as economic strength and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita are closely linked to a country's higher education enrolment ratio. In order to increase India's competitiveness, it is necessary to grow the availability of high quality higher education. Research conducted by The Parthenon Group's Education Centre of Excellence projects that India's higher education sector needs an additional 8 million seats over the next 3 years in order to sustain economic growth."

Other insights shared at the Global Education Seminar included reflections on the role foreign universities could play in helping India meet significant demand for higher education seats. Specifically, in order to increase its tertiary enrolment ratio, India needs a portfolio approach that incorporates both prestigious world-class and capital-efficient universities. While established world-class universities face limitations in their ability to expand, brand-recognized foreign universities have greater flexibility to help fill the current gap in higher education seats. Whereas world-class universities (with average annual enrolments of approximately 14,000 students) grow at an annual rate of only 1%, capital-efficient foreign universities boast faster growth rates that allow them to achieve much greater scale.

The Parthenon Group's research shows that in labour markets such as China and Vietnam, graduates from the local branches of foreign universities are able to command a slight 10-20% wage premium over graduates of local universities. As a result, universities like Ningbo Nottingham in China and RMIT in Vietnam are able to charge a tuition premium. Foreign universities such as Monash (Malaysia),

Nottingham (China), and RMIT (Vietnam) that have a recognizable – albeit non-world class brand – are able to achieve a self-sufficient scale of 4,000 to 6,000 students with revenues in excess of \$30 mn.

The key success factors for such universities include robust government relations, a strong local partner, and premium placements for students with leading employers. While these examples are encouraging signs, the question remains as to whether India's regulatory environment will allow for such foreign universities to play a role in bridging India's current – and growing – tertiary enrolment gap.

In addition to macro industry findings presented by Parthenon speakers, the Global Education Seminar also highlighted school-level learnings from two guest experts:

Dr. F. R. Mahmood Hasan, Founder and CEO of GSS, an educational NGO which provides quality primary education to 30 thousand children across 350 schools in Bangladesh shared his views on the low cost, activity-based education model adopted by GSS. "The government of Bangladesh spends \$60 per child on education. At GSS we are able to provide a higher-quality education for only \$38 per year." GSS also operates with a much higher success rate – with a dropout rate of only 7% - than that of traditional government schools, where dropout rates exceed 50%.

Environmental Sustainability in Education was another topic presented by guest expert Ronald Stones, OBE and Consulting Director of The Green School (Bali, Indonesia). "When we first opened, we served students from the international school community in Bali. Now, 30% of our students are from families that relocated from around the world to send their students to The Green School. [Sustainable school models] are the future of education," . Stones stated.

A survey of the Global Education Seminar's attendees revealed that investor interest has shifted from vocational and K-12 schools to higher education institutions. As expected, the most significant major challenge when considering an investment in the education space remains unchanged and is the current government regulatory landscape.

Source: Feb 02, 2011/ [India Infoline News Service](#)

Shri Kapil Sibal Inaugurates NPTEL National Video Server

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, inaugurated, *here today, the National Video Server of the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), which makes the entire NPTEL content available through this server. With this Video Server located at IIT Madras and connected to 1 Gbps link of National Knowledge Network and 155 Mbps link to the Colleges' Virtual Private Network (VPN) under the National Mission on Education through Information & Communication Technology (NMEICT), e-content download would be possible for all the Universities and*

Colleges that have got connectivity under the NMEICT. At present, more than 250 University/University level Institutions and nearly 11000 Colleges are already connected on NKN and College VPN and they could straight away start using or downloading the e-content for their storage and local use.

The National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) is India's largest technical knowledge dissemination programme through ICT in the higher education sector. Its main objective is to increase the reach of high quality engineering and sciences education across our country, which has the potential to transform India into a strong and vibrant knowledge economy.

It involves developing cutting edge curricula and delivering the same as video and web courses with free and easy downloads from the NPTEL website at: <http://www.nptel.iitm.ac.in>. Under NPTEL Phase-I, 125 courses in web format and 135 courses in video format in technology, engineering and sciences have been developed. These include the corresponding syllabi prescribed by AICTE-approved institutions and programmes.

NPTEL Phase I: Each course contains around 40 hours of lectures delivered by India's best teachers from different IITs and the IISc. NPTEL is now the world's largest electronic repository of video courses and has also attained the status of being the world's most highly viewed higher technical education portal accessed by users in India and other countries. All these courses can be accessed and downloaded easily and freely from the NPTEL Website at: www.nptel.iitm.ac.in and from YouTube at: www.youtube.com/iit

Course	Web	Video
Basic Courses (Semesters I & II)	16	20
Civil Engineering	24	19
Computer Science & Engineering	22	19
Electrical Engineering	16	25
Electronics Engineering	20	22
Mechanical Engineering	27	23
Ocean Engineering		3
Biotechnology		2
Mining		1
Metallurgy		1
Total	125	135

NPTEL Phase II: More than 1000 courses (at the UG and PG levels) have been proposed. These courses cover various disciplines including Technology, Engineering, Management, Sciences, and Humanities. *The courses are expected to be completed by 2012 and will be available to every one free of cost. The list of courses (received to date) along with the syllabi for the various courses developed under NPTEL Phase II are also now available from the NPTEL website at: www.nptel.iitm.ac.in*

Why NPTEL ? -

- The basic objective of science and engineering education in India is to devise and guide reforms that will transform India into a strong and vibrant knowledge economy. In this context, the focus areas for NPTEL project have been i) higher education, ii) professional education, iii) distance education and iv) continuous and open learning, in that order of preference.

- Manpower requirement for trained engineers and technologists is far more than the number of qualified graduates that Indian technical institutions can provide currently. The number of institutions having fully qualified and trained teachers in all disciplines forms a small fraction. Majority of teachers are young and can benefit through the knowledge sharing with qualified and experienced teachers. Therefore, it is important for institutions like IITs, IISc, NITs and other leading Universities in India to disseminate teaching/learning content of high quality through all available media. NPTEL would be the leader in this undertaking using technology for dissemination of knowledge.

- India needs many more teachers for effective implementation of higher professional education. Therefore, training young and inexperienced teachers to enable them carry out their academic responsibilities effectively is a must. NPTEL contents can be used as core curriculum content for training purposes.

- A large number of students who are unable to attend top rated institutions now have an opportunity to learn from some of the best teachers.

How is NPTEL received by the users?

NPTEL is extensively used by students, faculty members and working professionals from various companies. NPTEL channel in YouTube has received more than 39 Million upload views (up to 6th Feb., 2011) and has more than sixty thousand subscribers. NPTEL has received lot of appreciation from the users.

Why the National server?

The national server is set up at present to enable free and fast direct downloads using the National Knowledge Network and the VPN set up by MHRD under NMEICT. This facility has become necessary since You Tube access is severely limited by many organizations in India.

Source: Feb 9, 2011/[PIB](#)

Open School to Supplement RTE & RMSA; 20th General Body Meeting of the National Institute of Open Schooling Held

The 20th General Body (GB) meeting of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) held here yesterday deliberated on the issues related to developing a strategy plan for up-scaling the school education starting from primary level to the Senior Secondary level. Though open schooling has limited functions in the context of supporting

Right to Education (RTE), the General Body resolved the following in the context of RTE and RMSA (Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) as supplementary support to the school education system:

- In the context of RMSA, open schooling system to augment GER at secondary level by 15% (about 12 million) through setting up and promotion of open schools in the states;

- Developing quality parameters for open schooling courses and making them relevant for livelihood;

- Development of relaxed and flexible accreditation norms to develop the network of open schooling in inaccessible and hard to reach areas and also for informal sectors;

- Creating learning materials for the out of school children to admit the children at the age appropriate level thereby supplementing the efforts of formal school system at the elementary level;

- Enhancing professional and academic qualifications of in-service untrained teachers at elementary level by offering distance mode training/ academic courses and thereby meeting the requirement of RTE;

- Revisiting of Open Basic Education (OBE) courses making it relevant as per the NCF 2005;

- Developing tailor made courses for the disadvantaged children, more specifically physically challenged children (about 1 million) who would be mostly out of school, for facilitating their learning and thereby taking them to the formal education stream;

- Establishing linkages between vocational training and academic courses for value addition to the qualifications earned by youth to enhance their employability;

- Developing programmes on basic education and equivalency programmes with integrating vocational training for the neo-literates to support Sakshar Bharat programme of Govt. of India.

The General Body also discussed the Road Map developed by NIOS for Vocational Education and Training and strategy for integration of same with academic courses. The GB resolved the following;

- Launching of Vocational stream courses at Sr. Secondary level for developing a career path for the youth, who otherwise cannot have access to higher education system;

- Developing need based vocational courses for skill development on the priority sectors through Public Private Partnership (PPP) strategy;

- Developing competency based modular courses for skill training with the provision of credit accumulation and transfer;

- Up-scaling specially designed skill development programmes like "Hunar" for the disadvantaged groups in

the states for meeting the livelihood requirement of the youths;

- Developing a frame work for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to certify the skills acquired by the in-formal means of training;
- Developing web based training modules with e-content and OER in the courses to priority service sectors;
- Augmenting the use of infrastructure available in the formal education system in a collaborative and network model for meeting the skill training requirement in the country;
- Undertaking training of vocational teachers and developing courses on life skill.

The General Body meeting was presided over by Sh. Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development as president of the Society and co-chaired by Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State, HRD. Shri Sibal, while endorsing the Road Map of NIOS expressed his desire that the NIOS should emerge as a model distance learning institution with emphasis on catering to the contemporary needs of the country which has targeted to achieve 500 million skilled people by 2020. The NIOS also should have its focused activities to serve the educational needs of the disadvantaged groups as well. Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State, HRD suggested that NIOS need to rise from its ivory tower and emerge as an credible institution in the field of Open learning.

Source: 11-February, 2011/[PIB](#)

Pre Budget Expectations 2011-12: Anagram Research

Pre Budget Expectations 2011-12- Sectorwise Expectations:

AGRICULTURE & AGRO COMMODITIES: Agriculture is core sector contributing more than 18% of India's GDP. Rising prices would be in focus in near to medium term. Increased production and higher productivity will help to secure enough supply to curb prices. Agro input industry is very well placed. There is huge scope for the expansion as only 39% of cultivated land is under irrigation. Country is a net importer of fertilizer and India is one of the lowest per hectare consumer of fertilizer and pesticides. Some favorable policy changes will help to utilize huge business potential in time to come.

We expect positive measures to be awarded to the Agri Inputs sectors as the government would like to boost Agriculture growth during the current fiscal. Therefore we expect some pro positive measures to be announced in this forthcoming budget.

AUTOMOBILES: The Indian automobile sector has seen strong demand across segments resulting in 25% YTD volume growth. The small car and light commercial vehicle (LCV) segments is flooded with new entrants and new launches which may hurt profitability given weak pricing.

While in two wheelers, M&HCVs and tractors-the competitive landscape remains fairly benign, with limited new entrants. With potential headwinds - an increase in interest rates and higher fuel prices- coupled with a high base we expect growth rates across the automobile sector to taper off, but will remain in double digits. Post correction valuations have become reasonable for investors to enter into quality Auto OEMs and component companies.

BANKING: Amid the uncertainties of elevated price levels, liquidity crunch, delayed deposit growth and pressure of sustaining of margins, the banking sector continued to record robust earnings growth in each quarter. In terms of core activities, the sector has witnessed accelerated growth in loan book as compared to deposit base driven by infra, service and retail sectors.

The Reserve Bank's decision to raise key interest rates for seven times since March 2010 to tackle the inflation issue, has raised the cost of funds for the banking sector. On flip side the overall liquidity condition has remained in deficit mode from the third quarter of current financial year, partly on account of above-normal government cash balances.

The situation is expected to improve with the gradual spending by the government, while the deposit growth is likely to pick up as a result of recent round of deposit rate hike. In such a rising interest rate scenario, the banks with higher level of low cost deposits, prudent asset quality and sufficient capital to fund the growth would get edge over its peers and sustain the margins.

CONSTRUCTION: Construction & Infrastructure investment is the major driver for India in attaining consistent 8-10% GDP growth. The importance of infrastructure for a double digit growth is known to all; however, there is a big gap between infrastructure targets and achievements with slow execution in several sectors. Primary causes for the gap are shortfall in awarding projects, time and cost overruns in construction phase and funding potential shortfalls. It is about time to take rigorous steps in addressing the bottlenecks in construction & infrastructure space, if the government is serious about taking relevant action.

Finance Minister's signal to the infrastructure sector was that the sector should try to desist from asking for tax breaks and tax reliefs as the budget has a limited ability to finance the country's infrastructure needs. Hence, the sector this year restricts its expectations from tax breaks and focuses on other crucial aspects of enabling environment for raising capital and project development.

EDUCATION: India is expected to have highest working age population over the next 20-30 years which can propel economic growth in the country; however, India will have the highest number of illiterate adults and a large number of unemployed literate people. Education sector has this big challenge of educating adults and also ensuring employability. At the same time, this also serves as an opportunity for the innovative and capable players in the industry, as education sector along with infrastructure and

agriculture is expected to draw the focus of the budget and remain a top priority.

Government has not been successful in educating young India; hence the way forward is setting up a platform of private participation, an environment of funding and development of the sector. The adoption of public-private partnership (PPP) model in the education sector could go a long way in establishing success and creating a sustainable momentum in long-term. While the government's role could be that of funding the projects, it is the execution ability of the private sector which needs to be banked upon for the ultimate delivery of the model. We see a huge long term opportunity in this sector for private players.

FMCG: The FMCG sector witnessed a spate of new launches and acquisitions in 2010 contributing to the sector's phenomenal topline growth of 15% led largely by volumes. Robust GDP growth estimated at 8.75% in FY11, increased income in rural areas, growing urbanisation and changing lifestyle of consumers would be key growth drivers for companies. The sector is likely to continue in the same manner in medium to long term as favourable demand scenario. Though there are some near term challenges like inflation and irregular monsoon during the year for sector companies. we are expecting this situation will be reversed after harvesting of Rabi crop. With demand shifting from need based to want based we believe personal care and home care categories would lead the growth momentum with 20% and 15% growth, respectively, in CY11.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: The Indian IT industry showed remarkable resilience during the recessionary period and global downturn, now expected to deliver approximately 20% in FY10. Demand for IT Services exports is expected to continue with the recovery in developed countries like US & Europe and rising discretionary spend on IT infrastructure by consumers. According NASSCOM reports exports are expected to dominate the Indian IT industry, which account for USD 59 billion out of the USD 76 billion software industry.

However, the industry has its share of concerns. Fear of slower than expected recovery in US and other developed markets, pricing pressure due to competitive domestic markets, higher wage inflation and attrition and protectionist stance by the US government have forced a neutral outlook on the industry. On the backdrop of such mixed scenario, the industry is eagerly awaiting the Government's proposals in the budget.

PHARMACEUTICALS: The outlook for the Indian Pharmaceutical Market remains mixed with the Generic companies seeing stupendous growth while growth of the CRAMS companies remain muted. With innovator drugs worth USD 160 bn going off patent over the next five years, high growth in the domestic market which has been registering strong growth rates of 15-16% and is expected to reach USD 20 billion by 2015 and increasing focus on

low cost generics in order to reduce the high medication cost in the developed countries. We believe companies having a strong hold in the domestic market along with Niche/FTF opportunities would continue to trade at a premium. We remain bullish on the sector more specifically on the Generic Companies.

POWER UTILITIES/CAPITAL GOODS: Power capacity addition has been sluggish and is expected to achieve 2/3 of the revised capacity addition target of 62000MW. We prefer companies with strong execution capabilities, financial closure in place, secured fuel supply and less merchant sales.

We expect higher allocation to reforms like R-ADARP, RGGVY, and Bharat Nirman to continue. This will also contribute positively to the sectors long term growth. Our long term outlook on the Engineering and Capital Goods sectors remains positive. Higher allocation to infrastructure will benefit companies like, L&T, BHEL, Crompton etc, as they command a higher market share and have excellent execution track records.

SHIPPING: Global dry bulk fleet capacity is 464 million dwt and an additional 285 million dwt i.e. 61.4% of the existing fleet is likely to be added over the next two years. Global crude and product carrier capacity is 382 million dwt and an additional 170 million dwt i.e. 44.5% of the existing fleet is likely to be added over the same period. Hence, there will be a substantial overhang from the large fleet addition over the next couple of years. Freight rates are expected to be under constant pressure on account of demand moderation and supply overhang. Hence, the operating performance of shipping companies is expected to be subdued. Companies with high debt could also report a negative bottomline. However, the offshore shipping segment offers the best play in the entire shipping space on account of firmness in crude oil prices. Utilisation levels have inched up with semi-sub and jack up utilization levels at 85% and 75%, respectively. Vessel day rates are also expected to rise in the near to medium term.

TELECOM SERVICES & EQUIPMENTS: The telecom sector is reeling under overcapacity leading to stagnant revenue, high operating cost and huge debt resulting in dwindling earnings and regulatory uncertainty led contracting multiples. While subscribers have grown at 10.1% CQGR, revenue has grown by a mere 0.4% CQGR over Q1FY10-Q2FY11. Impending 3G launch and MNP introduction may be an immediate impetus. With an abating rate of decline in key metrics, telecom companies are expected to fare better in FY12E than in FY11E. Companies with exposure in foreign markets, like Bharti Airtel and OnMobile Global may see higher growth than the industry. Telecom stocks may remain subdued during most of FY12 while towards the end of FY12E we may see a narrowing of discounts to the broader markets once regulatory concerns are put to rest.

Source: Feb 18, 2011/[Money control](#)

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Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation

Apeejay Stya House
14 Commercial Complex, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, Part - II
New Delhi - 110048
Tel. No. (91 – 11) 29228296 / 97 / 98 E-mail: aserf@apeejay.edu
Fax No. (91 – 11) 29223326 Website: <http://aserf.org.in>