



Announcements

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

Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2011. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Education Society announces the opening of Apeejay Stya University

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

Apeejay Stya University offers a diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the academic session 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 Stya 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 Stya Education Research Foundation (ASERF) invites news, articles, resource material, opinions and analyses on relevant educational issues that can be highlighted in our by-monthly e-bulletins and on the ASERF portal.

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

Editor

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh

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ASPECT**Analysis Budget 2011-12: Education**

The emphasis on education in the budget has been on the rise in the last one or two years and Budget 2011 has been no different.

The budget has many positive announcements, with the finance minister acknowledging that India's demographic profile is both an opportunity and a challenge, with more than 70% Indians expected to be in the working population by 2025. Calling education as the tool of empowerment to reap the benefit of India's demographic dividend of a young population, Mukherjee **announced a hike of 24 percent in the budget spending for education.**

Government-sponsored vocational & scholarship schemes are both well thought through proposals. In this way the FM has done a commendable job of looking at the challenges of growth, i.e., a mismatched skill set that could hurt employability. **The extra attention and allocation for education and skill development is a great move for the next decade and subsequent budgets must build on it.** In this context the finance minister said **universalising access to secondary education, increasing percentage of our scholars in higher education and providing skills training is necessary.**

The budget proposes a fund outflow of **Rs. 52,057 crore (Rs.520 billion/\$11.5 billion) for education in 2011-12, a 24% increase from the current fiscal's estimates including Rs38,957 for school education and Rs13,100 crore for higher education. Total education outlay, including Plan and non-Plan allocation, rose 16% to Rs. 63,363 crore from Rs54,548 crore in the 2010-11 fiscal year.**

- o The double-digit increase in budgetary allocation is welcome but it is still short of the long due 6% investment of GDP on education. The expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP is low in India, and raising it has to start with the government's commitment to this sector.
- o Further out of this allocation some part of this funding is likely to be applied towards the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act. The implementation of the RTE Act, which continues to see funding challenges along with other conceptual and implementation hurdles, would also require subsequent budgets to provide large allocations.

The minister stressed on providing universal elementary education (classes I-VIII) under the Right To Education (RTE) Act, which is being implemented jointly through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

The outlay for RTE-SSA has been pegged at **Rs21,000 crore**, and is expected to benefit nearly 180 million children pursuing elementary education as well as 8.1 million more who are outside the ambit of school

education. **The allocation for RTE-SSA is 40% more than the Rs15,000 crore allocated in the last fiscal.**

However, according to data available with the human resource development ministry, the government allocated Rs15,000 crore just to SSA in 2010-11. When the RTE Act came into force on 1st April, 2010, another Rs4,000 crore was allocated, taking the total outlay for RTE-SSA to Rs19,000 crore. Taking this into account, the hike in allocation for the government's flagship education scheme is only around 10%. Further there is a marked dip in the allotment for upgrading existing facilities.

Last year we had found that there was a short fall of Rs. 75,000 crore spent on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Now the SSA having been subsumed under Right to Education Act the fact of the matter still remains that it is still far short of the allocation that was envisaged by the CABE committee. The budget speech is silent on how this amount is to be met.

At the same time we need to remember that government has the target of opening at least one primary school per 300 populations and an upper primary school per 800 populations. If we keep this context in mind than merely depending on the private sector alone – they are not able to achieve this goal because most of this is really required at the district level. Merely by doing reservations in the private sector schools things are not going to take place.

The budget proposed a fund of Rs 2,179 crore for the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, which aims to promote secondary education, and Rs450 crore to boost the use of information and communication technologies in schools.

In India only about **five per cent of students have access to any vocational training** as compared to about 60 per cent in developed countries. The budget has announced a Centrally-sponsored vocational scheme to be implemented from fiscal 2012, which will introduce vocational training as a part of secondary education.

The Fm said that the National Skill Development Council (NSDC) is on course to create 15 crore skilled workforce two years ahead of 2022, the stipulated target year and has already sanctioned 26 projects with a total funding of 658 crore (6.58 billion rupees). These projects alone are expected to create more than 4 crore skilled workforce over the next ten years.

The budget has also proposed the introduction of a pre-matriculation scholarship scheme for class IX and X students from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities which is going to benefit 40 lakh students.

Both proposals are well thought through; they can reduce the number of dropouts from schools and bridge supply gaps to skill-driven industries.

But there is lack of emphasis in terms of school improvement, quality control etc- given that this sector in

education has to be strengthened in order to prepare the skilled and innovative workforce of 2025.

In the Higher Education sector the 15 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) will get Rs2,081 crore, while the 11 existing and two upcoming Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) will receive a total of Rs149 crore. The minister made a special one-time allocation of Rs200 crore each to IIT-Kharagpur and Maulana Azad Education Foundation and Rs20 crore to IIM-Kolkata for research, as well as Rs50 crore each for upcoming centres of Aligarh Muslim University in West Bengal and Kerala apart from other grants to various institutions..

To promote innovation and cross-institutional research, 1,500 higher educational institutions would be connected via optical fibre under the National Knowledge Network initiative. The network, which has already connected nearly 200 institutions, will complete its task in fiscal 2012.

Although we need to laud the finance minister for the concept of innovation councils both at the center and at the state level. Very little has been talked about Research and Development apart from some increase in the funding and deduction from 175% to 200% for certain research Institutes, Laboratories and Universities. But research and development does not take place only in the universities and national laboratories – in fact not much is taking place in comparison to what would to have been taken place, but rather is been done by the industry at various levels and particularly in this case at the fore front are the Information Technology and the Pharmaceutical Industry. Even one would be waiting for the report/action of the innovation council this is an area where India cannot afford to wait for such reports to have come. Earlier budgets have mentioned and things have been done in this direction but in this budget we have not tried to take it forward in any manner.

The allocation of more funds is good news, but there is no additional policy support for individual and corporate contributions to endowments for scholarships, for enhancing faculty numbers and quality, and also for technology investments in furthering the cause of education.

There is lack of allocation of funds for Teacher improvement and training that will encourage qualified people to look at teaching as a rewarding and challenging career choice

There is not much concrete for vocational education and research at higher education, since Education is a big space and one do not find anything, which will entice and incentivise investment and promote education entrepreneurs.

However two critical things are even more disappointing – at every platform Prime Minister, The Planning Commission and the Education Minister have been talking about the importance of increasing Private Sector participation to meet the targets of the education in this

country, either at the skill development level, school education or the higher education. Further India's \$86 billion education sector is increasingly joined by private players in its rapid expansion, while increased government spending and fresh interest from foreigners and large funds who are pumping in money in services, technology and infrastructure play the catalyst. There is no incentivisation, nor any clear direction on increasing the participation of private sector as a sector in education in the country.

While the budget seems to have touched upon the scope of taxation of education services for service tax purposes, recognized courses continue to be outside the purview of taxation. Under the law as it stands today, an institute imparting recognized courses was granted a blanket exemption from service tax even if it was engaged in rendering other courses, such as vocational courses, which may not require separate recognition.

This resulted in an anomaly, since unrecognized courses that were otherwise subject to service tax escaped the service tax levy on account of being conducted by entities having recognized courses as part of their service offerings. As per the proposed amendment, all unrecognized courses, whether imparted by recognized or unrecognized institutions, would be subject to the service tax.

The budget proposes to introduce a comprehensive policy that can be used by the Centre and the State governments in further developing public-private partnerships. One would hope that this policy captures education-related infrastructure as well.

Overall, the budget has been positive for the sector. While it is silent on the passage of pending higher education Bills, the fine print does find allocations for the creation of the National Commission for Higher Education and Research, education tribunals, and the Accreditation Authority.

These do seem to suggest that the government is serious on the enactment of such Bills. Their passage would positively impact reform.

We welcome the signal to bring in better governance, but more could have been done for the education and health sectors. ***It meets the expectations to some extent but not hopes.***

Source: Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Can our national laboratories become research universities?

The Higher Education scene has suddenly come to the forefront of news. From merely proclaiming policies on higher education over the last few decades, the government has now started taking specific measures. Education reforms are being introduced in the legislation. Two apex committee reports^{1,2} have given rise to five legislative bills to be introduced in the parliament³. Government approvals have been given to almost doubling

the number of IITs, IIMs, NITs and Central Universities and more such professional institutions.

Enhancing gross enrollment ratio

All these dramatic movements in the last couple of years have been primarily due to the concern acute shortage of appropriately educated manpower at all levels, from trained technicians to Ph.Ds. The expectations of the youth seeking higher education are not being met. For social and economic reasons, access to education at all levels is becoming difficult. In this article, we will only focus on the question of access to higher education and the role of a university. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) that indicates the percentage of students who are actually pursuing higher education, in comparison to the total number of youths in the age group that should be in college, is only about 12% – much below even the average of about 20% for all countries put together⁴. Indian talent has been in great demand, particularly in the IT sector, and this is only the tip of iceberg of the untapped youth potential that India has. It is alarming to realize that we are sitting on a large and unutilized section of our youth population. The main national focus is therefore to increase GER from the present 12–15% by 2015; and to at least 25% by 2020. This is a major target, demanding a phenomenal growth in the number of higher educational institutions (and teachers). At present, India has 504 universities and 25,951 colleges⁵. The committee reports^{1,2} have projected a requirement of additional 1500 universities! It has taken over 60 years for India to establish these 500 odd universities. How do we 'establish' additional 1500 universities in a short time? This big question is being answered in different innovative ways.

One suggestion – and perhaps the most logical one – has been to convert a large number of well established colleges (or cluster of colleges) into full fledged universities with expanded and networked infrastructure. Other solutions indicate setting up more state and central level universities with public private partnership, and also permitting foreign universities to establish branch campuses in India.

National laboratories and deemed universities

Another major initiative that has been taken by scientific agencies like the Atomic Energy and Space is to get their existing national laboratories recognized as 'deemed' universities, allowing them to recruit mainly postgraduate students who can be awarded degrees by these 'deemed' universities. The CSIR has approached the government for approval to set up a 'CSIR Academy'⁶ that would be allowed to give formal postgraduate degrees (as is done by UGC recognized universities), to researchers working in their large number of laboratories. If this bill is approved by the parliament, the proposed academy would be able to take up the 'degree giving' role that is so far only been allowed to UGC! This will be a major reform in the 'university system'. Will UGC allow this? Will the other academies of sciences be allowed to play the same role?

In this article, we will focus on these initiatives of the scientific agencies and examine how this transformation of 'national' laboratories into the so called 'deemed' universities or a degree giving academy would be effective. How will these initiatives serve the purpose of enhancing the need of increasing the number of 'universities' required by the government?

The importance of 'University' education

The basic issue is that we need a much enlarged 'system' that will give opportunities to students to enter the higher education stream and get high quality education and exposure to a research culture that is so essential today for the scientific development in the country. From the students' perspective, such a system should provide them a well rounded education (and this is the role of an ideal university) leading to an undergraduate or a postgraduate degree that will help them to enter the outside world to undertake any career – teaching, research, entrepreneurial, social service, or even prepare them for public service and political public life. This broadbased requirement expected of a university system has been aptly defined in the Yash Pal committee report where the 'idea of a university' is given as follows²:

'A university is a place where new ideas germinate, strike roots and grow tall and sturdy. It is a unique space, which covers the entire universe of knowledge. It is a place where creative minds converge, interact with each other and construct visions of new realities. Established notions of truth are challenged in the pursuit of knowledge.'

In India, we may have a few universities that may meet this 'idea of a university' description, but by and large, most of our universities fail to comply with this definition. This lacuna should not be perpetuated and we should not continue to be satisfied with setting up the same kind of 'incomplete' universities, with 'more of the same' approach. I think India has now an opportunity to work towards building universities that will meet the noble concept of a university defined above, provided we do not dilute our ambitions and settle for something that just results in one more institution handing out paper degrees to our students, without giving them the kind of 'space'.

We need to address the question of higher education from the point of all disciplines of knowledge. But for the purpose of this article, let us look at how scientific knowledge (leading to degrees in science and engineering) can be imbibed amongst our 'future scientists' (viz. science and engineering degree holders) without depriving them of opportunities to taste 'the entire universe of knowledge' existing in disciplines like philosophy, history, literature, fine arts, etc., just to name a few disciplines that are normally considered to be 'outside' the purview of a 'science and engineering' degree requirement. Ideally we would like our 'scientists and engineers' to be well developed and rounded 'complete' individuals who should be able to meander in different areas of knowledge that they would be attracted to as they move into the outside world. We do not want over

specialization without broadening the knowledge base of our specialized graduates. Our new universities (and academies) should address this basic question of higher education or else we will end up creating 'more of the same' type of institutions and with the same criticism that our graduates are unemployable and not fit to face the multiple challenges in the real world outside.

A challenge to our national laboratories to become true universities

If our national laboratories wish to take up this new 'degree giving' role of a university, they must also take up the bigger responsibility to satisfy the above definition of a university². Universities that satisfy this role are seen in the USA and UK and also perhaps in Europe. The MIT, Caltech, Stanford and Harvard universities are not universities providing knowledge only in specialized areas of science, technology or business (as perhaps their names suggest). They offer courses on their campuses that cover 'the entire universe of knowledge' and, over the years, the students get a chance to taste this knowledge as they pursue their degrees in specialized areas. When a fresh student enters these universities as an undergraduate, very often he/she decides on the topic of specialization only after he/she has 'tasted' the pleasures of other disciplines. Our universities and colleges in India put you into compartmentalized boxes of 'Science', 'Arts' and 'Commerce' with literally solid wall boundaries preventing students and faculty to enjoy the flavours of other disciplines besides their 'chosen' one. If our national laboratories wish to become universities, they must aspire to fulfil the definition of an ideal university that permits such multidisciplinary approach to seeking knowledge. Are they ready to play this bigger role?

Our national laboratories are considered 'prestigious' institutions for pursuit of pure and applied science (and many of them have rightly deserved that honour), but now if they wish to enter the portals of an 'ideal university', they would have to change their approach to 'giving' and 'creating' knowledge. Thanks to the initiatives taken by Homi Bhabha and Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, our national laboratories have developed a culture of excellence and good governance, but limited to pursuing research in specialized areas. The national laboratories are not known for undertaking basic teaching responsibilities that would be equally important if they have to become 'universities'. Our good universities have done a commendable job of teaching and producing graduates that have, by and large, served the society well. But overall, our university system has not provided the space where '*new ideas germinate, strike roots and grow tall and sturdy ... a place where creative minds converge, interact with each other and construct visions of new realities. Established notions of truth are challenged in the pursuit of knowledge.*' Can these two arms of 'giving' and 'creating' knowledge do a hand shake? I think it is possible if both sides see the importance of developing competent and a wellrounded manpower required by the country.

The national laboratories have the experience of good governance, have a large scientific infrastructure with research capabilities; and in many cases, well developed land and buildings. They should use this strength and take additional responsibilities of teaching adequate number of undergraduate (to begin with, say just 100) as well as postgraduate students. They need to add and, more importantly involve, faculty in the areas of humanities and social sciences. But they must retain their emphasis on research in specialized areas of science and engineering. The existing scientists and new faculty should be expected to teach as well as to do research. On the campuses of these national laboratories, students and faculty from various disciplines should be able to live together and interact with each other.

Writing about 'Universities and National Life'⁷, S. Radhakrishnan, India's philosopher-statesman had said: '*I am not much in sympathy with the idea of developing the sciences in one centre and the arts in another. The liberal arts and the pure sciences complete, correct and balance each other.*' Further, quoting from Lord Haldane's address on 'Civic Universities' he writes⁷: '*You cannot, without danger of partial starvation, separate science from literature and philosophy. Each grows best in the presence of the other.*'

Radhakrishnan deliberates further on the role of universities when he recognized the importance of specialization in certain areas of knowledge. He had said: '*In these days of specialization, it is difficult for one to keep oneself upto date in any of branch of learning without neglecting to a certain extent other of branches of learning. University life, where men pursuing learning in different spheres daily meet together in intellectual and social intercourse, is the only safeguard against the dangers of overspecialization.*'

If our national laboratories truly want to be universities (and let us ban the word 'deemed', as it is only a legalistic creation of the UGC) – and one genuinely believes that they can be excellent research universities as well – they will have to incorporate, in their new structures, the concepts of an ideal university so clearly spelt out by Radhakrishnan and further propounded extensively in the Yash Pal committee report. Incidentally, the report has not accepted the suggestion that a national laboratory, in its present form, could be considered as a 'university'.

One would like to conclude on an optimistic note that if national laboratories, in their demand for university status, also accept the major responsibilities of an ideal university, our country would have taken a major step in higher education reform. We would have created an ideal blend of 'teaching and research' in our education system – a blend that we had lost when we created the structures of national laboratories. Surely, we can think of a Bhabha like innovation and create a new brand of 'research universities' incorporated in our national laboratories. We would have created our own Caltech and Stanford models for university education in India.

1. National Knowledge Commission Report, Govt of India, March 2009.
2. Report of The Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education, 2009; <http://www.education.nic.in/HigherEdu/YPCReport.pdf>
3. Education Reform Bills for Parliament, Govt of India, 2010.
4. UNESCO Institute of Statistics Report, 2010; <http://www.uis.unesco.org>
5. Annual Report 2009–10; Ministry of Human Resources Development, Govt of India, 2010.
6. The CSIR Academy Bill, 2010, <http://csirindia.wordpress.com>
7. Radhakrishnan, S., *Reader – An Anthology*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1990, pp. 481–494.

Source: by Dr. P. J. Lavakare, in CURRENT SCIENCE, VOL. 100, NO. 1, 10 JANUARY 2011

NEWS

Sham university: US promises to cooperate with India

Washington: The US has promised to cooperate with India to resolve the issue of affected Indian students of a sham US university, but said it's hard to say what is possible pending a full probe.

The issue "remains under investigation", State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley told reporters Wednesday when asked about the status of the students affected by the closure of "sham" Tri-Valley University (TVU) in California, on charges of visa fraud.

Some 1,555 TVU students, 90 percent of them from India, mostly Andhra Pradesh, face the prospect of deportation unless they can get admission in another institution to retain their student visa status.

"We do understand that there are students who have been caught up in this," Crowley said noting the issue has been discussed with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and others, and also with the Indian embassy here and the US embassy in India.

The US "will work as cooperatively as we can with the Indian government as we move ahead here", he said. "But it's hard to know exactly what is possible because the matter is still under investigation."

"We have ongoing concerns both in this case and more broadly about instances of visa fraud," Crowley said. "And we need to continue to investigate how these things happen and try to do everything we can to prevent them from occurring in the future."

Asked about assurances of help given to the Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and visiting Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao, Crowley said: "I can promise you that we are going to work as cooperatively as we can, both with the government and also to help resolve these cases."

"India has made the point, and we understand it fully, that students caught up in this, the risk is that they'll lose a year

of schooling and go through great inconvenience as this matter is being investigated," he said.

"We do understand that and we have pledged our cooperation. But we do recognise that there are strong indications of visa fraud, and we don't know who is involved, we don't know how they got involved, but this has to be investigated fully, and we will do that."

The US would continue to welcome Indian students to study here, Crowley said, advising them to "avail themselves of all the available information on how to do this, and alert them to the potential for fraudulent institutions that are trying to do these kinds of things".

Noting that it was "a matter of great concern" to both India and the US, Crowley pledged "to keep Indian authorities fully informed, but we have to go through this investigation first".

Source: February 17, 2011/ [IANS](http://ians.com)

HDFC to invest in Kaizen PE fund

Signalling its growing interest in the education space, India's leading home mortgage lender HDFC is making an investment in Kaizen Private Equity, the country's first education-focussed PE fund. This comes close on the heels of HDFC investing Rs 50 crore in Indus World Schools, the formal education venture of Career Launcher.

HDFC will make the investment, whose size was undisclosed, through its wholly owned subsidiary, HDFC Holdings Ltd.

Sandeep Aneja, founder and managing director of Kaizen PE, said the HDFC investment in the fund will help it complete its \$100 million fund-raising exercise. He, however, declined to divulge the size citing contractual obligations.

Following the investment by HDFC, Kaizen would now need about 50% more to close India's first education-focussed fund entirely, he told VCCircle. Kaizen is in the process of raising a \$100-million fund and has achieved its first close in December 2010. It has used the proceeds to make its first investment in an undisclosed company, a report in Business Standard said, quoting a press release.

Kaizen has, recently, raised commitment for its debut fund from International Financial Corporation (IFC), the private investment arm of World Bank.

Kaizen's fund expects to raise over 50% of the corpus from institutional investors. The PE fund will look at providing funding to education companies in their growth stage and will also focus on operational improvements in its portfolio companies. The fund would look at typically investing in the range of \$5 million to \$15 million, according to its website.

Thanks to its non-cyclical nature and huge demand across the KG to PG spectrum, education is one redhot sector if deal data is a pointer. The sector has seen investments of \$190 million across 23 deals in 2010, according to

VCCEdge, compared to 10 deals worth \$128 million in 2009. Beginning of 2011 has already seen several large-ticket deals such as Dubai-based QInvest's deal with FIITJEE and Pearson's strategic acquisition of TutorVista.

Source: Monday, Feb 21, 2011/[Moneycontrol](#)

State mulls regulatory framework for ODE

Minister for higher and technical education Rajesh Tope has spoken about the state government's desire to work out a framework of its own for regulating open and distance education (ODE) institutions in the state.

"Such framework will help the government promote ODE in a big way," Tope told reporters on the sidelines of a function at the Symbiosis Centre for Distance Learning. As of now, ODE in India is regulated by the distance education council (DEC) constituted under the Indira Gandhi National Open University ([ignou](#)). "The state will be within its right to have an ODE framework of its own considering that higher education is a concurrent subject," the minister said.

He said, "The government is not averse to allowing open universities to grant affiliation to colleges provided the law permits such a measure. If the law does not permit, then we will have to go for an amendment, but before we take such a step, we would like to have an apt regulatory framework in place, so that legitimate concerns relating to quality of education and assessment process, are taken care of."

"We want students passing out of ODE institutions to be as competent as their counterparts from conventional universities and colleges. Similarly, the syllabus and courses offered by ODE institutions should be credible and of high quality. Elements of industry-institute linkages to address employment issues besides networking and sharing of resources by ODE institutions are other matters of concern," said Tope.

"The framework will address these as well as other matters relating to eligibility, infrastructure, faculty and technology. It will serve as a ready reference for government authorities to decide whether or not to grant the sanction to an ODE institution," he said.

Tope described ODE as a "right tool" to address issues like the gross enrolment ratio (GER), ie. number of students in the relevant age group of 17 to 23 accessing higher education. Citing the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) report, he said, "The GER in India was a little over 12 per cent, which means out of every 100 student passing out of standard XII, only 12 make it to institutions of higher learning." He said that Maharashtra was better placed in comparison as the University Grants Commission's latest report has put the state's GER at 18 per cent. "We still have a long way to go to ensure that higher education is more accessible and ODE can be one of the key solutions."

Tope said the government was doing its bit towards achieving the goal of expansion of higher education in the state. This includes sanctioning of new colleges and opening of new universities. "However, the cost of infrastructure and shortage of faculty are posing a threat to our expansion plans," he said. "The cost of education is a major concern for students, who aspire for conventional on-campus studies. For them, ODE can be a solution owing to the flexible nature of studies, besides the opportunity it offers to earn while learning."

On the dormant state of the higher education council in the state, Tope said that steps have been initiated to re-constitute the council by bringing in new faces. "The fresh council will serve as a think tank for enabling the government formulate its policies and approach to higher and technical education," he said, adding, "The reconstitution process is likely to be completed in a week."

Source: Monday, Feb 21, 2011/[The Times of India](#)

AICTE fee hike irks pvt institutions

THE Union Government's target to enhance the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education from the existing 11 to 15 per cent by the end of the XI Five-Year Plan appears to be a tall order. According to the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission, this would require opening of 1,500 odd-universities having a cluster of colleges under them to achieve this target.

Though maintenance of quality is an important issue, the central regulatory authority All-India Council for Technical Education's (AICTE) recent move to enhance the processing fee of various technical institutes by 200 to 500 per cent for new professional colleges would deter opening new institutes.

In accordance with the new fee structure, an engineering college would have to deposit a Fixed Deposit Receipt (FDR) of Rs 90 lakh as against the earlier amount of Rs 35 lakh. Similarly, for MBA, pharma and other colleges, the FDR has been enhanced from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 35 lakh. This hike, ranging from 200 to 500 per cent, would put a spanner in the expansion process of a large number of private institutions and the move aims to be deterring private institutes from opening new colleges.

An MD of an education group at Solan opined, "This step will halt the process of expansion because it is an indirect way of deterring expansion activities. No doubt it will ensure that the existing colleges benefit, but instead of this indirect curb, the AICTE should dwell on improving quality."

He added that the notification had been forwarded to the state government, so that they could revise fee structure of these professional courses.

This move has drawn flak from the managements of educational institutions who feel that the cost recovery from students is already in the range of 40 to 50 per cent and hence, generating additional resources from fee would be difficult. Moreover, they would have to convince state

governments to effect an abnormal fee hike which would put a strain on students. The AICTE's move is also contradictory to the government policy of expanding higher education in rural and backward areas.

Dr Anshu Kataria, chairman, Aryans Group of Colleges, Chandigarh, while resenting this fee hike, said this would put a halt on all expansion activities in the private sector that wish to expand in other disciplines. With the processing fees to be paid by an institution to start a new project also being increased to Rs 7,50,000 from the earlier amount of Rs 1,00,000, new institutes would have to rethink expansion, Dr Kataria added.

Interestingly, at a recent national conference of Vice-Chancellors held by the University Grants Commission on "Development of Higher Education: Expansion, Inclusion and Excellence", the Vice-Chancellors had opined that the GER of 20 per cent should be achieved at the end of the 11th Five-Year Plan instead of 15 per cent as proposed by the government. They had also laid stress on the need for setting up new institutions and enhancing the capacity of the existing ones to achieve the objective.

The Vice-Chancellors had also unanimously stated that the new universities should be set up away from metropolitan cities and state capitals in backward and rural areas where the GER is lower than the national average. This objective would, however, fail to be achieved with the AICTE enforcing such norms, as it would deter new professional colleges.

This move is also contrary to the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission, which had proposed that most of the new universities would need significant initial financial support from the government. Instead, the move would put a severe burden on institutes to spare funds in the form of FDRs of one crore as against the earlier amount of Rs 35 lakh for opening an engineering college.

Lack of institutes of higher education is also leading to a higher dropout rate in the country and the lone way to check this is to ensure opening of more institutes in the rural and backward areas. However, this could only be achieved by relaxing stringent norms and facilitating new professional institutes.

Source: 22 February 2011/[The Tribune](#)

Unable to go to school, 14-yr-old commits suicide in Delhi

There is growing anger over public schools violating the Right To Education Act (RTE) after 14-year-old Algin Varghese committed suicide for not paying his school fees in the Capital last week.

Twenty-five per cent free education is mandatory for students of Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). Activists say such students are often harassed. Members of the All India Parent Association of India protested outside the Delhi police headquarters.

"Police hasn't registered a case yet. It's a clear case where the school has troubled Algin, harassed him and that played on his mind and made him commit suicide," said Ashok Agarwal, Parent Association of India, President and RTE Activist.

Algin was studying in VIII standard and was given free education at the Adrash Public School in Uttam Nagar. His mother was working as a temporary staff. She was asked to leave on the promise that Algin could continue studying. After the Right To Information Act was implemented, Algin was part of the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) list. His father alleges the school asked him to pay up or leave.

"He was harassed in school. The Hindi teacher beat him. But he was really depressed after he was not allowed into school. The principal told me the school will not allow him to appear for the exams if we did not pay up fees," said Algin's father PK Varghese.

Principal of Adarsh Public School, Usha Sahgal said, "He has been given free education. He is on the EWS list. Why will we dismiss him?"

However, Algin's friends admit he was often punished at school. And when seven students were suspended from school initially, only Algin wasn't taken back.

"This is the negligence of the police. Had they seized the documents earlier it wouldn't give the school a chance to manufacture and forge documents, which they have now done," Ashok Agarwal added.

Activists call it the Rouvanjeet Roula case of Delhi and the parallels are hard to miss. The only difference is that so far not even a case has been registered after Algin's suicide.

Source: Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011/[NDTV](#)

South Carolina School Counts on Bollywood to Expand

As part of the continuing trend of foreign universities that want to expand their presence in India, the University of South Carolina Monday announced an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, at a function held at the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotel in the city.

The two schools are expected to collaborate for exchange programs. But the university isn't only trying to woo engineering and business students from India—of which it already has a large number.

"We have a total enrollment of 1,700 graduate and undergraduate Indian students on our campus with 90% of them being in the fields of engineering, business, economics and psychology," said C.L. Max Nikias, the university's newly-appointed president. He added that the numbers make USC the school with the biggest Indian student presence in the United States.

But the university president said USC is now keen to expand awareness in India of its cultural offerings, including at the School of Cinematic Arts. The school is awarding an

honorary doctorate to noted Kannada playwright, Girish Karnad.

“We are planning to market the school more, considering India is the home of Bollywood cinema,” Mr. Nikias said.

Elizabeth Monk Daley, dean at the School of Cinematic Arts, says the school is looking at a “consulting role” that would involve helping movie houses in the process of digital production, as well as guiding Indian film schools that want to institute serious education in film.

“In India, like in many countries, it is very hard for families to invest in the media and in film education. They would rather that their kids go to engineering or medical school,” said Ms. Daley. “In a global film industry there is serious need for serious education in film.”

Mr. Nikias himself has fond memories of Hindi films from his childhood in Cyprus.

“As a kid I watched a lot of Bollywood films that had Greek subtitles in Cyprus,” he said of the 1960s films, adding, “I remember them as being so long as to sometimes have two intervals, a lot of dancing around trees and all the animals from the animal kingdom as sometimes having come onto the movie sets!”

The delegation is visiting Delhi next to hold meetings with government officials. The university plans to expand its recognition in India by setting up offices in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore. But it doesn't have any plans right now to offer educational programs in India with a local partner.

“At this point we are here more to learn and explore,” Mr. Nikias told India Real Time. “I view India as a strategic partner for the university and we are here to build relationships in the field of research, exchange programs and corporate collaborations.”

So far they're doing all right—Tata Group chairman Ratan Tata, who hosted the delegation in Mumbai, has been a university trustee since 2005.

Source: Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011/[The Wall Street Journal](#)

Enter bachelor's degree in Mumbai, graduate abroad

Three years ago, 19-year-old Pratiksha Puri would never have imagined that securing an admission for a Bachelor of Mass Media degree in a city college would become her passport to foreign shores. As foreign universities look to cash in on the lucrative field of higher education in India, many top-notch colleges in the city are tying up with foreign universities for more than just student exchange programmes. The trend of top-up courses and twinning arrangements is picking up, especially for mainstream courses like arts, commerce, science, mass media and management, among others.

Hopping on the bandwagon

While the Foreign Education Providers Bill to allow foreign educational institutions to open up branch campuses in India remains stuck in Parliament, renowned colleges in the city are entering into twinning arrangements or offering top-up courses where students can go abroad either for the completion of their graduation degree — called the top-up year — or for pursuing a Master's degree.

Case in point, Jai Hind College, Churchgate, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bournemouth University in the UK to offer a first-of-its-kind top-up programme in Bachelor of Mass Media (BMM). “A tie-up between an Indian and foreign institute saves money that would otherwise have been spent in gaining a foreign education. At the same time, it opens up new avenues in terms of the joint degree that is awarded by both institutes, as well as the chance to complete at least some part of the course abroad,” says 21-year-old Hemant Kumar who's currently looking to do an BMM from such an institute with a foreign tie-up.

Under this three-year degree programme, students can pursue their final year and Master's in the UK and graduate with a degree from the foreign university. A new syllabus has been created incorporating the curricula of both institutions. “This is the first time we are giving students an opportunity to study a mainstream undergraduate programme abroad. Often, colleges enter into partnerships with foreign universities only for postgraduate or specialised programmes. So students who want to opt for generic courses like commerce, management or pure sciences tend to miss out on international exposure,” said Kirti Narain, principal, Jai Hind College.

For those studying Arts, the college is also offering a global studies programme where students can study one term in Nottingham Trent University, UK. Furthermore, tie-ups with foreign universities for courses in bio-science, management, environmental management and computer science are also in the pipeline.

Similarly, St Xaviers College, Fort, has also partnered with University of Bath, UK to offer a top-up programme in biotechnology, where students can pursue their Master's degree at the UK campus. “Earlier, we only had short-term student exchange programmes with overseas universities, but now many foreign universities have started recognising our courses and allow credit transfer,” said Frazer Mascarenhas, principal.

HR College of Commerce and Economics has a plethora of courses with different overseas universities like SP Jain Institute of Management in Singapore and Australia and New York University, which has opened a new campus in Abu Dhabi, for Bachelors in business administration (BBA).

Best of both worlds

Such programmes find traction with students since they get a chance to enjoy the best of both the worlds. Despite the staggering costs, the popularity of such programmes is on the upswing, as these colleges offer students part of such

programmes with considerable tuition waivers and scholarships.

A BBA programme from DePaul University, USA offers a full tuition waiver for students of HR College.

"When we go to study abroad through such programmes, we are easily admitted due to the college brand name and receive many freeships and concessions which would otherwise not be accessible," said Saloni Kamgar, a banking and insurance student, HR College.

However, such programmes often require students to pay for their own trip abroad. But Narain adds, "The cost of such a course is almost double that of a similar programme conducted entirely in India. However, also worth considering is the fact that doing a similar programme abroad would have cost you almost four times as much!"

However, academicians advise students to tread with caution since such degrees might not always be a value addition to your resume. "The foreign returned students are not treated any differently when it comes to placements in India," admits a professor.

Source: Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011/[DNA India](#)

IITs log dip in girl aspirants

The IITs have seen a drop in the number of girls registering to appear for IIT-JEE for two successive years, data released by the institutes showed today.

The registration data for this year's IIT-JEE, which was released this evening by Kanpur IIT director S.G. Dhande, shows 23.44 per cent of the candidates are girls. Last year, the percentage was 24.82.

The 24.82 per cent was a dip from 25.72 per cent of 2009.

The total number of candidates has increased from 4,55,571 in 2010 to 4,85,918 this year.

The 4.85 lakh students will compete for nearly 10,000 seats in 16 IITs as well as the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad. This means nearly 50 students will vie for each seat in the premier technology institutes.

The IIT-JEE this time would be held in 1,051 centres across the country on April 10.

The dip in the percentage of girl aspirants is unusual as it had continuously risen from 1997 to 2009. About 10 per cent candidates for IIT-JEE were girls in 1997.

"The registration of female candidates has been increasing except for the last two years. We will analyse the trend and see what can be done to get more female students to the IITs," an IIT director said.

The interest of girl students for engineering has always remained low compared to boys, the director said.

The enrolment of girls in IITs has always remained below 10 per cent.

About 85,000 candidates will take the test under the IIT Bombay zone this year and nearly 58,000 students will appear in IIT Guwahati zone. About 63,000 students will sit for the test at 142 centres under the IIT Kharagpur zone.

The Joint Admission Board, which oversees the JEE preparations, met in Kanpur today to take stock of the preparation. "The preparations are according to schedule. There will be no major change in the exam format or procedure this time," Dhande said.

There were 9,509 seats in these institutes last year, the number of seats is expected to go up to about 10,000 this year.

Source: Tuesday, February 22, 2011/[The Telegraph](#)

GRE takers in India rise by 10% in

The number of students appearing for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is rising steadily not only globally but also in India. This can be attributed to the fact that an increasing number of business schools and graduate institutes are accepting this score for admission. According to Educational Testing Service (ETS), which conducts the GRE exams globally, during 2010, the test volumes have jumped by over 700,000 worldwide, a 5 per cent increase over the 2009 numbers.

"The growth we are seeing is further enhanced by the many business and graduate school programmes worldwide that are now choosing to accept the GRE General Test for admissions," said David G. Payne, VP and COO of the higher education division at ETS. "We expect continued growth in 2011 as students and institutions look to the GRE programme to provide an even more diverse applicant pool, and unmatched value."

Giving an Indian perspective, Vinayak Kudva, product head at IMS Learning Resources, said the number of candidates appearing for the GRE test in the country is also rising by 5-10 per cent year-on-year. In 2009, about 55,000 students took GRE exams in India and last year the numbers rose by about 10 per cent," he added.

That's not all. Come August 2011 and GRE will be introducing a new test pattern and according to Kudva, once this new set of patterns are introduced, a greater number of colleges, both management schools as well as graduate institutions, will accept and recognise this score, thereby leading to an increase in the number of candidates opting for this exam.

According to ETS, the GRE General Test volume has seen significant growth in China and India, as well as solid growth in Europe, Africa and other regions around the world. "GRE test takers represent more diverse cultural, ethnic and academic backgrounds than ever before, attracting those institutions looking for a broad and highly qualified applicant pool," said Payne of ETS.

With thousands of graduate and business programs worldwide now accepting GRE scores for admissions,

students are taking the GRE General Test to satisfy both business and graduate school application requirements for institutions worldwide.

Ajay Arora, director of the Triumphant Institute of Management Education (TIME) said that the rise is mostly due to the global meltdown of 2008, which saw both the GRE and GMAT numbers take a huge hit. "It's true that once the new format is implemented, the number of colleges accepting GRE scores will also increase. However, the main driver for students taking the exam will be the economic situation in the US and the employment trends globally," he pointed out.

Source: Tuesday, February 22, 2011/[My Digital FC](#)

More girls taking IIT JEE

There has been a considerable rise in the number of girl candidates taking the prestigious IIT Joint Entrance Examination (IIT JEE) exam which will be conducted by IIT-Kanpur in 2011.

Out of the 4.85 lakh candidates who will appear in the exam next year, 1.13 lakh are girl candidates. "In 2010, the number of girl aspirants was 24 per cent, which has gone up to 28 per cent in 2011," said IIT-K Director Sanjay Govind Dhande.

"It is heartening to see the significant increase in the number of girl candidates," said Dhande. The maximum number of girls appearing in the entrance exam are from IIT-Madras zone — 20,546, followed by 16,976 girls from IIT-Roorkee zone, 16,877 from IIT-Delhi IIT-Delhi zone, 16,770 from IIT-Kanpur zone, 16,529 from IIT-Bombay zone, 15,689 girls from IIT-Kharagpur zone and 10,555 girls from IIT-Guwahati zone.

A total of 4,85,918 aspirants will be appearing in the IIT JEE 2011, to be conducted at 1051 centres in different parts of the country on April 10.

When compared to the exam in 2010, the number of aspirants has gone up by 5 per cent. In 2010, 4.55 lakh students had appeared in IIT JEE. Dhande said that no change has been made in the format of the exam which will be conducted in two shifts — from 9 am to 12 noon and from 2 pm to 5 pm.

He said IIT-Bombay zone has the maximum number of 185 examination centres, followed by IIT-Kanpur with 173 centres, IIT-Madras with 156 centres, IIT-Delhi with 146 centres, IIT-Kharagpur with 142 centres and IIT-Guwahati with 117 exam centres. Dhande said, "From IIT-K zone, 16,770 girl candidates and 63,661 male aspirants would appear in the exam." He further said the exam results are likely to be announced in the last week of May.

Source: Wednesday, February 22, 2011/[Indian Express](#)

The new connect

The Australian Government organised an education fair in the Capital recently to showcase range of academic

programmes, scholarships and career opportunities as part of the 'Australian Education Excellence Showcase 2011.' Nearly 25 Australian universities participated in the fair that saw interested students from all quarters -- business management, technology, engineering, science and hospitality.

"The education relationship holds enormous promise and is the connecting thread between our two countries. Australia puts tremendous focus on innovation, research and development and that is reflected in our own benchmarking. At this transition point in our education relationship, we clearly wish to separate our education objectives from labour market and migration objectives. As we rebuild our education relationship with India, our focus will be on high quality students for high quality education. We will also want greater number of students to undertake postgraduate courses," said Peter Varghese, Australian High Commissioner to India.

"Though vocational education will continue to be an important part of the relationship, the mix will be slightly different. Our aim to provide quality education is only going to grow stronger," he added.

Commenting on the spate of 'racially-motivated attacks' on Indian students in 2009 that had drawn a lot of flak, he said, "We don't dismiss the fact that the students were not affected by all that had happened, but we are doing every possible thing to assure safety and quality education at the same time. The steps we have taken have had an impact. It is much less of an issue today than it was 12 months ago. We have come up with inter-cultural engagements to make all the international students feel better while they study in Australia," he added.

Regular surveys with international students have consistently shown a very high level of satisfaction with life in Australia and the quality of education there, he said, adding, "In the recently-conducted International Student Survey in Australia, Indian students turned out to be the most satisfied with our services." Over 8,000 students from India enrolled in Australian institutions in 2010.

Culture Card

The Victorian government has launched a cultural card for international students, studying tertiary courses at post-secondary institutions, that enables them to enjoy what is on offer in Victoria through a mix of special offers at sports, arts, and many other events.

The premise is that experiencing and understanding local culture is an important step to succeeding in studies, career and life.

It is an initiative of the Committee for Melbourne and the Victorian Government, supported by participating partners. The actual wallet-card style Culture Card is free for international students.

Geoffrey Conaghan, Victorian government commissioner to India and Sri Lanka, said "The idea is to get them out of campus and mix more broadly with the Australian society, get a broader education experience. The idea is that their experience is enriched and they return to their countries as brand ambassadors."

Source: Wednesday, February 22, 2011/[Hindustan Times](#)

Global design competition for Nalanda university

New Delhi: As the historic Nalanda University is set to be rebuilt, Vice Chancellor Gopa Sabharwal said Monday that a global design competition for the building's architecture will be announced in three to four months.

Talking to reporters in Delhi at a press conference, the newly appointed vice chancellor said that the new university will be built on an area of 446 acres, 10 km from the site of the ancient university of Nalanda in Bihar.

"The university will be built in Rajgir, which is 10 km from the site of the historic Nalanda University. A global designing competition will be announced in coming three or four months for finalising the architecture," Sabharwal said.

The Nalanda University Bill was passed by the parliament during the monsoon session in August 2010 and a notification for its creation was issued in November.

While the work for creation of infrastructure has already begun, the construction of the building and other details will start once the designs are finalised.

"The design must get ready by next year. We will try to built it as soon as possible but it is difficult to give a time frame," she said.

The university, which will be an international state-of-the-art institution, will have post graduate courses in six disciplines.

The course include Buddhist studies, philosophy and comparative religions, historical studies, international relations and peace studies, business management in relation to public policy and development studies, languages and literature and ecology and environmental studies.

Talking about the courses, Nalanda mentor group chairman and nobel laureate Amartya Sen said that the courses like Buddhist philosophy and religious studies aimed at connecting the modern university to its historic past when Nalanda was the centre of learning that attracted students from all over the world.

"Courses like Buddhist studies, comparative religion, literature and history will connect it to its past. I hope some day we can also include astronomy in the courses as it was taught in the ancient Nalanda university," Sen said.

Asked about the absence of science related courses, Sen said that creation of infrastructure was one of the main reasons for this.

"You cannot teach science without a lab, so infrastructure was one of the main reasons why we have stressed on humanities. In the course of time, science courses will get included," he said.

While the government of India has created an endowment fund for the creation of the university, the project has also attracted contributions from many other countries including Singapore, Australia and China.

"We got \$7 million from Singapore, \$1 million from China, Australia is funding a chair, while Laos has given \$50,000," Sabharwal said.

Speaking on the occasion, Foreign Minister of Singapore George Yeo said that the aim was to create a university to facilitate exchange of ideas.

"It will be a place where human beings gather and each contribute to development of others," Yeo said.

Source: Wednesday, February 22, 2011/[IANS](#)

Spending on education a total write-off?

Is the government doing enough to provide good quality education to children? Budget speeches and political propaganda would have us believe that increased government spending on education in the past few years and the Right to Education Act (RTEA) is propelling an education revolution. But the reality appears to be different.

A recent report of the District Information System of Education (DISE) says that 29% of elementary schools did not have a pucca building in 2009-10, up from 27% in 2007-08. Over 49% schools did not have boundary walls, only a slight improvement over two years ago when the proportion was 50%. Girls had a separate toilet in only 59% of schools, again only slightly better than 50% in 2007-8. There is improvement in drinking water and number of classrooms, but the situation is still grim.

Although there are no comprehensive surveys to test learning levels of children, an NGO Pratham which has been regularly testing samples of students in rural areas revealed in its 2010 report that 53% of class 5 students could read a simple text. That's down from 58% in 2007. Only 36% of children could do simple division compared to 42% in 2007. Desperate parents are shifting their kids to private schools where enrollment is up from about 20% in 2007 to 24% in 2010. The number of class 8 students taking private tuitions is also up from about 22% in 2007 to 31% in 2010. Most alarming is the fact pointed out in the DISE report that net enrollment ratio dropped from about 98% in class 5 to 58% in class 8.

Obviously all is not well. Government expenditure — both, state and central combined — on education has grown over the years, from about Rs.97,375 cr in 2004-05 to Rs.1,89,325 cr in 2008-09, according to data compiled by the Center for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA). As a share of total government expenditure, the spending on education is stagnating at about 11.6%, while

as a share of GDP it has increased only marginally from 3.01% in 2004-05 to 3.4% in 2009-10.

CBGA studies show that the government is being very tight fisted in its approach towards actually implementing the RTE Act. A meeting of state education secretaries in January last year had worked out that Rs 1.82 lakh crore will be needed to ensure that every child between 6 to 14 years gets good education, as per the act. This was to be given to the states over 5 years starting 2010.

The nearest to quality school education in the government sector is the Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs). According to CBGA, the government spent about Rs 2002 crore for 981 KVs in 2010-11. That works out to about Rs 2.04 crore per KV every year. Assuming that half this amount would be spent on elementary education — the rest going for higher classes — CBGA arrives at about Rs 1 crore for good quality elementary education per school. So, how much is the government willing to spend through the SSA for implementing RTEA? Just Rs 22 lakh, as per CBGA calculations. As the CBGA study points out "the first step towards making a dent in improving the education outcomes is possible only if the budgetary outlays are substantially increased". Is the government listening?

Source: 22 February 2011/New Delhi/[Times of India](#)

Brokers trade JEE toppers to coaching classes for credit

That the IIT coaching sector is one of the country's most profitable is well known. But there is also a cottage industry that feeds off coaching classes, one that deals with the buying and selling of top rankers at the joint entrance exam (JEE).

For over a month, TOI tracked one such "broker" trading in students, a man named Vishnu Agarwal from Kota, a dusty town in Rajasthan that has become the IIT coaching capital of India. He "sells" top rankers from one class to another for a fee.

Agarwal 's modus operandi is simple. He first zeroes in on the brightest students from the bestknown IIT coaching classes who are most likely to clear the JEE. He then approaches other coaching classes in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi and offers them the opportunity to administer their test series to these students. Once the JEE results are declared, the coaching class can include those who appeared for their test series as part of the total number of students from their institute who made it to the IITs. The test series is free of cost for students, who are sometimes even paid to write these tests. The coaching class pays Agarwal for the service.

Agarwal even claims that, for Rs 6 lakh, he can provide new entrants in the IIT coaching sector with the entire academic plan of well-known coaching classes such as Bansal in Kota. According to Agarwal, around 1,000 coaching classes in India use Bansal's content, much of

which is provided by him. He claims he has clients in Bihar, UP and Chattisgarh, among other states.

He operates from a plush locality in Kota's Talwandi colony, with three cellphones and a laptop. One of his mobile numbers is registered in Mumbai while the other number is registered in Kota. He would not reveal the third number.

The matter came to light when Agarwal contacted IITians Pace, a popular coaching class in Mumbai, and offered to "sell" it some top-rankers from the biggest names in Kota's coaching industry. TOI worked alongside Praveen Tyagi, MD of IITians Pace, to expose Agarwal. Our reporters approached him from Mumbai and Jaipur.

Tyagi first put TOI's Mumbai correspondent on a conference call with Agarwal, where he discussed his business model and how he would produce top rankers for Pace's test series.

TOI then phoned Agarwal from Mumbai posing as Tyagi's secretary, Sonal, and discussed plans to take the deal forward. The conversation was recorded. Agarwal said he could provide 30-40 candidates from three classes in Kota (Bansal, Resonance and Vibrant) who would definitely score a rank below 100 at JEE. Each of these student would come for Rs 10,000. He said he could also provide a few more kids who would probably make it to the IITs, but with a rank above 100. These, he said, would cost only Rs 5,000 per head. He said that in addition to his own fee, he would also have to pay students some money to appear for the tests.

Source: MUMBAI/JAIPUR/Thursday, February 23, 2011/[The Times of India](#)

Setting up of Model Degree Colleges in Educationally Backward District

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

Under the Scheme the Central Government shall provide assistance to the extent of one third of the capital cost for establishment of each college, limited to Rs.2.67 crore. For special category states (i.e. all North-Eastern States Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Assam, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand), the central share shall be 50 per cent of the capital cost limited to Rs. 4 core for each college.

During the remaining period the 11th Five Year Plan , provision exists for establishing 200 model colleges in identified districts, with priority being given to special category states and districts having concentration of weaker sections and minorities as well as other districts in Schedule V and Schedule VI areas. Those colleges which have been established on or after 1st January, 2008 in identified districts shall also be eligible to be covered under

this Scheme, subject to their satisfying the guidelines of University Grants Commission in respect of model colleges.

Source: February 23, 2011/[PIB](#)

Centralized Exam

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has laid down the minimum qualification for a person to be eligible for appointment as a teacher in schools in its Notification. One of the essential qualifications specified in the Notification is that a person has to pass a Teacher Eligibility Test (TET).

The TET will be conducted by the appropriate Government (Central Government and State Government) in accordance with guidelines framed by the NCTE for the purpose.

Source: February 23, 2011/[PIB](#)

Edge 2011 to discuss future of higher education

The Emerging Directions in Global Education (EDGE), a forum of like-minded public and private universities striving for global excellence, announced here on Thursday that the 4th edition of its annual conclave on higher education will be held at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi from March 9 to 11.

Human resources development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal will inaugurate the conclave that will bring together educators of leading national and international universities to interact, collaborate and understand the prevailing trends in the higher education sector. The theme for the event this year will be, 'Shaping the future of Indian higher education,' Vidya Yeravdekar, vice-chairman of EDGE's academic programmes committee, told a news conference here.

The forum, which involves some of leading varsities, including the Indira Gandhi National Open University; University of Pune; BITS, Pilani; Manipal; Symbiosis; Tata Institute of Social Studies; Bharati Vidyapeeth and Sastra University, Thanjavur, among others, is the brainchild of former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan. It was established in 2007 with an objective of promoting quality through sharing of knowledge and resources, best practices and exploring ways to adopt emerging trends in higher education.

Yeravdekar said, "Several key issues such as developing international partnerships; future of professional education, including medical, vocational and technical studies; infrastructure and funding; new methods of assessments; use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education and policy frameworks will be deliberated during the three-day conclave."

Rajendra Jagdale, director general of the Sci-Tech Park at the University of Pune, who is also an adviser to EDGE and convener of its awards panel, said eminent scientist C N R Rao will be presented the 'Education personality of

the year' award this year. Rao joins a group of illustrious recipients of this award like Sam Pitroda, Montek Singh Ahluwalia and Yash Pal, said Jagdale.

According to EDGE general secretary Jagdish Patankar, the conference will be addressed by 70 leading personalities, including minister of state for HRD D Purandeswari; Maharashtra minister for higher and technical education Rajesh Tope; Planning Commission member Narendra Jadhav; Secretary to HRD ministry Vibha Puri Das; joint secretary Amit Khare; Dubai Knowledge Village MD Ayoub Kazim; Nanyang Technological University provost Bertil Andersson; Lavasa Corporation chairman Ajit Gulabchand; Ignou vice-chancellor V N Rajasekharan Pillai and US Association of International Educator NAFSA's Marlene M Johnson.

Patankar said, "Four workshops covering diverse topics like 'New models of admissions'; 'Governance issues in educational institutions'; 'Making international partnerships work'; and 'What it takes to be in Top 100 universities' will be held as part of the conference. Over 30 international institutions from USA, France, Singapore, Australia, Dubai, Canada etc will participate in this event, he added.

Source: 24 February 2011/Pune/[The Times of India](#)

HRD Ministry Constitutes Task Force

The Union Ministry for Human Resource Development, has constituted a Task Force to examine applications from 'institutions that need to take corrective measures to several criteria for satisfying the Deemed University status' regarding rectification of the deficiencies mentioned in the Report of the Committee constituted to review functioning of institutions deemed to be universities.

The Central Government had constituted a Committee of Experts to review the functioning of the existing institutions 'deemed-to-be-universities' vide its notification No. F.9-26/2009-U3A dated 6/7/2009 so as to satisfy itself of the justification of their continuance as institutions 'deemed to be universities'. The Review Committee (i.e., the Committee of Experts) had submitted its Report to the Government on 20/10/2009 which was accepted, in principle, by the Government.

The Review Committee had, after assessment of the institutions deemed to be universities, placed 44 institutions in the category of institutions which on an aggregate were found to be deficient in some aspects which need to be rectified over a three year period for them to transit into the category of 'institutions satisfying most of the criteria for the Deemed University status'. Deficiencies found in these institutions vis-à-vis the parameters used in the Review are already available in the public domain in the website of the Ministry of Human Resource Development at <http://education.nic.in>.

The issues regarding expansion of these institutions can be considered by the Government only when these institutions rectify the deficiencies found in the Review within the

stipulated period of three years from the date of the Report, as otherwise, expansion of such institutions would further enhance their deficiencies.

Some of the above-mentioned institutions deemed to be universities have represented claiming to have overcome the deficiencies within the stipulated period three years.

In order to assess whether, and if so how, the deficiencies have been rectified by these institutions within the prescribed timeframe as mentioned in the Report of the Review Committee, the Government would require the advice of the Task Force as the deficiencies were found in these institutions, by the Review Committee (which consisted of the same members as that of the Task Force mentioned in the following para).

The Government has constituted the Task Force comprising the following experts to examine applications from institutions deemed to be universities so as to assess whether deficiencies pointed out in the Review have been overcome by these institutions and whether the institutions are eligible to continue as institutions deemed to be universities, and advise the Government accordingly:

1	Prof. P.N. Tandon, Professor Emiretus Department of Neurosurgery AIIMS New Delhi	Member
2	Prof. Goverdhan Mehta, National research professor and Lilly Jubilant Chair, University of Hyderabad.	Member
3	Prof. Anandakrishnan, Chairman IIT Kanpur	Member
4	Prof. Mrinal Miri, Former Vice Chancellor	Member

The frequency of the meetings and procedure to be adopted including venue, etc. shall be left to the Task Force itself, provided that it meets as often as it can and well within the stipulated period of three years from the date of submission of the Report.

The entire process of the aforementioned examination shall be video-recorded live and the findings of the Task Force shall be put in the public domain on the Ministry's website <http://education.nic.in> in addition to informing the applicants individually.

Source: February 23, 2011/[PIB](#)

Code of Ethics for School Teachers

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has developed a Code of Professional Ethics for school teachers on the recommendations of a Committee constituted for the purpose under the Chairmanship of Prof. A.K. Sharma, former Director, NCERT.

The Code provides a framework of principles that would guide teachers in discharging their obligations towards students, parents and other stakeholders.

The Code will be implemented in collaboration with the associations and federations of school teachers

Source: February 25, 2011/[PIB](#)

Seats in Engineering Courses

The various steps taken by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for increasing the seats of various courses of engineering in AICTE approved institutions in country are as follows:

(i) Applications for opening new institutions are accepted round the year.

(ii) New Institutes can now start with enhanced intake capacity for more economic viability.

(iii) Upto 5 Under Graduate (UG) courses and / or divisions with intake of 300 is granted to new engineering and technical institutions.

(iv) Upto 2 UG courses and /or divisions with intake of 120 is granted to new technical institutions other than engineering.

(v) AICTE approval is granted for establishing stand alone Post Graduate (PG) institutions. (vi) Upto 2 courses/programmes at any level per shift may be granted on self disclosure basis if facilities are available for institutions which has completed on batch.

(vi) Upto one course /programme any level per shift may be granted on self disclosure basis if facilities are available for institution which has completed one batch.

(vii) Upto one course/programme any level per shift may be granted on self disclosure basis if facilities are available for institution yet to complete one batch.

(viii) One course/programme at any level per shift may be additionally granted if the institution is accredited.

(ix) Approval is granted for 2nd shift to increase utilization of infrastructure at the institutes with additional intake.

(x) Additional division (60 seats) is granted for lateral entry of diploma holders in degree programmes in Engineering.

(xi) Different institutions established by same society/trust/government running same or different programmes can be integrated to increase the seats of various courses of engineering.

(xii) Land and building norms for the grant of approval to establish new technical institutions has been modified

maintaining the quality of education for enhancing participation and increasing the number of seats.

AICTE has opened its web portal from 30.12.2011 to 28.02.2011 for online submission of proposals for opening of new institutions with different courses in engineering for academic year 2011-12. The applications so received will then be processed as per process defined under Approval Process Handbook 2011-12 and approval will be granted to the suitable proposals complying with the AICTE norms before the commencement of the Academic year 2011-12, it is expected that grant of new approvals will inter-alia help in increasing the number of seats in engineering for academic year 2011-12.

Source: February 25, 2011/[PIB](#)

HRD Ministry Constitutes Committee for NVEQF

A consensus was arrived at in the meeting of State Education Ministers on the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) held on twentieth January under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Human Resource Development on the need for constitution of a Group of State Education Ministers (In charge of Vocational Education) for recommending a National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework and preparation of a roadmap for its implementation. Consequent to this, a Group of State Ministers has been constituted, as follows:

Minister of Education from 12 States (in charge of Vocational Education), Karnataka; Andhra Pradesh; Maharashtra; Gujarat; Chattisgarh; Haryana; Punjab; Rajasthan; West Bengal; Bihar; Assam; Mizoram along with Secretary (SE&L) as Convener and Secretary (HE) as the Co-convener

The Group of Ministers will submit its report on a suitable framework for National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) and a roadmap for its implementation by 31st July, 2011.

In order to co-ordinate the drafting of the NVEQF, the HRD Ministry has constituted a Co-ordination Committee with the following members.

1. Shri Ashok Thakur, Additional Secretary (TE), MHRD
2. Shri Sunil Kumar, Additional Secretary (HE), MHRD
3. Shri N.K. Sinha, Additional Secretary (TEL), MHRD
4. Dr. S.C. Khuntia, Joint Secretary (SE), MHRD
5. Chairman, UGC or his representative
6. Chairman, AICTE or his representative
7. Chairman, NIOS or his representative
8. Chairman, CBSE or his representative
9. Nominee of National Skill Development Corporation
10. Dr. Santosh Mehrotra, Director General, IAMR

The Coordination Committee is mandated to prepare a harmonized approach to the NVEQF by suitably incorporating the recommendations of the Committees constituted through the Sectoral Round Tables. The Co-Ordination Committee is to present its draft to the Group of State Ministers for approval.

The terms of reference of the Committee would be set common principles and develop guidelines for a nationally recognized qualifications system, covering schools, vocational education institutes and institutes of higher education with qualification ranging from secondary to doctorate level, facilitating international recognition of national standards. The framework will have a competency based modular approach with provision of credit accumulation and transfer. The NVEQF provides vertical and horizontal mobility with multiple entry and exit to the students. There will be full collaboration with sector skill councils (SSCs) and industry for development of quality standards competencies, model curricula, assessment and testing procedures.

The Co-ordination Committee shall submit its draft to the Group of State Ministers by 31st May, 2011

Source: February 25, 2011/[PIB](#)

E-Certificate for Candidates Qualifying in UGC-NET Exam

The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal today inaugurated the 'e-certificate' for the UGC-NET qualified candidates. The minister also released a compendium of UGC schemes. The UGC has initiated steps for online registration of the NET examination so that all the necessary information with regard to the candidates is captured, including their photographs, at the time of registration itself. The information thus captured is proposed to be used for the award of these e-certificates once the results are announced.

These e-certificates will cut down the time lag for issuing the certificate from 6-8 months to 6 days. Similarly, whenever an institution writes to UGC for verification of authenticity of the NET Certificate presented by the candidates, the authenticity of the certificate will now be done within a span of 24 hours as against the earlier 4 months. The process of issuing the UGC-NET qualification certificate to successful candidates normally takes around 6-8 months, a cause of concern both to UGC and to the students. Also, Institutions wrote to UGC for verifying the authenticity of the NET Certificates being presented by the candidates at the time of admission to Ph.D. or at the time of appointment in a College/University for the teaching assignment. This verification currently takes around 4 months another matter of great concern for all stakeholders.

In the compendium, 63 schemes of the UGC have been synoptically profiled, covering the objectives of each scheme, the criteria for becoming eligible to receive financial assistance from the UGC, the operational tenure

of the scheme and the process of selection followed in approving the proposals, and finally the quantum of financial assistance that can be provided to execute the scheme.

The University Grants Commission conducts the national level test, viz; National Eligibility Test (NET) twice in a year; in June and December to determine the eligibility for the recruitment of teachers as Assistant Professors in Institutions of Higher Learning and for the award of Junior Research Fellowships (JRFs). The Test is conducted in 77 subjects at 74 Centres spread across the country. While the examination for the award of JRF is being conducted since 1984, the examination for determining the eligibility for Assistant Professorship is being conducted since 1989.

The number of Fellowships under the NET scheme has been increased from 2,000 to 6,400 per annum since 2010. In June, 2010, 10,433 candidates successfully qualified the NET for Assistant Professorship, including JRF.

Source: March 03, 2011/[PIB](#)

Union Budget 2011: Govt ups education allocation by 24%

The education sector has got its share of goodies this Budget. Education allocation has been proposed to be raised by 24% over last year to Rs 52,057 crore, of which Rs 21,000 crore will be towards the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a 40% increase over last year.

The FM has also proposed to provide special grants to recognise excellence in universities and academic institutions including Rs 200 crore for IIT Kharagpur; Rs 50 crore each to upcoming centres of Aligarh Muslim University at Murshidabad in West Bengal and Malappuram in Kerala; and Rs 20 crore for IIM Calcutta for its finance research and training lab, among others.

IIMC finance professor Dr BB Chakraborty said: "We had asked the FM for this corpus to upgrade the facilities at our finance lab. This money will go towards higher levels of research, market-oriented research and development programmes."

Source: 28 February 2011/New Delhi/[The Economic Times](#)

Budget 2011, Highlights on Education

- An allocation of Rs 520.57 bn in FY12 for education, which is an increase of 24% over FY11.
- The proposal to increase the plan allocation for school education to Rs 389.57 bn in FY12 from Rs 310.36 bn in FY11.
- An allocation of Rs 210 bn for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which is 40% higher than Rs 150 bn allocated in FY11. A revised Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Vocationalisation of Secondary Education" will be implemented from FY12 to improve the employability of the youth.

- An allocation of Rs 103.80 bn for National Programme of Mid Day Meals in schools.
- An allocation of Rs 52.54 bn for University Grants Commission; Rs 56.60 bn for technical education and Rs 9.43 bn for National Mission in Education through information & communication technology.
- Connectivity to all 1,500 institutions of Higher Learning and Research through optical fiber backbone to be provided by March, 2012.
- Additional Rs 5 bn proposed to be provided for National Skill Development Fund during FY12.
- Introduce a scholarship scheme in FY12 for needy students belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes studying in classes ninth and tenth which would benefit about 40 lakh Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students.
- Rs 500 mn each to upcoming centres of Aligarh Muslim University at Murshidabad in West Bengal and Malappuram in Kerala.
- Rs 1 bn as one-time grant to the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University at Pookode, Kerala.
- Rs 100 mn each for setting up Kolkata and Allahabad Centres of Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha.
- Rs 2 bn as one time grant to IIT, Kharagpur.
- Rs 200 mn for Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Sriperumbudur, TamilNadu.
- Rs 200 mn for IIM, Kolkata, to set up its Financial Research and Trading Laboratory.
- Rs 2 bn for Maulana Azad Education Foundation.
- Rs 100 mn for Centre for Development Economics and Ratan Tata Library, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi and Rs 100 mn for Madras School of Economics.

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Government will universalise secondary education: Patil

President Pratibha Patil Monday said that after Right to Education for primary education, the government is committed to universalising secondary education.

'My government is committed to universalizing secondary education through the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. Girls' hostels are being set up in each of the 3,500 educationally backward blocks in the country to bring secondary education within the reach of girls,' the president said addressing a joint sitting of both houses of parliament on the first day of the budget session.

'The Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act is another step in my government's approach to right-based governance. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been aligned to the implementation of this act. It has been scaled up to universalise elementary education with a universal mid-day meal programme to improve both enrolment and retention,' she said in her hour-long speech.

Focusing on adult literacy, the president said that government's flagship Saakshar Bharat programme will be spread to more districts.

'The Saakshar Bharat programme is designed to improve adult literacy, especially among the disadvantaged sections of society. By 2012, it will extend to all 365 districts that have poor adult female literacy levels,' she said.

Patil added that the government is taking steps to effect changes in the Apprenticeship Act 'to introduce a large number of modular training courses, and to make skills training bankable'.

The Apprenticeship Act requires firms to reserve 50 percent of new jobs for apprentices trained by them.

'Our country has a huge advantage in terms of being a young nation. Our young people have to be invested with skills if we are to reap the demographic dividend,' she added.

Source: 21 February 2011/New Delhi/[IANS-Sify News](#)

Digital classrooms: The future of young India

Keeping pace with students who are becoming more tech-savvy, schools in India are taking to the concept of digital classrooms — a new education technology that assists teachers with course-ware and maintenance support in digital format.

When Mrinalini Kaura, the principal of Venkateshwar International School (VIS) in Dwarka, New Delhi, heard of this concept, she did not think twice before digitising 45 classrooms. Barely a few months into revamping the classrooms, Kaura was so impressed with the results that she plans to implement it in the remaining 23 classes of her school.

Kaura says she sees digital classrooms as the way ahead for all schools because it makes both teaching and learning simple: Better assessment system, real-time paper evaluation and abstract concepts made easy to understand.

VIS is not the only success story with Educomp Solution's smartclass in its classrooms. Several schools in Ludhiana — including Kundan Vidya Mandir, Satpaul School and BCM School — too, have caught up with the trend and are experimenting with technology to impart knowledge to up to class VIII students.

Educomp, till a few years ago, was the only player in the digital classroom segment, but today the market has over

half-a-dozen players — like Everonn Education, EdServe Softsystem, Core Projects and Technologies, NIIT and Manipal K-12 Education — who have made learning easy through IT-enabled systems.

There's no denying the fact that schools and educational institutions are waking up to the opportunity of IT-based solutions and service providers are reckoning its potential.

Chennai-based Everonn Education lists its growth plans for its iSchool. "This segment will see huge growth in the days to come. At present, we are in 1,370 schools. We plan to take that number to 5,000 schools over the next three years," says P Kishore, founder and managing director of Everonn Education.

Educomp has 5,534 schools — including Delhi Public School and Bal Bharti in New Delhi — and 3.9 million students using its Smartclass solution.

The digital classroom services include: setting up of infrastructure and technology in schools; providing digitised course-ware and maintenance support to teachers; educating teachers and the management on technology usage and conduct special interactive sessions, sometimes through VSAT.

The market has evolved with the Central government's move to fund Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan for ICT@Schools programme with a Rs 15 lakh per district per year budget. Under the government's Technology in Education Initiative, out of a total 10,00,000 schools in the country, the programme will cover 6,42,600 schools at the primary, upper primary and secondary levels.

Every school will have a server, five PCs, printer and internet connectivity. State governments will outsource installation and maintenance of hardware, content and training to a private party. The information and communication technology (ICT) business is tender-based. It functions under the build/own/operate/transfer model.

Many service providers are using the powerful channel of 3D animation videos to explain concepts like formation of block-mountains or volcanic formation. And, schools are using the available technology to explain and simplify concepts in subjects like Chemistry, Physics, History, Biology and Science. "The key is to make learning as interactive as possible," says Kaura.

According to analysts, visually improved presentation through use of graphics increases students' interests in classrooms. With more and more companies realising the potential, analysts expect the market to grow ten times in the next five years. ICT inflows to private-sector players is pegged at around Rs 4,500 crore by March 2012.

The service charges vary for each player. For instance, while Educomp charges between Rs 155 and Rs 160 per student per month (for an average class comprising 40 students), Everonn charges Rs 15,000 for one classroom.

Everonn, however, provides a 50 per cent subsidy if it caters to the needs of more than five classrooms in a school. Industry experts believe that by March 2013 around 200,000 public schools will be able to offer computer training to their students.

While Educomp did not divulge how much it spends on digitising an existing classroom, Everonn said renovating each classroom costs between Rs 60,000 and Rs 100,000.

Source: Monday, Feb 21, 2011/[Business Standard](#)

Great expectations

The Union Budget for 2011-12 — to be unveiled by finance minister Pranab Mukherjee a few days from now — is anxiously awaited by the Indian industry and trade as also by the public with a huge sense of anticipation.

The industry expects Mr Mukherjee to set in train measures to resuscitate the industrial economy, particularly the manufacturing sector. At the same time the aam aadmi, groaning as he is from the impact of food inflation, is in dire need for a modicum of relief.

Let's get to the basics. At a time when the global economy is still not out of the woods, it would be prudent for Mr Mukherjee not to tinker with the tax rates too much.

In fact, he should tailor the direct and indirect tax measures to beef up domestic demand and ensure that there is no rollback of stimulus measures that have stood the test of time.

It is my considered view that the North Block should seriously consider abolition of surcharge and education cess, moderation of the corporate tax rate, removal of the cascading impact of dividend distribution tax (DDT), rationalisation of minimum alternative tax (MAT) as a specified percentage, retention of the peak customs duty rate of 10 per cent, reduction in the Central sales tax (CST) rate from two per cent to one per cent with effect from April 1, 2011.

Also, the incentives for the private sector's contribution to agricultural growth, impetus to exports, information technology and the software sectors, and tax breaks for large-scale private investment in the social sector must be taken into account.

On direct taxation, Mr Mukherjee ought to do six things. These are:

- Abolish surcharge and education cess. These have complicated India's tax structure. A good idea would be to consider allocating a part of direct taxes collection for educational projects in place of education cess.
- The need to reduce corporate tax rate to some extent: The global average corporate tax rate of 114 countries in 2010 is 24.99 per cent. While in India, corporate tax effective at 33 per cent, including surcharge and cess. This

is imperative as in the competitive global environment, we must be in tune with others.

- Further, Mr Mukherjee should look at the removal of the cascading effect of DDT. DDT paid at the first level ought to be reduced in the hands of each subsequent level of holding subsidiary relationship, instead of restricting it only up to one level. Ideally, Section 80M, which we had till a few years ago, should be revived. Section 80M of I-T was scrapped in 2004. It allows a subsidiary company not to pay tax on dividend received from another subsidiary company.

- Budget 2011-12 also affords an opportunity to rationalise MAT as a specified percentage, say 50 per cent of basic corporate tax rate. Over the last four years, the rate has gone up from 10 per cent to 18 per cent, which has caused great anxiety.

- The industry would also like to see the North Block mandarins make the investment-linked incentive meaningful. This could be done by allowing the losses of specified business of the assessee to be set off or carry forward from his other profit-making businesses, instead of restricting it to only from his specified businesses.

- Finally, to reduce the cost of borrowing for industry, it should be possible to restore withholding tax exemption on interest payable on foreign commercial borrowings, as also the tax exemption of interest income of an infrastructure capital fund and an infrastructure capital company. I believe that the restoration of these exemptions will also help in raising long-term funds at competitive rates for the crucial infrastructure sectors.

As for indirect taxation, we in the industry would like to see retention of peak customs duty rate of 10 per cent for some more time.

Mr Mukherjee should also consider reduction of the CST rate from two per cent to one per cent with effect from April 1, 2011; evolve suitable mechanisms for speedy refunds of service tax, special additional duty (SAD) as also Cenvat (Central value-added tax) accumulations, which cannot be modvated and extension of the weighted deduction benefit on research and development (R&D) to the service sector.

Last, but not the least, there is a need to end the current impasse over the goods and services tax, which the industry is eagerly awaiting.

It is also imperative to grow agriculture at a fast clip. For this to happen, apart from the ongoing initiatives, there is a need to grant fiscal incentives by way of 100 per cent depreciation on all investments in physical assets, like infrastructure development in agriculture by the private sector and the entire agri-value chain and a tax holiday for 10 years. It would also be desirable to provide a weighted deduction of 200 per cent on any expenditure incurred on R&D in agriculture and provision of extension services in transferring the best agriculture practices for various crops.

Social sectors like healthcare and education also need a boost. For the healthcare sector, a tax holiday for five years

in any of the 10 years of the inception of a project would be of great help.

In education, the government should formulate a national policy for public-private partnerships (PPP) initiatives in the higher education sector. Also, private sector should be encouraged to set up higher educational institutions as a Section 25 company.

Source: Monday, Feb 21, 2011/[Deccan Chronicle](#)

Government will universalise secondary education: Patil

New Delhi: President Pratibha Patil Monday said that after Right to Education for primary education, the government is committed to universalising secondary education.

"My government is committed to universalizing secondary education through the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. Girls' hostels are being set up in each of the 3,500 educationally backward blocks in the country to bring secondary education within the reach of girls," the president said addressing a joint sitting of both houses of parliament on the first day of the budget session.

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Patil added that the government is taking steps to effect changes in the Apprenticeship Act "to introduce a large number of modular training courses, and to make skills training bankable".

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"Our country has a huge advantage in terms of being a young nation. Our young people have to be invested with skills if we are to reap the demographic dividend," she added.

Source: Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011/ [IANS](#)

Education beyond brick and mortar

An open courseware project in India could take learning outside campus walls and alleviate the education deficit.

Over the past decade, an international trend towards expanding access to educational materials has steadily gained momentum. Originating in 2001 with the launch of the landmark OpenCourseWare project of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), open courseware has turned into a full-fledged movement. Hundreds of universities now share online versions of their course materials with the public, "unlocking their gates" to the world.

While MIT's may be the most prominent effort to make online course materials freely available to a mass audience, an impressive initiative from India's flagship universities is perhaps beginning to rival it. The National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) has given away thousands of hours of free audio and video lectures since 2003. Formulated jointly by the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the programme offers a unique and compelling example to the rest of the open courseware movement, and has much to teach its peers around the world.

The power of open courseware lies in its ability to expose the intellectual products of some of the world's best universities, once reserved exclusively for their selective cohorts of enrolled students, to anyone with an Internet connection. In the Indian context, such a development could be nothing short of transformative.

Indeed, one of NPTEL's great strengths is its unique sensitivity to national needs. Launched with funding from the Indian government, NPTEL was created to respond to a specific problem in Indian higher education: the widening gap in quality and resources between the prestigious IITs and many of the country's other engineering colleges. The recent proliferation of the latter has far outstripped the number of available PhDs needed to staff them with qualified faculty.

The IITs' notoriously difficult admissions process—with acceptance rates historically hovering around 2%—has meant that vast numbers of students must be turned away. But by harnessing the power of technology, the NPTEL team has enabled the IITs' talented faculty to extend its reach to all of India's engineering students as well as their teachers. The project's ultimate goal is to raise the overall level of student preparation—and thereby improve the competitiveness of India's workforce—by providing widespread access to the best engineering educational materials the country has to offer.

While other prominent open courseware projects have often been explicitly global in their ambitions, showcasing their parent universities' teaching in an effort to improve their international standing, NPTEL's focus has been much closer to home. As the initiative's Web coordinator Mangala Sunder Krishnan has said, "If people use NPTEL content outside of India, that's a by-product. That's not our motive. Our motive is to solve a local problem." In determining the disciplines to feature in the project's first phase, NPTEL consulted the government-led All India Council on

Technical Education to determine which subjects were in greatest demand at engineering colleges nationwide. Serving the needs of this clearly defined target audience is, therefore, built into the very design of the initiative's content offerings.

Beyond this concentrated attention to India's educational priorities, NPTEL's consortial structure is perhaps its most striking feature. As a successful collaboration between seven IITs and the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore—universities with shared missions but otherwise independent governance, which have historically vied for top faculty and students—NPTEL has successfully turned former competitors into collaborators.

This kind of joint effort, rare in the open courseware space, represents an admirable feat of coordination. NPTEL already incorporates the work of over 350 faculty members from the eight participating institutions. In the programme's second phase (which is currently under way), the team plans to further diversify the sources of its content, hosting on its platform high-quality courses from faculty outside of the IITs. Allowing other professors to create NPTEL courses would spread the burden of content creation beyond the IITs, with positive implications for the initiative's sustainability. Expanding the programme to include a wider range of faculty contributions from across Indian higher education may also reinforce its national character. "We want other people to feel like they are a part of it," NPTEL national video coordinator Kushal Sen has said. "No egos. Our aim is to make everyone rise."

Though undoubtedly impressive in scope and scale, NPTEL's current model of broadcasting courses does not yet fully satisfy the ambitions of its founders. Dating back to the initiative's original planning discussions in 1999, the ultimate vision for this digital course material has been to support an entirely online university—the first "virtual IIT", which would offer course credit and even degrees to a larger group of qualified students than the brick-and-mortar IITs can sustain. In this sense, the IITs have taken a bolder and potentially game-changing approach to courseware than many of their international peers: Should the IITs' virtual campus come to fruition, these universities would be the world's first premiere institutions to offer a credit-bearing, fully online version of their core undergraduate programmes. If such a virtual university could equal the IIT benchmark of quality, it would set a new standard for online education, solidifying India's position in this field.

Taylor Walsh writes on behalf of Ithaka S+R, the strategic consulting and research service of the New York-based not-for-profit organization ITHAKA. She is the author of *Unlocking the Gates: How and Why Leading Universities are Opening Up Access to Their Courses*.

Source: Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011/[live Mint](#)

Centre may include pharmacovigilance into syllabus of medical education

The Centre is considering keen to include pharmacovigilance in the syllabus of medical education in India. A meeting is scheduled in this regard in February end to finalize the same. As per the proposal, pharmacovigilance will be a subject for MBBS from the next academic year or in the following year.

Dr YK Gupta, coordinator, National Pharmacovigilance Programme and professor-head, department of pharmacology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) who was here in Bangalore recently said that unless the adverse drug monitoring knowledge is included into medical education, quality adverse drug monitoring in India would be a challenge.

There are also plans by the government to include pharmacovigilance into the national immunization programme, going by the unreported deaths caused after an inoculation. Therefore the need for systematic education in pharmacovigilance is required for medical professionals going by the gamut of services ensuing on a national scale, he pointed out.

The biggest challenge of the National Pharmacovigilance Programme, implemented in India from July 2010, is the poor feedback coming in from the 20 medical centres spread across the country, this is why extensive training was mandated. If pharmacovigilance is included in the syllabus, the doctors engaged in the programme will have a broad based understanding of the processes involved and save on the basic training schedules, he stated.

Further, the government is now looking at integrating pharmacovigilance into public healthcare. Although it has roped in government medical colleges and hospitals attached to these institutes, it has also opened a dialogue with corporate hospitals. "At this point of time, we would refrain from disclosing any details on the same," informed Dr Gupta.

Commenting on the status of the National Pharmacovigilance Programme, he said efforts are on to take stock of the functioning of the centres, identify the bottlenecks and find solutions in adverse drug reporting, address the administrative and financial matters of the centres, impart training in causality assessment to the coordinators from the zonal and peripheral centres.

"The country's 1.2 billion population pool will provide a huge data on the risk profile of medicines and help generate evidence based treatment protocols for diseases. It will provide ample data to set up a National Centre for Excellence in Pharmacovigilance in India. It will help to maintain a database of continuous surveillance on safety and efficacy of the pharmaceutical products which are used in clinical practice. Continuous evaluation of their benefit and harm will help to achieve the objective to make safer and more effective treatment options available to patients. It will provide the much needed reliability on India for good

reporting on adverse drug reactions with no deficiencies”, he pointed out.

This is where India need to immediately include pharmacovigilance into the medical education course. It will arm the doctors with an instinct to signal reviews of the one or two reactions and compare the assessment with experts in the multi-institutional panels, said Dr Gupta

Source: Wednesday, February 23, 2011/[Live Mint](#)

I beg to differ, Prof Amartya Sen

In a recent op-ed in The Hindu , Amartya Sen has clarified his views regarding what importance we should assign to growth in the policy discourse . Coming as it does in response to a debate on the Cuts Forum to which I had actively contributed, Sen’s clarification justifies a rejoinder by me. The lively debate on the Cuts Forum had been triggered by a lecture Jagdish Bhagwati had delivered at a joint session of the Parliament on December 2, 2010 and subsequent remarks Sen made on India- China growth comparisons while speaking in New Delhi. Bhagwati , who actively contributed to the Cuts Forum debate, had emphasised in his Parliament lecture the centrality of growth to poverty alleviation firstly as a force that “pulls up” the poor into gainful employment and secondly as a source of revenue to expand anti-poverty programmes.

In contrast, in his New Delhi talk, Sen had argued that the Indian fixation with surpassing China’s rate of economic growth was “very stupid” as a measure of the nation’s advancement (James Lamont in the Financial Times, December 21). He noted, however, that growth was a “positive thing” in the context of social justice, poverty reduction and directing greater revenues towards health and education. In the op-ed , Sen elaborates on these views. He states that growth can be a good thing, denounces growth for its own sake (anon sequitursince no serious analyst advocates growth for its own sake), notes the importance of growth in generating “resources for the government to spend according to its priorities” and characterises as “silly” the focus on growth in India-China comparisons.

Sen leaves the impression that growth is at best a sideshow when it comes to the well- being of the poor. He essentially ignores the direct contribution growth makes to the creation of income and employment for the poor when he states: “The central point to seize is that while economic growth is an important boon for enhancing living conditions, its reach depends greatly on what we do with the fruits of growth. To be sure, there are large numbers of people for whom growth alone does just fine, since they are already privileged and need no social assistance.” Thus, contrary to the evidence that growth directly benefits the poor, Sen emphasises the accrual of such benefits only to those “already privileged” with the benefits to the poor depending principally on how what the government does with the “fruits of growth” . Why does it matter whether you choose to see growth as central to improving

the wellbeing of the poor or as a sideshow ? Because the policies you would advocate critically depend on this choice. Bhagwati, who sees growth as central, has long advocated policy reforms that enhance growth prospects while also recommending increased expenditures on antipoverty programmes.

Sen, who sees growth as a sideshow, has rarely spoken in favour of promarket reforms, implicitly giving a nod to the licence-permit raj, which denied higher incomes and better employment opportunities to the poor. All politicians now recognise the centrality of growth in generating revenues to finance expenditures on health, education and employment programmes in a poor country like India. Because India started extremely poor at Independence and also grew very slowly for nearly four decades, successive governments failed to muster enough revenues to finance expenditures on these sectors. As a concrete example, Article 45 of the directive principles of state policy in the Constitution had required free compulsory primary education . But despite repeated attempts throughout, the goal remained unfulfilled until 2010 when accelerated growth finally yielded sufficient revenues to permit the implementation of the right to education as a fundamental right.

Source: Wednesday, February 23, 2011/[Economics Times](#)

B-schools make hay while the sun shines

Growing job opportunities ensure good placements for even second- and third-rung business schools.

For Panvel-based Pillai’s Institute of Management Studies and Research (PIMSR), 2011 has seen remarkable placements.

Domestic salary in the institute has gone up from Rs 6.59 lakh in 2010 to 10 lakh this year — an increase of 49 per cent.

And average salary in the institute is up from Rs 2.5 lakh in 2010 to Rs 3.5 lakh this year.

It’s not just the premier B-schools that are witnessing buoyancy in placements. Even mid-rung and three-tier B-schools in the country are having a field day, nearing a 100 per cent placement target.

For instance, Ahmedabad University’s (AU) Amrut Mody School of Management (AMSM) has recorded the highest salary at Rs 8 lakh offered by Futures First.

“We started the process of inviting companies in mid-October and 60-65 companies have so far made it to the placements this year. Last year we had approached around 100 companies out of which 92 had turned up,” says Rima Gupta, assistant placement officer at AMSM.

TCS, Torrent pharmaceutical, Prakash Chemicals, Futures First, Doshion, Reliance, L&T Finance, and ICICI were some of the top companies that have been part of the recruitment process. Out of 120 students there were 109 who went in for the placements process. Around 50-55

offers have already been given to students while the process will go on till May.

At Nirma University, Ahmedabad, out of a batch of 170 students, 160 students have opted for the placement process. Nirma had invited more than 500 companies for placement and there were around 40 companies that participated.

According to Neeraj Amarnani, placement chairperson at the Institute of Management, Nirma University, top recruiters from regular sectors like IT, banking, consumer durables, manufacturing and infrastructure participated in the placement process. The institute did not divulge salary package details.

At the Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA), annual average salary offered to the participants is around Rs 8.03 lakhs, which is a 34 per cent increase from last year's average. "Organisations like Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation, (GCMMF), the newly set up NDDB dairy Services (NDS), ITT Corporation, ITC, and ICICI, have been some of the top recruiters while the highest salary offered till now has been Rs 10.47 lakhs per annum by consulting firm Ernst & Young. The highest compensation package has also increased to 10.79 per cent from last year's Rs 9.45 lakhs," said placement coordinator, Professor Preeti Priya.

Domains on offer included finance, research and advisory, agri-business, ICT, renewable energy, livelihood promotion, watershed development, education and health.

This year, IRMA has also introduced a policy for deferred placements, so as to provide placement services in the coming years to the participants who choose to opt out of this year's placements.

Among the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM), IIM Ahmedabad's (IIM-A) cluster based placement process began on February 12 with companies from across four cohorts—international investment banks, global strategy consulting, global niche consulting and private equity/venture capital. Boston Consulting Group and McKinsey recruited more students than last year.

At IIM Indore, final placements for the 2009-11 batch were concluded in a window of five days. The highest domestic compensation offered was Rs 32 lakh per annum which was made by an investment bank. Around 12 per cent of the class secured offers in excess of Rs 20 lakh per annum. The placement process witnessed a participation from almost 100 companies offering a wide array of profiles across functions of finance, marketing, HR and operations, among others.

At Bhubaneswar-based Xavier Institute of Management (XIM-B), the highest international package offered was \$32,650 per annum. The highest domestic salary was Rs 15 lakh per annum. A total of 86 companies participated in the placement process of which over 70 companies made final offers. Of these, 21 were the first time recruiters at

XIM-B. At XLRI Jamshedpur, average salary offered was Rs 16.5 lakh, an increase of 9.27 percent over last year's Rs 15.1 lakh. A total of 370 offers were made to a batch of 240 students, making 1.32 offers per student.

Many B-schools are yet to begin the final placement process on their campuses.

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Creating education cities can boost overall quality

For India, which has the largest young population in the world, the education sector is a key priority. While the implementation of the Right to Education Act would attempt to plug the gaps in school education, improvement in higher education is still a pending matter of concern. Just about 13% of Indians in the eligible age actually undergo any form of higher education as compared to about 24% of the Chinese and more than 70% of the eligible Americans. If we need to increase this to 20% by 2020, India needs to invest a whopping Rs 360,000 crores to create additional infrastructure. At the same time, there is also an urgent need to improve the quality of higher education institutes which is evidenced by the fact that we have more higher education institutes than any other country in the world, however just 2 or 3 of them ever feature in the top 500 global rankings.

It is in this light that India needs to seriously consider creating education cities as a tool to provide a fillip to the higher education segment. Across the world, countries are developing education cities to attract leading education institutes, cater to the needs of domestic students as well as to draw International students. In the Middle-east, impressive education cities are coming up in Qatar and Dubai. Similar education cities have come up in Korea, Australia and Singapore as well. These cities aim to provide a facilitating environment for educational institutes to set-up, thereby attracting best-in-class institutes from across the world.

Creating such education cities in India can have significant benefits. Firstly, an education city allows multiple education institutes to share common infrastructure, thereby significantly reducing the investment incurred to create additional capacity. Secondly, new players and international universities seeking to enter the country face significant challenges in finding good locations and acquiring land at economically feasible prices. Developed education cities could be suitable locations for these players and attract them in large numbers. Thirdly, our higher education system suffers from a number of unconnected institutes and uni-disciplinary centres of excellence. With an education city playing host to multiple institutes within a large super campus, multidisciplinary studies and collaborative research could receive a significant boost.

Fourthly, as India seeks to emerge as an economic superpower it needs to build on its strength in the area of knowledge industries. Internationally it has been seen that education clusters double up as centres of excellence in

research and significantly spur entrepreneurial activity in knowledge industries. Education cities could emerge as a way for us to re-create multiple 'Silicon Valleys' across India.

Till now there have been limited efforts to develop education cities in India. The few education cities that are being developed by private developers and state governments have largely been limited in size, unimaginative in scope and constrained by lack of regulatory support. Development of education cities is one of the most powerful tools that have emerged in the last few years for governments to transform a country's education landscape. India must seriously consider building on this idea as it sets to radically upgrade its higher education system.

The writer is senior manager, education practice, Ernst & Young.

Source: 23 February 2011/[The Financial Express](#)

Private schools are money spinning enterprises: SC

The Supreme Court on Thursday said private educational institutions cannot complain about Government's decision to reserve 25 percent of seats for economically weaker sections (EWS) under the RTE Act as it is an investment for the country's future prosperity.

A three-judge bench of Chief Justice SH Kapadia, KS Radhakrishnan and Swatanter Kumar observed that that there was nothing wrong in the Government's attempt to provide 25 percent of the EWS population quality education in private schools.

The apex court however, said it was willing to strike down the legislation if the private schools are able to establish that Constitutional principles have been violated by enactment of the Right to Education Act under which free and compulsory education had been made mandatory for all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

"What is wrong in 25 percent having better education in private schools. Today you are making an investment for the country. Children are the future of the country. Can the court intervene and say it is unreasonable," the bench asked.

The bench made the observation during the hearing of the bunch of appeals filed by private educational institutions challenging the 25 percent reservation for EWS.

The apex court brushed aside the argument of senior counsel and former Additional Solicitor General Vikas Singh that the legislation impinged upon the fundamental rights of the unaided institutions to manage their affairs without governmental control imposed a huge cost burden.

Singh appearing for various private schools argued that providing 25 per EWS deprived the children from themiddle class and rich their seats in the private educational institutions.

In such a scenario he said the displaced children from the middle and rich class have to take seats in Government schools, creating an anomalous situation.

"You may be right but can we go into that arena. It is a legislative policy. You may be absolutely right on the ground realities. But you have to show the Constitutional principles violated.

"If a citizen's right is violated then they can come to us," the Chief Justice said.

The counsel submitted that the situation would lead to various peculiarities as the Government would end up subsidising the education of the rich and middle class children in government schools.

He cited the instance of the US where the schools are all run by the Government but provide quality education.

But the argument failed to convince the court which said if comparison has to be drawn then it should be done on tax compliance and other matters also.

"Only five percent of the population pays tax in the country. There are only five percent tax payers, out of these three percent are the salaried class.

"We cite the instances of US, Canada and other countries. Then let us talk about the tax GDP in those countries with that of our country," the bench remarked.

The senior counsel gave an illustration that in a state have one lakh seats, if 25 percent seats are reserved for the EWS that would displace 25,000 students from other sections of the society who may be forced to seek admission in government schools.

The apex court also asked the Additional Solicitor General Indira Jainsing to furnish data if any on the number of students who may stand benefited under the EWS quota.

Source: Thursday, February 24, 2011/[Financial Express](#)

Over regulation by AICTE can hurt B-schools

New Delhi: One way of looking at the notification on admission and fees of business management institutions put out by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) last December is to view the sector regulator doing its job of protecting consumers' interests (i.e. prospective students) from venal institutions that are cashing in on the growing demand for a B-school education.

But, in addressing a problem that it has been responsible for, in no small measure, AICTE has overreached itself. So, it is not surprising that the issue now finds itself in court. Of the eight rules that AICTE has set out, two can be considered somewhat logical.

The first stipulates that the admission for all management education courses cannot start before March 31. Most mainline B-schools begin the admission process in January, two months after the Common Entrance Test (CAT), one of the widely-used admission tests, in October,

but others start later, depending on the timing of other entrance tests.

Such staggered admissions allow students to make multiple applications and then get transferred to their preferred institution, if they can. A vacant seat cannot be filled once the term begins, so the upshot is that a large number of seats go abegging each year.

AICTE is also probably correct in attempting to limit B-school fees. B-schools may argue, as they have done, that this amounts to unwarranted interference in their autonomy. But it is also true that soaring demand is putting a B-school education outside the purview of many less affluent students, and has promoted such frankly unethical practices as capitation fee. This has the effect of creating an uneven playing field for talent that is unlikely to help India Inc.

But, in stipulating that fees be subject to a state government-led fee fixation committee, AICTE has come up with a sub-optimal solution. Experience has shown that state government interference in education tends to become so politicised as to verge on the destructive.

It would probably make more sense for a centralised fee-fixation committee, comprising representatives of the regulator, B-schools, industry and educational professionals, with a clearer idea of balancing costs and quality.

But these are only two issues that irk the over 2,000 B-schools that seek AICTE approval. The most contentious one is the stipulation that their admission tests be limited to CAT, MAT or an equivalent state-level test. This amounts to gross over-regulation. More so, since only the state-founded IIMs and about 150 privately-run B-schools actually use CAT; the remaining 1,900-odd institutions use a variety of tests, including those designed by XLRI and AIMA, all of which will have to be scrapped. Even assuming that this is done, with CAT now a computer-based test delivered by a private sector player, the danger of monopolisation cannot be an overstatement in sync with B-school functioning.

For an institution that has played such a laissez faire role in approving B-schools of dubious quality, its guidelines appear to be designed to irk rather than enable institutions to focus on quality.

Source: Friday, February 25, 2011/[Business Standard](#)

Continuing along path of education reform

The author's wish list from this year's budget from an education sector standpoint include, announcements around the following:-

- Policy initiatives to encourage private participation in PPP models & education services;
- Dilution of FDI conditions prescribed for construction development of education institutions;

- Income-tax incentives and tax holidays for creation of education infrastructure;
- Expansion of service tax exemptions for services provided to or by education institutions;
- Announcement of a roadmap for passing of pending Higher Education Bills in Parliament.

The Indian private education sector offers considerable opportunities for the private sector. In the context of higher education, the Ministry of Human Resource and Development has targeted an increase in the gross enrollment ratio from the current 12% to 30% by the year 2020. If this is to be achieved, India would need over 300 new Universities and 20,000 new Colleges to be set up. Significant expansion in the number of K-12 institutions is also required. These supply gaps cannot be achieved through public funding alone and there is an acute need for the private enterprise to significantly increase its participation in the sector.

Education in India comprises of the regulated and unregulated segments. For example, segments such as vocational training, test preparation centers, ICT services, etc, are subject to little or no regulation. On the other hand, K-12 education and institutions that offer degrees or diplomas comprise the regulated segment. Under Indian laws, the regulated segment requires the institution to function under a not-for-profit format and has been historically subject to archaic laws and multiple regulations. Subject to CSR initiatives, the not-for-profit mandate and the regulatory framework may have dissuaded private capital from entering the regulated segment. While it may be too much to expect the Government to make the structural change required to move towards a for-profit-model, the Government through policy could encourage private sector participation through public-private partnership models and education services.

The private sector can be encouraged to provide much needed real estate and infrastructure to K-12 schools and higher education institutions. Both K-12 legislation such as those of CBSE, ICSE and State Boards and higher education legislation such as certain Private University laws permit the institution to lease land and buildings subject to minimum lease tenures. A pain point in this context is India's Foreign Direct Investment ("FDI") regulations, as applicable to real estate. While foreign investment up-to 100% is permitted in real estate, stringent investment and development conditions have been prescribed. One such development condition is the requirement to develop a minimum of 50,000 square meters per project, which is in particular difficult to comply with for school projects. The Budget should take steps to dilute the FDI regulations for the education sector on par with those of other infrastructure segments such as hotels and hospitals in which FDI is permitted without restrictions. A lease model may help the education institution achieve scale faster and will result in a win-win situation for both the Government and the service provider.

Under the domestic tax law, education is a 'charitable activity', which entitles not-for-profit entities to claim income-tax exemptions on their income. However, no similar incentives are provided to entities engaged in the development of infrastructure for education purposes. The dearth of high quality infrastructure in both private / State institutions justifies the need for tax holidays for entities that invest in the creation of education related infrastructure. Such tax breaks could be structured on the same lines as the deductions contained in tax law for the development of other infrastructure segments such as industrial parks, hospitals, etc. Such a policy will positively impact the creation of additional capacities and among others would help the Government achieve its social objectives around implementation of the Right to Education Act, 2009 and its targeted gross enrolment ratios.

The fees charged by recognized education institutions to students are not subject to service tax. However, most services consumed by such institutions are subjected to service tax and as a result the tax burden is passed on to students. The Finance Minister could consider exempting services rendered by entities to recognized educational institutions from the levy of service tax. Under the current service tax code, taxable service categories such as immovable property rentals and business support services provided to recognized education institutions are not subject to service tax and it would be helpful if the exemptions can be applied across a larger list of taxable service categories. If such an exemption is provided, this would reduce the cost of imparting education by a few percentage points and would make it easier to comply with the RTE Act and sixth pay commission norms.

While staying on the subject of service tax, the definition of commercial coaching and training centers was widened in the last budget. This year it is rumored that the service tax net would be widened to include additional education services. Human resource development is one of India's most critical challenges given our demographic profile and the Minister should weigh the potential revenue collection with access and equity to achieve inclusive growth.

As is common to other sectors as well, tax and policy certainty is critical while making investment decisions; else the risk weightage for the sector increases. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has proposed a large number of Bills including the Foreign Education Providers Bill and the Unfair Practices Bill. The passage of such Bills would help the process of reform and would add to policy certainty across the higher education sector. We are hopeful that the Finance Minister would in his Budget provide a road map towards enactment of pending Bills; which otherwise may share the fate of several other legislation which either does not get enacted or are enacted after significant delays.

Source: 25 February 2011/ www.moneycontrol.com

Education sector awaits budget goodies

The higher education sector is pinning its hopes on a few big-ticket reforms in the Budget to be unveiled on Monday.

Sector players and analysts said along with a substantial increase in budgetary allocation for both primary and higher education, the Budget should propose tax exemptions on various fronts, incentives for entrepreneurs to set up higher education institutions and support creation of specialised institutions and universities for the masses, too.

“From a direct tax standpoint, donations/endowments made to recognised educational institutions are entitled to a 50 per cent deduction from the taxable income of donor. The Budget could positively impact this process by extending the benefit to an across the board 100 per cent deduction for contribution to recognised educational institutions,” said Amitabh Jhinghan, Partner, Transaction Advisory Services and National Sector Leader – Education, Ernst and Young.

According to Jhinghan, an increased budget allocation towards education could help in implementation of right to education (RTE) and achievement of the targeted gross enrollment ratio of 30 per cent by 2020.

The Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world in terms of number of institutions and student enrolment. Higher education spends in India are currently estimated at Rs 46,200 crore and are projected to grow to nearly Rs 150,000 crore in the next decade. This would reflect an average growth rate of 12.8 per cent according to Ernst and Young. Sector analysts said the need of the hour is to provide either funding or incentives to start universities for the mass market.

“We need allocation for creation of specialised institutions and institutions that cater to the masses. An increased allocation would help better the industry and academic interactions. Budgeting needs to be done for upgrading curriculum through industry interaction,” says Narayan Ramaswamy, Executive Director, Educational service, KPMG.

Sector players however, said allocation alone will not impress them. Implementation is the key.

“There is no significant expectation from the Budget. In the past two years, we have seen a lot of media hype from the Ministry of Human Resource Development. We want to see some execution now. A lot of new projects-- Creation of Central universities, innovation universities and new IITs have been talked about. We wish to see the government doing some ground work for the same now,” said H Chaturvedi, director, Birla Institute of Management and Technology.

Analysts are also expecting grant of income tax exemptions on faculty salaries and increase in the expense deduction on contributions on research and development spends at universities.

“There is an active speculation the scope of taxable services in the education sector will be expanded. The budget should consider the larger impact of human resource development, skill building and the recent inflationary trends,” adds Jhinghan.

It should also consider exempting organisations that render services to recognised educational institutions from the levy of service tax.

Source: 28 February 2011/Mumbai/[Business Standard](#)

Budget: Elevating the education debate

We have been talking of making India the knowledge capital of the world. What will the Budget do today?

Let's not forget that our first generation scientists, scholars, teachers, leaders, all came from the village schooling system. If we want to see the country progressing, we must first improve our education system with the due budgetary support from the government.

In that backdrop, let's see what we have been doing towards the education sector over the last few years. In the Budget for 2007, there was an increase in allocation for school education from Rs. 17,133 crore to Rs. 23,142 crore; there was a provision for strengthening of teacher-training institutions; mid-day meal scheme was provided Rs. 7,324 crore; the provision for secondary education was doubled from Rs. 1,837 crore to Rs. 3,794 crore; etc. In the Budget for 2008, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was provided Rs. 13,100 crore; mid-day meal was allocated Rs. 8,000 crore; secondary education was allocated Rs. 4,554 crore; etc. In the Budget for 2009, Rs. 827 crore was allocated for opening one central university in each uncovered state; Rs. 2,113 crore were allocated for IITs and NIT; etc.

And then, in 2010, we made the modest beginnings towards educating our millions with the Right to Education Act (RTE)—which came into effect from April 1, 2010—sadly 60 years after the Right to Education was enshrined in our Constitution (article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy states: “The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years”). In the Budget for 2010, RTE, which promises free and compulsory education for all children aged between six and 14, got a huge thrust, with the Budget proposing Rs. 15,000 crore allocation for SSA, which acts as a vehicle towards fulfilling RTE provisions. (It has been observed that in the previous Budgets, SSA—the obvious corollary in terms of realising the mandate of the RTE—did not get incremental increases in terms of money, on account of which the implementation of SSA suffered in many states.) Given this understanding, the cost estimates for the implementation of RTE at a micro-level needs to be substantially revised. Also, at the higher education level, significant outlays have to be accorded towards teacher-training. The total allocation for education, thus, jumped up

from Rs. 30,681 crore to Rs. 42,036 crore. In the same Budget, on the higher education front, Rs. 4,300 crore was allocated for the University Grants Commission and Rs. 4,700 crore for technical education.

Hopes from this year's Budget

Although RTE should be one of the major priorities in today's Budget, but for its effective execution, the focus should be on teacher-recruitment and other functionaries, phasing out the implementation plan, enhancing teacher-training facilities, etc. Says KT Chacko, director, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi, “The Budget should be one that stimulates growth and ensures that the fruits of such growth be channelled in such a way that they reach the needy. RTE, compared to many other statutes, has been put on a much more sounder framework. In RTE there seems a ‘will’ to reach out and provide education. But that ‘will’ must be matched by the ground-level work—first, having enough schools and, second, having a large number of teachers qualified to teach. If you see what are the children in government schools are learning compared to what their counterparts in a private institute are learning, you will realise there is a huge knowledge gap, so grooming more teachers is the need of the hour. The Budget should focus more on setting up of more teacher-training institutes.”

Also, there are high hopes that this Budget will have an increased focus on higher education and research compared to last year. At the same time, there should be a focus on interlinking vocational education with mainstream education (By 2020, India will need 500 million skilled and employable graduates). According to Prashant Bhalla, senior vice-president, Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad, “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 also have the highest number of illiterate adults and a large number of unemployed literate people. Though the government expenditure—state and central combined—on education has grown over the years, this cannot be considered enough if we look at the actual requirements and needs of the sector.”

According to Prof Sudhir K Jain, head, Department of Management Studies, IIT Delhi, “In view of India's growing population, we can derive the demographic dividend only if the growing population is well educated and professionally qualified. Before entering the workforce, if the youth are provided technical or vocational qualification with adequate inputs on management and entrepreneurship, they can certainly become successful entrepreneurs and create enormous employment in India. I hope the ministry of HRD will get sufficient fund allocation in the Budget and the visionary minister Kapil Sibal will continue on the fast track of laying strong foundation for modern educated India.”

On educational loans to students, Prof BN Jain, vice-chancellor, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, says, “The government must recognise the

significant contribution that many universities inside and outside the government sector are making to growth in quality of manpower in India. Therefore, instead of limiting the flow of government funds to only those universities in the... government sector, it must empower the ultimate beneficiaries—the aspiring students—to choose the university or the programme that offers the best education to him/her. One such scheme that empowers the students is one which enables every student to take an education loan at significantly subsidised interest rate, without the need to provide any 'collateral' or satisfy his/her 'credit worthiness'. We would like to see such a scheme to be in place at an early date."

The Budget should take steps to scaling up the existing institutes of central or state governments, while new institutes are needed, current ones can be expanded. According to Dr Devi Singh, director, IIM Lucknow, "The government should continue to focus on building capacities and creating new institutions. The focus on education both at the grass-root level and higher education level should continue. In the last Budget the government had announced a lot of sops for the sector and created new institutions. The real work of building these institutions will now start by the administrators and academicians alike. I am of the opinion that the real differentiator will be the intellectual capital."

On the adoption of public-private partnership (PPP) model in the education sector, Prashant Bhalla believes that it 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 that needs to be banked upon for the ultimate delivery of the model," he adds.

The PPP model is also exhorted by Prof KV Iyer, dean, United World School of Business, Hyderabad. He says, "It is worthwhile to note that the service sector is contributing to more than half of the Indian GDP. The Prime Minister in his address at the inauguration India corporate week in December 2010 exhorted the corporate sector to engage in a quest for sustainable growth. He emphasised that increasing the employability of the population through effective skill development should be central to corporate strategy. While the government has a vital role to play in the field of education, it cannot go alone. Partnership with the corporate sector is the need of the hour. We hope enough encouragement is given in today's Budget for private sector to play a key role in skills building and in the area of professional education."

On the issue of loans to spur capital investments, BN Jain says, "Some good private educational institutes have expanded their programmes in the last decade, but using bank loans at market-determined interest rates. Most such institutes are now looking to consolidate their offerings by expanding their post-graduate and PhD programmes. But this can only happen if our government develops a

scheme whereby.. they underwrite a significant fraction of capital investments made in order to expand capability and/or capacity."

The mandate of several government ministries and/or departments is to fund research and postgraduate education. This they do by helping build lab infrastructure for research or postgraduate education, assistantships to research fellows, as well as fund basic and applied research in areas that are emerging or are strategic to India's development. Prof BN Jain adds, "While such ministries/departments do fund research and postgraduate education in independent universities (outside the government sector), we would like to see the independent universities to be treated in a manner similar to those funded by state or central government and the processes used to provide such funds to be streamlined."

"If the government wants to create 100% literacy in the country and wants to see that goal of RTE is realised, it should focus more on the primary and secondary education," believes Prof VK Gupta, director, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon. He adds, "If you see countries like the US and the UK, most of the world-class institutes of higher learning are in the private sector. And since the government has been pumping a lot of money into the IIMs and IITs, and in setting up central universities, it is time that some encouraging public-private partnerships are thought of by the government."

Source: 28 February 2011/[The Financial Express](#)

RESOURCE

Meghalaya ranks poorly in elementary education: report

Meghalaya ranks way below the national average in imparting elementary education in the country, according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2010.

The national average of children in the 3-4 years age group in 'anganwadi' schools is 75.7 percent, whereas Meghalaya's average is way below at 46.7 percent, revealed the report, released Thursday by Leader of Opposition Conrad K. Sangma.

According to the report, the national average of children in the age group of 6-14 out of school is 3.5 percent and Meghalaya's average is more that double at 7.2 percent.

Moreover, children between ages 3 and 6 years not attending any kind of pre-school is very high in Meghalaya and the percentage of such children in the state is increasing year after year since 1997.

Amongst the seven districts of the state, Jaintia Hills fares the worst in imparting elementary education, the report stated.

The report comes as no surprise since pre-school teachers, mostly in rural areas, are still getting a salary of Rs.1,800

despite many appeals to the government. This salary has remained unchanged for the past ten years, so many of these teachers juggle between several jobs to make ends meet.

"Many of the elementary school teachers have outsourced their jobs to others. In return they get 50 percent of the salary and carry on other work," the report said.

"In such a scenario, how can the state expect to do well in imparting elementary education," Sangma said.

He also claimed that the central government's flagship programme - the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme - has also lured children away from the schools in the villages.

"Many school children are not attending their classes and are taking up jobs under the MGNREGS. The state government must ensure that such instances do not take place," Sangma said.

ASER is the largest household survey on elementary education in India.

Source: February 18, 2011 [IANS](#)

Schools in India

India has a population of 360 million in the 5-19 year age group. Out of this, only 230 million are enrolled in schools.

Only 53 per cent of these students study beyond class 8, the rest drop out at various stages.

India currently has 1.3 million schools out of which 78 per cent are owned and managed by the government.

School capacity in the country is heavily skewed towards primary and middle level education. Only 13 per cent schools provide secondary/higher secondary level education.

To provide universal school education in 2015, India will need another 250,000 schools. Most of these schools will have to be set up through private investment.

Setting up a conventional school with current prices of land is not feasible within most metropolitan city limits. Therefore, a careful assessment of financial feasibility and positioning of schools is required before considering such ventures.

Source: February 21, 2011/[Business Standard](#)

Information rich, but short on analysis

Education, particularly elementary education, is a terrain of profound thinking and fierce contestation. A century ago, the idea of 'India' and the dream of a national education grew together. The Constitution gave the new nation 10 years to shed the curse of illiteracy and turn educated. After half-a-century, the dream has faded and India's dismal record in education stares the nation in the face.

Many years ago, J.P. Naik, the great educationist, called education an "elusive triangle", with equality, quality, and quantity forming the three sides, none of which can stand without the other two. When 'elite India' and its policymakers rejected the dimension of equality, the triangle collapsed and the country has landed itself at the bottom of the human development index table.

India's education system, marked by an elaborately constructed multi-track schooling, is among the most exclusionary ones in the world. With neoliberalism sweeping across the country, the 'market' has triumphed and knowledge stands commoditised. Children are pushed into a merciless and mercenary world of fierce competition. What we have today is unabashed, unapologetic class education.

Dimensions

In this book, Jagannatha Rao, a former Director of Public Instruction in Karnataka, seeks to present the manifold dimensions of elementary education. Packed with data and information, it contains a useful discussion on learning outcome measurement, an issue that is poorly addressed in elementary education, with even the Right to Education Act remaining silent on it.

The annexures are a mine of information about the mid-day meal scheme, early childhood care and education, and the various studies on learning achievement levels.

The chapter on 'financing of education', which makes a detailed presentation of the government's flagship programme, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), should help one to grasp the nuances of the shortfall in resource allocation. Where the author stands in the raging debate on 'public vs private education' is clear.

He wants private schools to be regulated and monitored by a system that is "friendly" and "realistic" and, what more, given support (by way of assistance from the public exchequer, for instance) so that they are enabled to provide high quality education. This is not to say the author has no concern for improving public education. In fact, his concern is palpable throughout the book.

Common school system

Drawing upon the experience he had gained as the head of educational administration in Karnataka, he pinpoints its many flaws and suggests the way ahead.

However, while the coverage is vast, the missing elements are many and cardinal to the debate on elementary education. The entire discourse on common school system that has been the dream and demand of generations of educationists and nation-builders has been summarily dismissed in a couple of sentences. "No doubt the concept of the common school system that aims at ensuring equity is desirable. But in reality, it is not practical as ground realities are different." The concomitant concept of 'neighbourhood schools' does not get even a cursory reference. Historically, the common school system with

neighbourhood schools has been the bedrock of education and nation-building in advanced countries. It has also found favour with successive education commissions in India.

Another intriguing omission is a discussion on curriculum, which has a defining role in education. Curriculum is at the centre of the country's dreams of what the nation and its citizen should be. Gandhiji and Tagore are among the many thinkers and nation-builders who laid stress on designing the curriculum to reflect the self-image and identity of the nation and its flowering into a grand democracy.

More recently, the National Curriculum Framework of 2005 provided the ignition to much thought and action in this area. The debate on a large number of issues — the irrelevance of the curriculum to social reality and needs; work-centred education to integrate the head, heart and hand; the class character of the curriculum privileging the middle class child and denying the cultural and cognitive capital to the working class child and so on — does not figure in the book.

While initiatives by the state get a lion's share of space, experiments in alternative education are dismissed in a few paragraphs. Sadly, the renowned Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme that profoundly impacted the most marginalised children does not find a place.

The entire educational development is projected as having flowed from the state's own commitment, thereby ignoring the powerful people's movements that in fact prompted, often compelled, the state to act. Finally, one cannot engage with the foundational field of education without taking on upfront the politics of education, with all its ethical, human, and constitutional implications.

There is little doubt that the book, although devoid of a vision, is a useful source of reference.

Source: Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011/[The Hindu](#)

PaGaLGuY B-school Rankings 2011 – The results!

Welcome to the PaGaLGuY B-school Rankings 2011, the guide to India's Most Preferred B-schools in its 4th edition.

As many of you tracking our rankings since 2008 might have noticed, each year we have been experimenting with the various possibilities our CommunityRank methodology could throw up — while ensuring that the product we eventually put out was accurate and useful to you all. Simultaneously, we have been continuously improving the algorithm under-the-hood to accommodate an increasing number of b-schools while never letting its accuracy fall. This year's ranking is an aggregation of all that we have learned in the past three years about the directions in which CommunityRank can be pushed and is therefore backed by a stronger, scaled and more robust algorithm than ever.

We have also simplified the structure of our rankings this year based on readership statistics from last year. For example, rankings such as those according to b-school students, alumni, freshers, etc have been pruned out owing to low interest from readers. Similarly, we have also let go of last year's regional rankings. We have only retained the Overall rankings, rankings as per Women and rankings as per those with Work experience, as these have been the most used ones in previous years.

Traditionally, B-school Rankings have been trying to tell us which MBA programs we should be looking at in the coming admissions season. However, none of them have succeeded in capturing the order of business schools that Indians actually want to study at, despite what these rankings advise. The basis of the PaGaLGuY B-school Rankings has therefore always been to find out what India thinks about its b-schools by measuring their perception in a technologically seamless yet easy manner.

Coming to the specifics of this year's rankings, a total of 8,673 people participated in the PaGaLGuY B-school Rankings survey 2011. After data cleaning and ignoring incomplete responses, we were left with a total of 7,931 respondents whose votes we used to calculate the rankings.

This year we have ranked a total of 104 b-schools. The year 2010 has seen a lot of important new b-schools starting up, of which the three Indian Institutes of Management at Raipur, Rohtak and Ranchi are the most significant. We have included these b-schools in the rankings to see how people perceive them compared to older schools.

Based on requests, we have also included several government and university management schools in smaller towns of India which have come to be highly aspired for in their local regions — such as IMS Indore, FMS at Banaras Hindu University, Delhi School of Management at Delhi Technological University and more.

Start viewing the rankings in any of the following ways,-
[Visit the rankings homepage](#)
- Go directly to the [Overall Rankings](#) | [Rankings as per Women](#) | [Rankings as per those with Work Experience](#)
- Read a [brief analysis](#) of the rankings- To find out how we arrived at the rankings, [view the Methodology](#) Most questions about rankings, why we follow the methodology we do, why not some other methodology, have been answered in the Methodology page. Readers are advised to go through it to understand the rankings in proper context.

We wish you the best for this admission season and hope that you get through into the b-school of your choice

Source: Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011/ [pagalguy.com](#)

Parents wary of rising cost of kids' education: Survey

New Delhi: A majority of parents in the country are concerned about the rising cost of their children's

education, even more than their health, lifestyle or marriage, a survey released here said Friday.

The report "Aviva Education Insights", by research company IMRB International reflected the concerns and aspirations of young parents for their children's education.

"About 81 percent of parents are concerned about their child's education and 30 percent of these mention that they are more concerned over the expenses incurred on the child's education than the quality, admission, performance or marks," the survey found.

One of the key concerns of parents was the rising expense on children's education with 39 percent parents concerned about the cost of their education in the future.

"The survey highlights that the rising cost of education has become a major cause of worry for parents, and they now want additional funds for their child not only for higher education but during the schooling years as well," said T.R. Ramachandran, CEO and MD, Aviva Life Insurance.

The survey also highlighted the fact that 51 percent parents believed that insurance was the most effective tool to cushion the child's education cost.

The survey was conducted in 11 cities across the nation with a sample size of 2,402 parents.

Source: Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011/ [IANS](#)

Sans education, girls under big risk: UNICEF

Girls still lag behind boys in secondary school education as more than 70 million adolescents are currently out of schools across the world. Due to lack of proper education, girls are predominantly becoming victims of domestic violence and also more susceptible to the risk of HIV infections.

These details were published in the latest report of UNICEF which was released formally by Chief Minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy at his camp office here today.

The report titled 'The State of the World's Children 2011' emphasises the need to focus more on reaching adolescents, especially girls and invest in education, health and other measures to improve their lives.

As the United Nations announced that period between Aug, 2010 and Aug, 2011 would be observed as the International Year of Youth, this year's report focuses on youth-related topic 'Adolescence - an age of opportunity'.

The report affirms that adolescents cannot develop the knowledge and skills they need to navigate risks of exploitation, abuse and violence without education.

Minister for Women Development and Child Welfare Sunitha Lakshma Reddy along with UNICEF-AP and Karnataka CFO Dr Yogendra Mathur and special chief secretary for Women Development and Child Welfare Chaya Ratan were present.

Source: 26 February 2011/Hyderabad/[Express Buzz](#)

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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

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Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation

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

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

Email: aserf@apeejay.edu
Website: <http://aserf.org.in>