



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 Stya University announces admission for the session 2011-12

Apeejay Stya University is offering 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

Apeejay Signs MOU with Dutch and French Universities

Apeejay Institute of Design (AID), New Delhi and Apeejay Stya University (ASU), Haryana signed (MOU) with AKV St. Joost, Avans University of Applied Sciences, Breda, The Netherlands and Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam/ University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Further looking for long-term partnership in academics and research, Apeejay Stya University has signed two (MOU)with its School of Management Sciences and School of Design & Visual Arts with EM Normandie, Caen, Le Havre, Deauville, France (E.M Normandie-Normandy Business School) and with Escole Supérieure Des Arts Appliqués De Troyes (Groupe Esc- Troyes-Champagne) respectively.

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**Cloud computing in education**

The rise of the cloud is more than just another platform shift that gets geeks excited. It will, undoubtedly, transform the information technology industry, but it will also profoundly change the way people work and companies operate.—The Economist

The education sector is the second largest sector globally and Indian school system is the world's largest school system with over 1.12 million schools. The development of the sector is key for economic growth and improvement in the standard of living.

According to the 2011 census, India's literacy rate has reached 74 per cent, increasing by 9 per cent since 2001. But, what is important is the quality of this literacy. In 2009, 96 per cent of children in rural India, who were six years to 14 years old, were enrolled in schools — of these, 73 per cent were enrolled in government schools and 53 per cent could read class two texts. The government has allocated Rs 52,057 crore for the education sector in the Union budget for financial year 2011-2012, up by 24 per cent compared with the past financial year. Is this enough?

While such statistics paint an extremely positive picture of the Indian educational sector, the overall quality of education still remains an issue. There is a need for more effort on multiple fronts to enhance the quality of educational discourse, improve standardisation and increase the reach of vocational and other alternate education channels to all sections of society.

The challenges posed by the growing appetite for education requirements are immense. India will have about 45 million people in the age group of 18 years to 20 years by 2020. To train them, we need more than 20 million teachers. As per present trends, we will create only 20,000 teachers by 2020.

Traditional forms of technology in education pose a number of other key challenges. Cost of technology, both hardware and software, which are unaffordable for the masses; cost of maintenance of IT (information technology) setups; power shortage, particularly in the rural areas; and a lack of trained teachers — especially in IT awareness and knowledge are only some of the issues.

Cloud computing and related business models provide answers to many of the challenges faced by the Indian educational sector. IT in general has proven to be a catalyst in making the experience of learning more enjoyable and effective and cloud computing could provide answers to many of the challenges faced by the education sector in India.

The cloud refers to wide-area networks, generally the internet, from which remote computing resources are shared. Google and others, already offer various

productivity applications, and Microsoft has announced that it will offer Microsoft Office 2010 online next year. The cloud reduces costs and complexity and provides scalability.

The biggest advantage that the cloud brings is to reduce costs and improve efficiency. An institution can rely on the the 'pay-as-you-go' characteristic of the three pillars of cloud: IaaS, PaaS and SaaS.

Ease of maintenance increases efficiency as the pain of maintaining the software is now shifted to the cloud services provider. Technical issues related to online portals for distance education programmes and online examinations are the responsibility of the cloud service provider.

One of the primary reasons for the high dropout rate in Indian schools is the insipid form of learning propagated by rote learning. Interactive applications delivered through the cloud can not only standardise teaching methods and content across schools, but also add richness and variety to the learning experience.

Teacher-training programmes at remote locations or rural areas are often caught in a web of ignorance themselves. Cloud computing solutions can be used for teacher-training courses and rapidly train a larger number of teachers.

Many adults, deprived of minimum education at an early stage of life, are later reluctant to go to schools or do not have the time to do so. Cloud can help bring mass awareness among the rural population through interactive applications delivered using newer means of delivering education through mobile phones and televisions.

SciCloud is a project that is studying the scope of establishing private clouds at universities. With such networks, researchers can efficiently use the already existing resources in solving computationally-intensive scientific, mathematical, and academic problems.

The project established a Eucalyptus-based private cloud and developed several customised images that can be used in solving problems from mobile web services, distributed computing to bio-informatics domains.

Online tutoring has become a source of employment in India. In the rural areas, where career choices are limited, cloud online tutoring can play a major role in helping a person earn his bread and butter.

At peak times, online tutoring vendors like Tutor Vista's teachers coach 2,500 American students in one to-one sessions.

Opportunity is knocking and while there is no doubt that the private sector will seize it, the government has to form partnerships to enable India to utilise the full potential of cloud computing.

“Education is not the filling a bucket but the lighting of a fire.”— William Butler Yeats

Source: 06 June 2011/[Mt Digital fc](#)

NEWS**Battle between AICTE, institutes over PGDM courses continues**

The battle between the B-Schools and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) over issues relating to regulation of fees, admissions and governance, is far from over.

The common admission process for the PGDM 2011-13 batch, announced on Thursday by the Consortium of Management Education (COME), is largely aided by the interim orders passed by the Bombay high court on February 24 and the Supreme Court on March 17.

These interim orders are effective only for one year, which means PGDM admissions for the 2012-14 batch will be subject to the outcome of the matter that is now pending before the Supreme Court and is posted for next hearing on July 4.

"We expect the court's final verdict will be out by September/October, which will give us a clear picture about matters relating to fees, admissions and governance vis-à-vis admissions from next year," said Apoorva Palkar, president, COME, which is a body of 52 unaided management institutes in the state.

In December 2010, the AICTE had issued a notification laying fresh set of rules for the council-approved technical institutions offering degree, diploma and PGDM courses in the country.

Some of the key features of these rules, which were to be effective from 2011-12, were:

PGDM shall be of a duration not less than two years;

All PGDM admissions will be done only through two nationally recognised common entrances test i.e., CAT and MAT or the test conducted by the state government (MHT-CET in case of Maharashtra);

Seat allotment should be effected by the concerned state government through its competent authority i.e. Director of Technical Education (DTE) in case of Maharashtra.

Similarly, the rules provided that the fees for each PGDM course will be subject to approval by the Supreme Court-mandated Shikshan Shulka Samiti (fee fixation panel) set up by the state government. It also provided for nomination of five invitees on behalf of the AICTE and state government.

The new rules drew considerable flak from the B-schools, which viewed the same as an encroachment on their right to conduct admissions and decide fees, thus setting off a spate of litigations in the Bombay high court and the Supreme Court.

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

Number of overseas students continue to fall in Australia

Australia's education industry has witnessed an 8.7 per cent drop in international enrolments this year, particularly from India following a spate of violent attacks on Indians.

Tightening of student visa rules by Australia is also blamed for the sharp decline in the enrolment of the foreign students.

Australian education providers have reported an 8.7 per cent drop in international enrolments during the first three months of this year compared with the same period last year, 'The Age' reported.

The hardest hit enrolments were recorded in the vocational education and English language areas, where numbers fell more than 21 per cent on March last year.

The report said the biggest challenge for the sector is the Indian market where the numbers all sectors fell by 30.4 per cent, continuing the year's trend, outlined in figures released in April for February enrolments.

It also recorded a drop of 19 per cent from Nepal and 17 per cent from Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, higher education sector enjoyed modest growth, with a 3.6 per cent increase on last year's enrolments with many universities stating that growth was consistent.

Apart from attributing the drop to 'safety issues of Indian students', many education experts have also blamed Australian government for tightening immigration laws that were leading to the drop in student enrolments.

Source: June 3, 2011/[Economic Times](#)

State seeks AICTE approval for 52 new technical institutes

The state government has recommended 52 new professional institutes in the state for approval from the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) this year. The colleges, which include management, pharmacy, engineering and integrated campuses, if approved, will accommodate 11,158 more students.

"We received 98 applications of which we have shortlisted 52. The list of approved institutes should be out by the end of the month," said Rajesh Tope, minister of higher and technical education. Last year, the AICTE had approved 116 new colleges in the state out of 240 proposals.

This year applications across the country have reduced. While AICTE has tightened its norms, experts said that the market for technical education has saturated. Every year, seats go vacant especially in new colleges that have not yet established a reputation. Last year, 9,000 management seats and 22,000 engineering seats remained vacant after the admission process was done. To fill up vacancies in B-

schools, the state government allowed students who had not taken the entrance test to take admission. There are already 1.14 lakh engineering and 31,000 management seats in the state.

“More colleges will just lead to more vacancies. Also with quantity, quality deteriorates,” said an AICTE official. After the state’s recommendation, AICTE officials will scrutinise the proposals. As per the recommendation, the largest chunk of seats (5,232) will come from integrated campuses where more than one course will be taught. Engineering proposals follow with 14 colleges offering 4,140 seats.

To further enhance technical education among existing institutes the state has initiated the second phase of Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme. The phase will have two main components: one to enhance infrastructure in technical institutes and the second to upgrade postgraduate and doctoral research in colleges. Around 31 institutions had applied for the first component and eight have been short-listed. For the second component, 15 institutes applied and ten have been short-listed.

Source: June3, 2011/[Hindustan Times](#)

HRD Ministry proposes to extend RTE till Class 10

In its bid to push for the inclusion of secondary education till Class 10 under the Right To Education (RTE) Act, the HRD Ministry in its proposal to be placed before the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) meeting next week, has cited examples from around 85 countries ranging from the US to Djibouti and Palestine that have extended the years of compulsory education.

It also talks about similar efforts in Russia, Taiwan, etc. In Russia, 11 years of schooling was made compulsory since 2007. Taiwan will expand the coverage from the current nine years to 12 years. The proposal argues that the reason behind the economic development of the US is because of the policy of extending mass secondary education till students attain 16 years of age. The Right of all Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill says every child between 6 and 14 years is entitled to receive free education. Among the countries named in the proposal, India is the only one that extends this right till Class 8.

There are issues that the Centre and the states need to resolve on funding this legal entitlement. Expanding it to secondary education will require money, creation of infrastructure and more teachers. The government would also have to extend the mid-day meal scheme till the secondary stage. “The legal entitlement will have to be backed by law. Maybe, there will be an amendment to the existing act or a new one altogether,” a ministry official said.

“That’s why we are proposing this at the 58th CABE meeting. It will take 2-3 years if it is approved but the ministry is keen on this. The question that led to this (thought) was what happens to children after they complete Class 8,” the official added.

Source: June 4, 2011/[Indian Express](#)

Pearson Education Seeks Larger Presence in India

Pearson Education India, the operating company of Pearson PLC that recently acquired a majority stake in online site TutorVista and tied up with Educomp Solutions, will buy or form alliances with providers of education in a bid to gain a 10% market share in India in two years.

“We will grow [both] inorganically and organically in the Indian market, will continue to forge alliances and buy out companies wherever there [is synergy],” said Anish Srikrishna, chief marketing officer of Pearson Publishing India.

Pearson Publishing owns the Financial Times newspaper, publisher Penguin and Pearson Education, has a compounded annual growth rate of more than 20% in higher education and school publishing.

The cover of a children's book published by Pearson Longman. Pearson Longman is Pearson's arm for publishing educational books for schools.

“Education as an investment destination is growing from the nascent stage to the growth stage,” said Narayanan Ramaswamy, executive director who oversees education at consulting firm KPMG Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd. “Institutions have to gain size and scale through three options-getting funded, getting acquired or coming together with other companies.”

The risk-adjusted returns now look better than ever before, and as a result interest from domestic and foreign companies in acquiring companies or forging alliances has multiplied, he said. For instance, in May, Core Projects and Technologies Ltd, an education solutions provider, acquired ITN Mark Education, a U.K.-based provider of teachers and teaching assistants, for \$25 million and DMC Education acquired Kolkata-based education consulting firm Plansteps for about \$10 million.

The Indian higher education system has over 26,000 institutes across varied fields of study, according to a 2010 Ernst and Young report.

Two years ago, Pearson went on the acquisition path with its investment of \$30 million to co-promote vocational training provider IndiaCan with Educomp and took a 17.2% stake in TutorVista, the online tutoring firm. Earlier this year, it acquired an additional 59% stake in TutorVista to take its holding to around 76% for \$127 million.

The company's higher education and teachers' training divisions are expected to contribute to its growth, Mr. Srikrishna said. Further, the government's plan to spend

one trillion rupees on higher education, according to the latest federal budget, provides Pearson an opportunity to sign up as a partner in setting up schools and other initiatives. He expects the company's teachers' training model, which was used in Bhutan, to appeal to state governments in India and has initiated talks.

"Any public-private partnership in India requires lot of due diligence, which is time-consuming and hence no timeline can be given on when we can roll this out," Mr. Srikrishna said.

Pearson expects its growth to outpace the anticipated 30% compounded annual growth of education.

"We will grow faster than the industry, as we have done in the past and will garner substantial market by 2015," Mr. Srikrishna said.

According to the E&Y report, spending in the higher education segment is expected to increase to 1.5 trillion rupees by 2020.

By that time, keeping in mind the target gross enrollment ratio (the number of students admitted to schools and colleges) of 20% and taking into account the prescribed infrastructure for educational institutions, we would need to invest 3.6 trillion rupees, the report said.

Against this backdrop of rapid growth, students' preferences and needs also have changed. There's a new category of students who are willing to pay for academic quality but in turn want education that matches global standards and is linked to employment.

The company, listed on the London Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange, has no plans to sell shares in India. "We will meet our investment demands through internal accruals and treasury management," Mr. Srikrishna said.

Corrections & Amplifications

Pearson PLC bought a stake in a joint venture with Educomp Solutions and not a stake in Educomp as was written in this report earlier.

Source: 7 June 2011/Mumbai/[The Wall Street Journal](#)

Shri Kapil Sibal Addresses 58th Meeting of CABE; Proposes Extension of RTE up to Secondary Level Moots Bill to Control Malpractices in School Education

The world of the 21st century will be driven by the power of ideas. Knowledge capital generation will lead to wealth creation and removal of poverty. The youth of the country would have to be at the forefront for leading the nation to social and economic progress. This can be done by empowering the youth and children through education to harness the demographic dividend. This was stated by Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development in his address at the inaugural session of the

58th meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE).

In his opening remarks, Shri Sibal put forth the main challenges facing the nation, before the State Education Ministers and eminent members from academia and civil society. He stated that delivering the right to elementary education enshrined in the Constitution has been taken up in right earnest by the Centre and the States. He placed the suggestion that the Right to Education needs to be extended up to the secondary level (class 10) to provide avenues for children emerging from elementary education, as a natural corollary. In other words, recognizing the right of a child to 10 years of free and compulsory education needs to be carried forward by the Central and State Governments in the decade ahead. In this context, he stressed the need to ensure quality in educational delivery towards bringing down drop-out rates and providing value to the children through the educational process.

Shri Sibal stated that one of the critical challenges before the nation is to develop, recognize and enhance skills in youth to be productive members of society and the economy. To integrate vocational education and skill development, it was essential to develop a set of nationally recognized qualifications tailoring the qualifications to the requirements of industry. The National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) proposed in the agenda aims to embed vocational education in the educational system providing for horizontal and vertical mobility for youth to seamlessly move from general to vocational education. The Minister underlined the integral role of State Governments in preparing this Framework, as the levels of diversity in skill development in the states will best be addressed by the State Governments. He also said thus an element of diversity must be built into the education system to enable mobility; and the necessary unity that is also required will be provided by the standards set by a common NVEQF.

Another pressing need of the day was to promote transparency and accountability of the educational system towards its primary stakeholders i.e. children and their parents. The Minister informed the invitees that the Centre is proposing a legislation to prevent and prohibit adoption of malpractices in school education (essentially to prevent the rule of money power in this sector) for which he sought suggestions and views from the State Governments to generate a platform for consensus. He said that this legislation could be modeled on the lines a similar legislation on prevention of unfair practices in Higher Education already introduced in the Parliament and on which the recommendations of the Standing Committee of Parliament have been received.

The Minister then moving on to Higher Education sector, stated that an important item on the agenda is consideration of the recommendations of the recently held conference of Vice Chancellors of Central and State Universities in the public sector, especially with regard to

reforms in the affiliation system in universities. Affiliation had emerged in the period of colonial India for the rulers to control what was being taught. There has to be a change in the philosophy of affiliation to enable the power of independent thought to flower in the collegiate system. He requested the State Governments that efforts need to be made to reduce the number of colleges affiliated to universities so that universities could become centres of learning.

Union Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri Ajay Maken, mentioned the need to integrate physical education and sports into the education system. In this regard, he recounted the measures provided under RTE and the steps taken by CBSE in its affiliated schools and exhorted States to adopt similar measures in schools affiliated to State Boards.

Dr. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Shri Narendra Jadhav, Member (Education), Planning Commission, Smt. Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, Higher Education, Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary, School Education and Literacy besides Ministers of various state Governments, members of CAFE from academia and civil society and other senior officials attended the meeting.

Source: 7 June 2011/[PIB](#)

Summary Record of Discussions of the 58th Central Advisory Board of Education

The Fifty Eighth Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CAEB) was held here today under the Chairmanship of Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of Human Resource Development.. Shri Ajay Maken, Union Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports; Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for Human Resource Development and Vice-Chairperson of CAEB, Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member (Education), Planning Commission along with 26 Ministers-in-charge of Education from various States/UTs attended the meeting. The meeting was also attended by eminent educationists, authors, artists, linguists etc. apart from Heads of different autonomous organizations and senior officials of different departments of the Government of India as its members.

The CAEB is the highest advisory body to advise the Central and State Governments in the field of education. The previous meeting i.e. 57th meeting of CAEB was held on 19th June, 2010. The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed today along with the Action Taken Note on them.

In his opening remarks, Hon'ble HRM put forth the main challenges facing the nation. He stated that delivering the right to elementary education enshrined in the Constitution, has been taken up in right earnest by the Centre and the States. He placed the suggestion that the Right to Education needs to be extended up to the

secondary level (class 10) to provide avenues for children emerging from elementary education, as a natural corollary. He also stressed the need to ensure quality in educational delivery aimed towards bringing down drop-out rates and providing value to the children through the educational process.

Hon'ble HRM also mentioned that one of the critical challenges before the nation is to develop, recognize and enhance skills in youth to be productive members of society and the economy. It is essential to develop a set of nationally recognized qualifications tailoring the qualifications to the requirements of industry. The National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) proposed in the agenda aims to embed vocational education in the educational system providing for horizontal and vertical mobility for youth to seamlessly move between general and vocational education. Hon'ble HRM underlined the integral role of State Governments in preparing this Framework, as the levels of diversity in skill development in the States will best be addressed by the State Governments. He also said that an element of diversity must be built into the education system to enable mobility; and the necessary unity that is also required will be provided by the standards set by a common NVEQF.

Another pressing need of the day is to promote transparency and accountability of the educational system towards its primary stakeholders i.e. children and their parents. Hon'ble HRM informed the CAEB that the Centre is proposing a legislation to prevent and prohibit adoption of unfair practices in school education for which he sought suggestions and views from the CAEB to generate a platform for consensus. He said that this legislation could be modelled on the lines of a similar legislation on prevention of unfair practices in Higher Education already introduced in the Parliament and on which the recommendations of the Standing Committee of Parliament have since been received.

Regarding the Higher Education sector, Hon'ble HRM stated that an important item on the agenda is consideration of the recommendations of the recently held conference of Vice Chancellors of Central and State Universities in the public sector, especially with regard to reforms in the affiliation system in universities. Affiliation had emerged in the period of colonial India for the rulers to control what was being taught. There has to be a change in the philosophy of affiliation to enable the power of independent thought to flower in the collegiate system. He requested CAEB that efforts need to be made to reduce the number of colleges affiliated to universities so that universities could become centres of learning. He also mentioned the importance of Book Promotion as also preservation and promotion of languages in creating a knowledge society.

Union Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri Ajay Maken, mentioned the need to integrate physical education and sports into the education system. In this

regard, he recounted the measures provided under RTE and the steps taken by CBSE in its affiliated schools and exhorted States to adopt similar measures in schools affiliated to State Boards.

After deliberations, the CABE resolved as under:-

- (i) Members expressed deep appreciation for the earnest efforts in implementing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. Further, all members of CABE endorsed the proposal to extend free and compulsory education to the secondary sector. It was felt that every child in the country – irrespective of gender, caste, class or community to which he or she belongs must have the right to at least 10 years of formal schooling. It was decided to constitute a CABE Committee comprising Ministers, members of civil society as well as educationists to formulate the draft legislation. The CABE Committee will prepare a preliminary draft in about three months time, so that it can be discussed with all stakeholders, including students, teachers, teachers associations, parents and community members.
- (ii) Members earnestly shared the concern about the increasing trend of adoption of unfair practices in school education sector and expressed the need to arrest this trend. While the Ministry has already introduced a Bill in Parliament to prohibit unfair practices in the higher education sector, it was agreed to initiate a similar legislative proposal for prohibiting unfair practices in the school education sector also. It was decided to constitute a CABE Committee comprising Ministers, members of civil society as well as educationists to formulate the draft legislation. The CABE Committee will prepare a preliminary draft in about three months.
- (iii) There was unanimous endorsement of the need for a National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) providing for a nationally recognised framework with vertical and horizontal mobility between general and vocational education. The Group of State Education Ministers already constituted will develop a road map for implementation incorporating the requirements and concerns of all the States. State Governments were urged to identify regional and local skills and develop curriculum content to feed into the NVEQF. The courses chosen should be locality specific to be implemented through plans devised by the States, which would be woven into a national grid within the parameters of NVEQF.
- (iv) The recommendations of the Vice Chancellors' Conference held on 25-26th March 2011 were presented before CABE. Considering the criticality of the need for expansion in higher education consistent with quality in order to address issues of access with equity, university reforms including governance reforms are essential. In order to chart a road map for such reforms, it was decided to constitute a committee of

CABE consisting of State Ministers and academics. The CABE Committee on University Reforms would submit its report within three months. All the State Governments were requested to examine the recommendations of the Vice Chancellors' Conference and send their views and comments to the CABE Committee.

- (v) The initiative taken in formulating a National Book Promotion Policy was widely appreciated and endorsed by CABE. Members felt that implementation of this Policy would go a long way in reviving the interest in Books particularly amongst children and youth.
- (vi) CABE expressed their concern for preservation of the linguistic diversity and resolved that measures be taken to protect and preserve endangered languages in the Twelfth Plan thru' appropriate schemes.
- (vii) CABE also discussed the need for integration of sports and physical education with academic curriculum as also introduction of "10 Great Thinkers of Modern India" in the syllabi of schools.

While appreciating that three meetings of CABE have been held in the last two years, members suggested that preferably two meetings be held every year in context of wide ranging reforms and large scale expansion taking place across the education sector which could provide a platform for the interaction amongst the Centre, States, academia and civil society.

Source: 7 June 2011/[PIB](#)

Summary Record of Discussion of the State Education Ministers' Conference

The Conference of State & UT Education Ministers' was held yesterday with Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, in the chair. Smt. D. Purandeshwari, Minister of State for HRD, Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, 26 Ministers of Education representing State Governments and Union Territories, Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Smt. Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, Higher Education and senior officials of the Centre and State Governments were present.

The Conference of State/UT Education Ministers reviewed the status of implementation of the RTE Act, 2009. The Conference noted the considerable progress that has taken place in developing understanding and generating consensus on the child-centred assumptions of the RTE Act. The Conference agreed to carry the process of systemic reform forward, specifically with reference to

- (i) giving wide publicity to child entitlements under the Act
- (ii) undertaking teacher recruitment, re-deployment and training in a time bound manner,
- (iii) initiating GIS mapping exercises for establishment of neighbourhood schools,

- (iv) initiating curricular renewal and instituting a system of learner assessment as an integral part of the learning system,
- (v) expediting the processes for constitution of SMCs and notification of local authorities, and
- (vi) monitoring admission of 25% children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections at entry level in private unaided schools.

A presentation was made on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in school education. The need to leverage resources from the private non-for-profit sector by creating suitable PPP models to meet the challenges of expansion in the secondary education sector was outlined. The PPP model for establishment of Model School in non-educationally backward blocks prepared by the Ministry of HRD was presented. State Ministers were appreciative of the Scheme for Model Colleges in the PPP mode and assured their co-operation in the implementation of the Scheme.

Several suggestions were made by the State Education Ministers' during discussions on the schemes in secondary education including the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)

- (i) to continue the 75:25 fund sharing patterns between the Centre and the States in the Twelfth Plan,
- (ii) to extend RMSA to cover higher secondary level and to cover Government-aided schools;
- (iii) to increase the allocation for MMER (Monitoring, management, evaluation and research) to meet administrative and monitoring expenses beyond the present level of 2%.
- (iv) to reduce the 5 km distance norm to 3 km for establishment of secondary schools wherever there is density of population is more or in respect of schools for girls, Urdu and Sanskrit schools.
- (v) to raise the financial limit for construction of new schools and expansion of new schools
- (vi) to give flexibility to States in utilization of the amount allocated for repairs and maintenance of schools according to need.
- (vii) to provide for a common SMDCs (School Management Development Committees) under RMSA and SSA.
- (viii) to provide for hostels in Model Schools especially in tribal areas.

The progress in implementation of Sakshar Bharat was reviewed. A few State Ministers desired extension of the programme to more districts.

The State Ministers agreed with the need for a comprehensive and reliable data-base on Higher Education to reflect not only the factual status of the Higher Education sector, but also to aid in planning the

sector's growth in order to address the issues of access, equity, relevance and quality. Central Government's initiative in conducting the All India Survey on Higher Education was endorsed by States and all possible co-operation was assured in completing the survey in time and in identifying the agencies for conducting the survey. States also agreed to advise all the Institutions located in the States to provide information as required.

Presentations were made on the progress in implementation of the scheme of interest subsidy for pursuing professional education and the scheme for establishment of model colleges in 374 identified educationally backward districts. The State Ministers indicated that awareness campaigns need to be launched by the States to publicise the scheme of interest subsidy to reach out to deserving students. State Ministers agreed to ensure prompt submission of proposals for availing of benefit for establishment of model colleges. Some States requested for the Central share to be increased.

A presentation was made on the progress made so far under the National Mission on Education through ICT, which has 3 major components viz., generation of e-content, connectivity to colleges and universities and development of low-cost access cum computing devices. Nearly 390 universities of the country have already been provided 1 Gbps connectivity till date which could be seen on the Sakshat portal (<http://www.Sakshat.ac.in>).

Orders for manufacture and supply of low cost access and computing devices have already been placed and a few samples from the production process have already been received and are under testing. States were informed that on an average nearly 3000 such low cost devices would be provided to each state for testing of these devices for their functionality, utility and durability in field conditions.

The scheme of setting up of 20 Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) in PPP mode was discussed in the Conference and it was informed that proposals from the State Governments are awaited. State/UT Governments were requested to identify private partners & location of the institute as per the criteria laid down by the Expert Committee and forward their proposals based on the DPR to the Ministry of Human Resource Development within three months.

The State/UT Ministers were sensitized on the UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of ragging. States Governments were requested to ensure proactive participation of civil/police authorities in anti-ragging committees and immediate filing of FIR on complaints of ragging. States could also help disseminate awareness of the 24X7 toll-free Anti-ragging Helpline and ensure that educational institutions disclose all related information including contact numbers of relevant authorities through media campaigns.

Source: 8 June 2011/[PIB](#)

Education summit in Canada

A delegation of 25 vice-chancellors from India is slated to visit the Education Summit in Canada. Held as part of the 'Year of India in Canada' and hosted by Carleton University, it builds on the agreement signed by the prime ministers of India and Canada, and the visit of a number of Canadian university presidents to India in November 2010.

The summit is an initiative of Sunaina Singh, president, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute and chairperson from India for the summit.

The delegation includes VCs of top Indian universities like Najeeb Jung, vice-chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi; Dinesh Singh, vice-chancellor, University of Delhi; Anil K. Bhowmick, vice-chancellor, Indian Institute of Technology Patna and PN Ghosh, vice-chancellor, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, among others.

The delegation will join their Canadian counterparts in the event which will include major keynote addresses as well as executive round-tables on the topics of student and faculty exchanges, joint programmes and degrees, twinning arrangements, credit transfers and accreditation issues, among others.

Source: 13 June 2011/

Twin engineering degree

The NMAM Institute of Technology of the Nitte Education Trust has signed an MoU with Penn State Harrisburg, USA to offer a 2+2 engineering programme for students.

The first of its kind twinning programme in [India](#) offers a bachelor's degree in engineering, where students can complete the first two years of their study at Nitte and the next two years at Penn State, USA.

Addressing a news conference, Nitte Education Trust president N Vinay Hegde said that the new twinning program will have the benefit of a globally recognised and contemporary engineering education with the coming together of two well known names in the higher education space. The articulation of the agreement between Nitte and Penn State provides for a common curriculum, education delivery and evaluation.

Further, the transfer of credits as per the agreement ensures participants the benefits of pursuing part of the programme in India adhering to global benchmarks in engineering education. The specialisations offered are civil, electrical, computer science and mechanical engineering, he said.

Source: 15 June 2011/[Times of India](#).

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE**Skill shortage presents hurdle to India's growth: World Bank**

Skill shortage remains one of the major constraints to growth in the Indian Economy, says a recent World Bank working paper.

"Insufficient supply of quality skills is one of the major impediment to further economic growth in India," World Bank working paper 'Employability and Skill set of Newly Graduated Engineers in India' said.

About 64 per cent of employers in India are not satisfied with the skill sets of fresh engineering graduates, it added.

The authors of the working paper Andreas Blom and Hiroshi Saeki surveyed employers in 20 sectors such as IT, power and infrastructure in India.

Half of the respondents were large companies with over 500 employees, with more than 40 per cent from North India, 27 per cent from the West and 19 per cent from the South.

The working paper further noted that the skill gaps are largest within higher order thinking skills and smallest among the lowest order thinking skills.

Interestingly, most employers, were very satisfied with the English communication skills of the new graduates.

Adding that the skills shortage is more in sectors such as IT, infrastructure and power, where engineers play a critical role, the report said, "The skill shortage has forced India's exporting IT sector to raise wages by 15 per cent from 2003-06."

In its sixth annual talent shortage survey, Global HR firm ManpowerGroup had said that India ranks second as far as the problems of skilled labour shortages are concerned.

"The number of companies in India reporting difficulty filling vacancies is second only to Japan," the ManpowerGroup had said.

It may be recalled that Assocham and Mackinsey had also in a report in 2005, said that only 25 per cent engineering education graduates are employable by a multinational company.

Source: June 5, 2011/[Economic Times](#)

Reshaping India's higher education landscape

Indian higher education suffers from inadequate competition among the better institutions, inadequate experimentation, and inadequate measurement of outcomes.

A few months have elapsed since then human resources development minister Kapil Sibal introduced his higher education Bill. The immediate brouhaha now having subsided, I feel it might be worthwhile to point to three

generalized inadequacies in our higher education landscape that I hope this Bill, with its spirit of fostering openness to educators and educational institutions from outside India, might address. Indian higher education suffers from inadequate competition among the better institutions, inadequate experimentation, and inadequate measurement of outcomes.

First, consider inadequate competition. There are sufficiently few institutes in India that merit the appellation “excellent”, so that their institutional feet are not held to any individual or collective fire. The mainstay of their effort is the running of a competitive examination and ensuring it does not “leak”. The sheer numbers of applicants will result in a critical mass of highly qualified candidates meeting some stringent benchmark, and end up educating each other. The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) fit this bill. But why can the IITs and IIMs not also produce world-class research? A simple hypothesis is that their mission is not currently compromised by not doing so. Were there other credible institutions of engineering and business—the Indian School of Business (ISB) in Hyderabad is one example, though we need many, many more—the super-smart attendees of the IITs and IIMs would have options, and the IITs and IIMs, and the regulators who have oversight over these institutions, would have to work smarter to earn their keep.

Another way to say this is that the severe competition among striving, smart youngsters allows institutions themselves lacking competition to live the good life. If credible global institutions enter India, it will make their professional lives harder. Expect India’s “best” institutions, therefore, to resist.

Second, there is inadequate experimentation. The Indian education system reminds one of the hamster endlessly rotating its hamster-wheel with no end in sight. There is a certain mind-numbing uniformity to the path that the average upwardly aspiring family desires for its progeny. This is, to put it mildly, sad. All the ample research on education, not to mention common sense, suggests that the phrase “different strokes for different folks” is a better description of what India’s youth needs. Institutions should specialize not just in classroom learning, but also in vocational skills, in experiential learning, in experimental learning, among other modes. While there are localized pockets of such experimenting in India, they are sufficiently scarce as to not to make much of a difference (yet).

There are some experiments outside of higher education—Pratham comes immediately to mind, reaching out to millions of underprivileged kids across India; so does the much-newer Teach for India, a spin-off from the intellectual parent Teach for America. No reason why experimentation shouldn’t spread to higher education, as it has in many settings outside India. Look at the success of the Khan Academy in the US, with more than 2,000 video tutorials

on all sorts of topics, already having delivered more than 50 million lessons speedily. Or Seoul-based Megastudy’s attempt to disproportionately reward successful teachers (and implicitly penalize those who are ineffective). Perhaps one of the many corporate house-sponsored universities in the planning stages will pay attention to such cutting-edge experiments around the world.

Third, there is inadequate measurement. There are few credible metrics at any stage of the Indian education system (other than entrance examinations perhaps to a small handful of institutions). We do not know the effectiveness of particular curricula, probably set by a sclerotic and unconstrained bureaucracy, nor the effectiveness of particular institutions, nor the ability of particular teachers to excite enthusiasm or to inspire a lifelong commitment to learning. As the old saw goes, what is not measured is not managed.

I’m excited about one attempt to measure, started by two brothers in Delhi, from IIT and MIT, Aspiring Minds (full disclosure, I am an advisor). Aspiring Minds has managed to place more than 10,000 youngsters from outside the mainstream—that is, not from top-tier colleges, and not from major metros—into top-tier jobs, through its state-of-the-art measurement and assessment system that dramatically and cost-effectively increases the talent pool accessible to any corporate firm operating in India. The social multiplier of plugging in some of India’s otherwise (economically) disconnected youth into the economic mainstream is simply enormous. And this is just one example of returns-to-measurement.

So, what we need is to foster hundreds of experiments, to measure their results, and to shut down the failures and spread the successes like wildfire. Then endlessly iterate to excellence. Simple? It is not without cost. What if one is the result of a failed experiment, after all? I have no answer to this, other than to say our current system fails many more than those who might be failed by future hypothetical failed experiments.

Let’s come back to Sibal’s Bill. A dose of competition from the outside will be just what the doctor ordered. Some columnists have bemoaned the inability of government institutions to compete with foreign entrants, on the grounds that the formers’ institutional hands are tied by red tape. There is some truth to this, but it also smacks of the classic problems of incumbency. After all, even in the US, there are plenty of excellent state-run universities, with constraints on tuition setting and so on, that compete adequately and robustly with the best private universities.

I suspect that other than relieving the inadequacy of competition, foreign entrants will also relieve the inadequacy of experimentation, and, with a penchant for rankings and metrics of all sorts, will take a number of steps that encourage measurement and accountability.

There are many ways for institutions of learning to collaborate with, and compete with, domestic institutions.

Sure, some campuses will be set up, and that is no bad thing. But there are other methods, too. My own institution, the Harvard Business School (HBS), has been in the business of seeding its own competition, so to speak, for decades. It has, for example, been involved with the founding of business schools such as the IIM in Ahmedabad, the Asian Institute of Management in Manila, INCAE in Costa Rica, and so on. These are past experiments. Recently, HBS launched the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network in Latin America, which stitches together numerous business schools in several countries in a collaborative network of research and teaching. And lately, Harvard University has reinvigorated its South Asia Initiative, an attempt to bring all of Harvard's myriad faculties—business, law, arts, medicine, public health, government and so on—to South Asia, to learn and to teach in a variety of engaged and engaging ways.

Experiment, and measure, so that we can find out which strokes work for which folks. Sibal's Bill moves us in that direction. We should celebrate the effort.

Source: June 6, 2011/[Live Mint](#)

'New IITs, IIMs are non-performing assets'

One of the few Padmashri recipients in the management education space, management guru Dr Pritam Singh, Director General of International Management Institute (IMI), Delhi is well-known for having hauled up the fortunes of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow, and the Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurgaon, during his tenures as their director. This April, IMI Delhi hired him as the Director General, hoping to benefit from the same 'midas' touch' that helped IIM Lucknow and MDI.

As an influential professor of eminence who sits on important panels including those of the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), he is known to have strong opinions on business education, some of which PaGalGuY captured at an interview at the IMI campus last month.

According to you, what in the Indian context improves a b-school's reputation among applicants and corporates?

Business education is built around three powerful concepts. The first is creation of knowledge. Being a brahminical profession, and I don't mean that in a casteist way, it is incumbent on the faculty of a b-school to create knowledge. The second one is dissemination of knowledge, and third is application of knowledge.

These three concepts translate to research, teaching and being involved in executive education. Whenever I have been involved with b-schools, I have tried to inculcate these three pillars to create a holistic school.

Barring four or five b-schools, most b-schools in India are not holistic by this definition. Both the university MBA education in India and privately-run PGDM programmes are largely teaching-oriented. I will not call these schools holistic by any measure.

In executive education, it is important to powerfully connect with one's clients, that is members of the corporate world. This year, we (IMI Delhi) have already gathered Management Development programme (MDP) business of Rs 7.5 crore. Such connections help us during the campus placements process because when the corporates have a good experience with a school, they come back to hire graduate talent from it. Better placements make better quality of students join the school in future years and this leads to a sort of a cycle that improves a b-school's standing.

I also believe that a b-school cannot be healthy unless it is fully residential. As we expand, we are going to create 200 rooms with 400 beds within the IMI Delhi campus. We are demolishing the existing canteen and putting up a four floor building there.

Source: June 6, 2011/[Rediff.com](#)

Soon, study a lesson prepared by the Tatas

Group to enter education, invest Rs 100 cr to begin with

The Tata group is making an aggressive foray into education, which it has identified as one of the six areas for future growth.

The other areas are business support services, an unmanned vehicle project, project management in the defence sector, logistics and producing advanced materials for aerospace and medical sectors.

The education foray is led by Tata Industries, which is providing the necessary software, hardware and electronics equipment, besides connectivity to schools.

The group is looking to invest over Rs 100 crore to begin with. It has already tied up with 40-50 schools. According to the plan, standardised education content will be loaded on a central server from which it will be delivered to schools.

At first, the curriculum will cover classes five to twelve and also offer content to improve the skills of teachers. The company will also look at tying up with government schools to deliver digital lectures.

Tata Industries will also provide schools the flexibility of choosing subjects and offer packages which may include all subjects, a group of subjects or even one subject.

“The model does not replace the teacher in the class but complements him. Also, due to differences in the quality of teachers, a standardised content will help even teachers augment skills,” said a person close to the project.

Tata Industries is clear that it will not set up schools. Company sources say the project will make money, though it may not give huge returns.

The Tatas will be joining companies such as Educomp which are foraying into the space. Educomp runs both digital and physical schools and Extramarks.com. HDFC is

looking at small towns to either set up schools or take over defunct boarding schools.

Industry experts expect penetration of smart classes among private schools to rise from 8 per cent at present to 12 per cent by the end of 2012.

Tata Industries is also leading a move into business support services, which will go beyond call centres. People in the company say these will include services for media companies and for motor and third-party insurance administration. The company is already providing telecommunications support to Tata Sky and is looking for work the insurance sector regulator insists should be undertaken by a third party.

The Tatas have already funded an unmanned vehicle of some former students. The product could be used in surveillance and disaster management. Sources say the idea is to support a new concept.

The group has also made a foray into defence project management for providing technology and software to companies supplying defence equipment. Under the rules, foreign companies that get defence orders have to buy 30 per cent inputs (in value terms) from India. The group plans to benefit from this.

"We are not going to position ourselves as buying agents but take responsibility of delivering what is required," said a source.

Source: June 06, 2011/[Business-Standard](#)

Lack of research facilities still haunts IITs

The seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) churn out graduate engineers that are among the best in the world, but they are still not referred to as world-class institutes. This dichotomy exists because of the gap in research that world-class institutes are expected to deliver and for which benchmarks are set by the likes of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and California Institute of technology (CalTech). "Graduate studies at IIT are unparalleled," says Alok Mittal, managing director, Canaan India. "But they lack in post-graduate studies and research."

Mittal passed out from IIT Delhi in 1994 and went on to do a Masters at the University of Berkeley, where he also taught briefly. "IIT faculty is brilliant and many of them are regarded by peers around the world," he adds. "However, in the academic world, respect does not come from how well you can teach undergraduate students, but from research." IITians have set up companies, they have taken on leadership roles in government and the corporate sector alike, they have created millions of jobs and wealth (See graphic below). But they have demonstrated an aversion for staying on in their alma mater to do research.

The Anil Kakodkar Committee, which looked into the issue of autonomy and scaling up of IITs, says the seven institutes hand about 1,000 PhDs a year. But just 1% of these were engineers who did their under-graduation from

IIT. "They (the IITs) have not tried to become research-oriented," says Arjun Malhotra, chairman emeritus, Headstrong and a 1970 pass out from IIT Kharagpur. "They also emphasised education over research," adds Kanwal Rekhi, managing director, Inventus Capital Partners. "IITs lack the breadth of offerings like MIT and Stanford in that they are only technology institutes and are not great in pure sciences," says Rekhi, from the 1967 batch of IIT Bombay. The means to more research is faculty, funding and governance.

For instance, Union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal says India's annual research spend is \$8 billion a year, compared to \$250 billion by the US and \$60 billion by China. According to the Kakodkar Committee, the US and China produce 8,000-9,000 PhDs in engineering and technology every year, compared to 1,000 by India. While funding is an issue, Mittal argues that for courses like computer science it is less of an issue than in, say, aeronautics or research. "We need a policy intent, and investments in faculty and infrastructure to scale up IITs," he says. "IITs are unlikely to be world class as long as they are under the thumbs of babus and netas," says Rekhi. "Directors are appointed for five years and that is not a long-term horizon to pursue a dream."

Source: 6 June, 2011/[Economic Times](#)

I touch students' lives, and it feels good

Tell us something about yourself and The Indian School.

There were only two career choices for me — to become either a doctor or a teacher. Initially, I did not want to pursue a degree in Bachelor of Education. But my father pushed me to do it. I was always supposed to [become a teacher](#), I guess. So, once I joined the Bachelor of Education programme, I immediately became interested in children. I thought it was one of the most interesting fields possible. And after that, there was no looking back. I have been in field for so long now, and I like it when somebody walks up to me and says that I taught them once. It is a very good feeling.

Do your ex-students talk to you? Tell us any anecdote from your career?

I remember a time when this man walked up to me and said that I had taught him in Class II. It was a great feeling. It is nice to know that I touch my students' lives, and the fact that they remember. I think my strength as a teacher is that I can motivate my students. They come to me with their problems. I talk to their parents and sort their problems out. I am good at motivating students.

Tell us something about the school.

The school was founded in 1996 by the Gyan Mandir Society in the heart of South Delhi. The school prepares students for CBSE education. The beautiful building, with its ample grounds, is equipped with naturally well-lit and ventilated classrooms. We have state-of-the-art labs for Computers, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics and

Psychology. Specialist teaching rooms are also ready for environment and Social Sciences, Entrepreneurship and Business Studies, Fashion Technology and Engineering Graphics to keep pace with the future, and develop the full potential of every child.

What kind of philosophy does the school follow?

‘Knowledge is power’ is the motto of the school. We believe in imparting education to children to turn them into visionaries. He should be able to question everything and become a global citizen with values intact. We equip our children to meet global challenges, besides retaining themselves within their Indian sanskaras. We build ocean liners with Indian anchors and ethical rudders. In today’s fast changing world when limitless opportunities are opening up for the young, we are extra watchful of the dangers that confront us, particularly the escalating alienation of adolescence which is emerging to be the single greatest menace.

The Class XII results were declared only recently. How did the school perform?

Our students have been doing very well every year in the board exams.

There is an interesting programme in our school that I find very unique. Every [academic](#) year, children write about themselves on a piece of paper. They write about their dreams, their aspirations, their likes and dislikes, and what they want to do in the future. The class teacher preserves that page of paper. And when the child passes out from the school, the school gives him all the pages he has written about himself. That file, in a way shows the entire school life of the child, what shaped his school years. I find that very special. At the end of Class XII, when the child is moving out of the school, we give him the file with a bunch of articles he had penned during his years at the school.

Any other interesting programmes/projects that the school has?

Every year, the school selects a theme. Various activities of the school are based around that theme. For example, this year the theme is ‘Silk Route’, and all the activities are based on that. We asked students to read Orhan Pamuk’s Istanbul, and in the Social Sciences class, teachers tell students everything they should know about the Silk Route. So children get to learn while having fun. It is an attempt to heighten curiosity as well as creativity and draw co-curricular activities into mainstream learning. It is an epoch in history, a country or an individual or an event that has left a profound impact on our lives, changing the way we think. We have, thus, focused on China, the Mughal era, the rise of India and our former European masters. Last year, it was Delhi Meri Jaan, a year-long tryst with our city. This year, we tread the Silk Route. Accordingly, subject-enhancing and age-appropriate assemblies, projects, activities and celebrations are planned around the theme for the whole year, and they run like a spiral through the entire school. We have established

international links with schools abroad, which involve teacher and [student exchanges](#). We are regularly visited by teachers and students of reputed schools overseas, with whom we share a variety of international programmes. Similarly we have literary weeks in the school. We have various clubs. We encourage our children to think independently, respect themselves and value excellence. We also have a [learning centre](#), and its enlarged library has a resource centre with audio-visual, Internet and photocopying facilities. Apart from the spacious multipurpose auditorium on the ground floor, an 80-seater audio-visual room is set up on the first floor for conferences, lectures, workshops, educational film shows, assemblies, powerpoint presentations and teacher-training programmes. The school has been observing literary week every year to introduce our students to the beautiful world of literature and languages. Through the week, a number of activities are planned for children of all age groups across the board to provide them with a platform to develop their creative imagination. Discussions on great literary works of eminent authors and poets are held. Eminent speakers, authors and poets are invited to familiarise our students to various literary works in different languages. The young mind is inquisitive and fertile and the inaugural issue of Creative Muse reflects the kaleidoscope of the collective dream of next generation. We have a brochure of literary work created by our budding writers.

How you do balance technology in the [classroom](#) with a teacher’s human touch?

In tune with tech-enabled education, we have special smart classrooms where classes are held in an interactive visual mode. [Curriculum](#)-based learning material is uploaded on the net, and class notes, worksheets and school notices are e-mailed to students. The school puts a lot of emphasis on vocabulary, handwriting and reading. The security-conscious CCTV cameras keep an alert eye, safeguarding every resident of the campus. We affirm that parents are the chief [educators](#) of their children, and we work with them as a team while preparing for life. Parents are invited to school events such as class assemblies, dance and musical events, sports days, art exhibitions and annual days. The campus has a football field, a cricket pitch, a state-of-the-art skating rink and a basketball court. It also has an athletic track, spectator stands, indoor badminton court and tables for table tennis. We want children to be aware of the world in which they live and to realise that they have obligations to society as well as rights within it. The schools’ new initiative, a citizen programme, has been set up to engender in children through social service, field work, excursions an awareness of their roles and responsibilities as citizens of the country. Our school is privileged to be one of the pilot schools of the PEC India programme – a short development programme designed to raise awareness and make children understand of the importance of physical education.

Source: June 6, 2011/[Indian Express](#)

Ten-year balance

Compulsory education defeats its own purpose if isn't sufficiently compulsory and long enough. India has been a late entrant into the community of nations that offer their children free and compulsory education up to a basic level, for a certain minimum number of years. The Right of All Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, passed in 2009, entitled every child between 6 and 14 years of age to a free education. However, India still stood out by extending this right for only eight years, up to Class 8. In contrast, nations like the US, Djibouti or the Palestinian territories have extended the years of compulsory education. Russia, for instance, changed its law in 2007, making 11 years of schooling compulsory.

It has been felt in nations offering free and compulsory education that at least a school clearing certificate is necessary. If parents are bound by law to send their wards to school for primary and secondary education, they might as well see them educated till the end of secondary or high school. That's why the Union Human Resource Development Ministry's proposal to extend free and compulsory education to Class 10 is welcome, even as the idea might look no more than common sense. What's the point in ensuring everybody goes to school till age 14, if many of them still finish without the school leaving certificate that also doubles as the most basic, minimum public degree?

However, while the justification of extending compulsory education to Class 10 could not be stronger, there's a long way to go. RTE is still nascent, its modus operandi and resource pools still being established. The extension will need fresh blueprints and further consultations between the Centre and the states. To begin with, there's the matter of infrastructure, teachers and money. The proposal may also need an amendment to the RTE Act or a new one altogether. But even as the HRD ministry admits the hurdles, it has its finger on the problem: what happens to children after Class 8? Between the needs of a rapidly growing economy and the social necessity of education, Class 8 was too little, and came too soon.

Source: June 6, 2011/[Indian Express](#)

E-governance in education

When forecasting future growth rates of emerging giants India and China, economists project a slightly upper hand for India. Among the factors often cited in support of this forecast is the demographic dividend. However, as is often cautioned, given the state of the country's education sector, the advantage accruing from the demographic dividend should not be taken for granted. This article focuses on how to revitalise the important education sector.

Since a country's social and economic progress hinges largely on its people having access to the vast area of knowledge gained through modern channels of learning, it

is important to ensure that education sector keeps up with the times, in other words, it is evolving. However, the country's education sector, particularly higher education, is often accused of being overly regulated and undergoverned. With science and technology evolving at such a rapid rate, the conventional classroom education we offer can hardly be described as sufficient.

Although the concept of effective school governance is not new, it needs to be thoroughly innovated to be able to effectively deal with the new challenges confronting us. In this context, e-governance can facilitate in improving transparency, providing speedy information, dissemination, improving administrative efficiency and public services in all the aspects of education.

It is beyond doubt that for the quantity and quality of output of our education system to substantially improve, there is no option but to introduce e-governance in this sphere. Although the application of ICT is fairly widespread in the private sector, the education sector, one of the key pillars of the country, has remained relatively untouched by e-governance.

Before delving into e-governance, the first step should be to define governance and lay down its scope and objectives. The age-old concept of governance has been reintroduced into modern discourse, focusing on how to achieve good governance. I believe good governance is the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, just and unjust, fair and foul, and moral and immoral. In the Arthshastra, Kautilya says that the person who governs should realise that his achievement or success is a measure of the happiness of his subjects and that what is good for the subjects should be undertaken. Governance standards should be improved not only at the government level but in all areas of society.

As a concept, it is important that governance should include all stakeholders such as school authorities, teachers, parents, children and even government bodies such as CBSE. Instead of merely being consultants, they should be part of the active decision-making process. But this simply is not enough. It is important to ensure that governance is not only participatory but also accountable and transparent. For the smooth functioning of the system, it is imperative that responsibilities and accountabilities be clearly laid down for all stakeholders. This is crucial as we need to have not only procedural accountability but also performance accountability.

In addition, there should be an effective grievance redress mechanism in place. It also goes without saying that this structure would work only if it were allowed to be flexible, implying that school boards should not impose rigid regulations on school and teachers.

In this respect, technology can act as a great enabler by making it easier for all parties concerned to be able to have access to meaningful information. Implementing e-governance will help us to monitor academic standards. It

can help in continuous monitoring, assessment and meaningful evaluation of the teacher and the pupil. Constant feedback to the persons concerned - be it administrators, faculty, parents and students - and appropriate timely control and correction mechanisms can be easily undertaken. It may also be possible to analyse the reasons of dropping out of the system while, at the same time, it can make teachers more accountable.

Add-on features such as online testing tools can help appraise the performance level of students and that of teachers. It can send SMS or e-mail message to parents if their children are absent at school, enhancing parents' involvement in their children's schooling activities.

Such a comprehensive and integrated system can also enable authorities to analyse the performance of one of the best performing institutes and compare it with other schools and colleges to identify the gaps. Also, the system can obtain feedback from students to modify course curriculum if deemed appropriate by the authorities. This will allow all the low-performing schools and colleges to reduce the gap with better-performing institutes. It will be help in the betterment of the higher education in the country and increase the number of employable students.

The mobile phone and the Internet have succeeded in transforming our lives in ways that could hardly be envisioned a decade ago. Not only has the Internet revolutionised information dissemination, it has also exposed us to new ways of thinking and ideas. Coupled with changing social structures, conditioned mindsets of a new generation of parents makes it important for all stakeholders to have a more interactive relationship.

It is, thus, important to take into account different views and opinions of all, be it teachers, parents or children. Additionally, given the new avenues that have opened up and, given the highly-competitive environment, ensuring that students are exposed to a variety of careers will only help expand their horizon. It is important to establish links with community, by which I mean business and industry, to ensure a healthy participation of the general community and provide a platform to share ideas.

I would like to conclude by saying that for us to ensure that the education system can fully equip our children to meet the ever evolving demands in today's highly-competitive environment, the education system needs to be made more efficient and effective by implementing e-governance. It is high time our educators think in terms of imparting what is known as life-long education, or, more aptly, life-long self-education.

Source: June6, 2011/[Economic Times](#)

First Advantage's background screening trends in India report shows slight increase in discrepancy rates

First Advantage Corporation, a global risk mitigation and business solutions provider, today announced the release

of its Background Screening Trends—India Report for the First quarter 2011, which shows a slight increase in overall discrepancy rates.

The Background Screening Trends—India Report is based on pre-employment background checks conducted by First Advantage between January and March 2011. "Discrepancies" or "discrepancy rates" refers to inconsistencies discovered between job-applicant-provided data and data discovered by First Advantage in providing its background screening services to its customers.

"The First quarter 2011 showed a slight increase in the overall discrepancy rate for background checks from 10.2% in the last quarter to 10.9%, with misrepresentation related to previous employment remaining steady at 75 percent of those discrepancies," said Mr. Wayne Tollemache, Executive Managing Director – International at First Advantage. "The trends report is part of our larger endeavor to create a security-conscious corporate sector. We aim to provide employers with data that enables them to progressively improve their risk mitigation strategies and benchmark them against industry standards."

Significant observations for First quarter 2011 include:

- In Q1-11 and Q4-10, discrepancies/misrepresentations related to past employment data has remained steady at 75%.
- Applicants providing inconsistencies in records regarding tenures of past employments remains the main or primary employment-related discrepancy.
- The highest rate of increase in employment related discrepancies was recorded in the education sector (from 14.29% in Q4-10 to 34.38% in Q1-11) while the steepest drop in discrepancies was observed in the biotechnology sector (from 25.00% in Q4-10 to 3.57% in Q1-11).
- Education, travel & hospitality, and real estate sector companies had the most employment related discrepancies.
- Education-related discrepancies have been displaying an up/down trend for the past six quarters now.
- Mumbai, Meerut and Kanpur are the top three cities with most education related discrepancies.
- 67% of all discrepancies observed involved associate level employees even as the discrepancy rate for first-level supervisors has increased to 9% compared to 6% in Q4-10.

Source: June 6, 2011/[afaqs](#)

How India Inc is funding primary education in India

Satya Bharti School, Nangal Mundi, has just three classrooms for the students of classes I to V who study here in two shifts. But the rooms are large, airy and clean, and decorated with colourful cut-outs of alphabets and fruits.

The school has six teachers who use aids such as flash cards and instructional CDs played on laptops to teach the around 130 children on the rolls. There's a well-tended lawn, a sand pit and a computer that students are allowed operate on their own.

The toilets -- separate for boys and girls -- are squeaky clean. How many primary schools in even the big metros can boast of all these facilities?

Nangal Mundi, however, is no city or even a town; it's a village of 2,000 on the cusp of rural and urban in Haryana's Rewari district.

Satya Bharti School, too, is no private school charging hefty fees, but a charitable one run by the Bharti Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Mittals, for poor students.

It is vastly superior to the Government Primary School just 50 metres away, where all but one of the dark and stuffy classrooms are locked, and students from classes I to V are taught in one group by a single teacher.

Students don't have textbooks because the government issues are yet to reach, and all that they get as midday meal is a thin broth of porridge with some milk and sugar.

The meal served at Satya Bharti School looks hearty in comparison -- *roti*, *chana* and *aloo-subzi*.

"If India has to be the backyard for providing workforce within the country and the world, then education needs to be taken deep into rural India," says Rakesh Bharti Mittal, co-chairman of the Bharti Foundation.

And how effective has the effort been? "In Neemrana, when we first took in students they had bleached hair. But one year in the school and it started turning black, because the mid-day meal the children were getting was probably their only nutritious meal in the day," says he.

Mittal also points to the high 96-98 per cent that Satya Bharti students have scored in board examinations in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

Little Mahima and Ravina at Satya Bharti School in Kohrar, in a remote corner of Rewari, are examples of the transformation education can bring.

Daughters of a small trader and a farmer, respectively, whose fathers had studied till class X and mothers never went to school, the class V students are at the computer, rearranging jumbled-up sentences in English -- shuffling "wall the boy on sat the" to "the boy sat on the wall" -- clicking on each word and dragging it to its right place in the sentence.

Their summer vacations are kept short -- they may otherwise forget all they have learnt in school.

Companies have for long run schools near their factories for the children of their staff. But that's corporate social responsibility, not charity, and hence not scalable.

Things have taken a turn for the better now. Indian businessmen, made rich beyond belief by the stock market boom of the last seven years, are moving in to plug the gap in primary education.

Pratham, an NGO which works in education, has received large donations for several years from high net-worth Indians, or their companies, including Mukesh Ambani, Ajay Piramal, Rohini Nilekani, Gautam Thapar and Kumarmangalam Birla.

(Even so, "individual and corporate donation make up only 10 per cent of the charity in India" says Bain & Company's *2010 India Philanthropy Report*. Indian businessmen seem parsimonious compared to big donors abroad like Bill Gates and Warren Buffet.)

The problem in education is complex. The numbers are there, alright. Nearly 96.5 per cent of children in India now go to school. Social scientists will tell you it's because of the free mid-day meal.

But the dropout rate in primary classes has remained a high 24.93 per cent. More than that, it is the quality of education that is the cause for concern.

Pratham's *2010 Annual Status of Education Report* found that only 53 per cent of children in class V could read a simple text, and 36 per cent could do a simple division sum.

That was the thought behind setting up Satya Bharti Schools. In four years, the Bharti Foundation has set up 242 primary and senior secondary schools in six states -- Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu -- which reach 31,000 children, 48 per cent of them girls.

By end of this year, Mittal aims to have 250 schools. Bharti Foundation has a team of 140 employees, besides the teachers and staff in schools, headed by a CEO to run its operations.

It is bankrolled by the Rs 200-crore (Rs 2 billion) endowment by the Mittals (Sunil Mittal and his family, according to *Forbes*, were worth \$8.3 billion in 2010), with some help from others like Kalpana Morparia, the DLF Foundation and, recently, Google.

Funds shouldn't be a problem for the Azim Premji Foundation either, to which Wipro founder Azim Premji (worth \$16.8 billion) transferred 21.3 million of his own shares late last year.

The Azim Premji Foundation works in the area of elementary education, but its approach is different from that of the Bharti Foundation.

Instead of opening and running schools, the Azim Premji Foundation works to augment capacity and iron out systemic glitches in government schools, given that these are where most poor Indians send their children.

Having started out in 2001, it has worked with 20,000 schools and 2.5 million children across 13 states to date.

In a way, the Azim Premji Foundation's entire programme has evolved out of an initiative called the 'Learning Guarantee Programme', which was launched in 2002 in 1,000 government schools in seven districts of north-east Karnataka which accounted for half the out-of-school children in the state.

It was a simple programme to identify the best schools in these districts and showcase them, so that they could become lighthouses for neighbouring schools, explains S Giridhar, the foundation's head for programmes and advocacy.

Schools were assessed, there was recognition and a cash award -- Rs 5,000 to Rs 20,000 -- for the best ones, who had to specify what they were going to spend the money on. A team would later check if the money had indeed been used for that purpose.

The programme spread fast: within two years, Karnataka had decided to implement it in 30 schools in each block, Madhya Pradesh in 1,654 schools in two districts, Uttarakhand (a year later) in 400 schools (now increased to 780 schools), Gujarat in 970 schools, and Rajasthan in 1,080 schools.

The Azim Premji Foundation has, over the years, worked on other initiatives as well. It has created workbooks for classes I to VIII in Rajasthan, and trained teachers in how to use these. Since 2004, it has also been conducting a pilot project on a 'child-friendly school' in Shorapur in Yadgir, a district in Karnataka very low on human development.

The logical next step was the Azim Premji University which has started taking in students this year. "As we worked with the government, we realised that one of the biggest problems was the paucity of teachers," says Giridhar.

So the university, spread over 75 acres near Bangalore, will offer courses not in engineering or computers but in education and development. "We want to groom passionate professionals who will go down to the ground and work," says Giridhar.

VidyaGyan, run by the Shiv Nadar Foundation, set up by Shiv Nadar of HCL (net worth \$5.6 billion), is not just a school, it is a radical experiment in social engineering.

All students at VidyaGyan come from poor households with an annual family income of less than Rs 1 lakh (Rs 100,000). But they are all academically bright -- having come first or second in the state-conducted class V examinations.

But it's not just the education that's catered to. In order to equip them to compete with urban students, every aspect of their lifestyle is sought to be transformed.

All students are given a 'kit' when they come in, which has school uniforms, nightgowns and sports uniforms, T-shirts and shorts, undergarments, shoes, slippers, toothpaste and everything else they might need.

There are posters in the bathroom telling them how to use the amenities. (Nadar's wife Kiran and their daughter Roshni were involved in the project, down to designing the bright, cheerful uniforms.)

They are then sent for a medical check-up and put through a vaccination regimen. Their meals include milk, eggs, cereals, lentils and non-vegetarian food four times a week.

No wonder, says B Banerjee, VidyaGyan's principal, they gain five to six kg and two-three inches within the first few months.

Besides students at VidyaGyan have access to audio-visual learning and computers aids, they watch television and films, listen to music, play games and take part in theatre, choir singing, debates and quizzes.

Teachers double as mentors to address any adjustment problem the children may have. Remarkably, in the past two years, only one child did not come back after the summer break.

"There has also not been one single incidence of damage to school property. These children are disciplined, they value what they have got," says Banerjee.

Shiv Nadar Foundation has been around since 1996, setting up engineering and management colleges. But it is only with the opening of VidyaGyan in Bulandshahr in August 2009 that its philanthropic aspect has come to a head.

"As HCL grew," says Nadar, "so did my desire to give something back to society. As I pondered and thought about what could make India shine, I looked at myself and asked, 'What am I?'-- I'm a product of education."

Nadar last year sold 2 per cent in HCL Technologies to raise Rs 580 crore for the foundation. Two more VidyaGyans will come up in Sitapur and Varanasi.

"I do not like the word philanthropy as it gives a sense of being on a pedestal. I get inner peace in giving," says G M Rao, who endowed GMR Varalakshmi Foundation with \$340 million this March.

"Those of us who have been able to create significant wealth are the fortunate ones in a position to help those who have not been so fortunate. These are values I received from my parents. Even at school, I would be sharing everything from books to food," says Rao, who is worth \$2.6 billion, according to *Forbes*.

The GMR Varalakshmi Foundation has been around as the CSR arm of the group since 1991, working in areas where the company had infrastructure projects under way.

Education, especially primary education and vocational training, is a key thrust area and the foundation has built schools and supports government schools -- building a toilet where needed, or a science lab or library, besides giving out scholarships to the meritorious but poor students.

It has worked with 200 government schools reaching out to 28,000 children so far. The foundation also recruits and trains locals to help out in schools with a poor pupil-teacher ratio; runs night schools, tent schools and manages and supports 129 Balwadis and Anganwadis benefiting 3,000 pre-school children.

Source: June 7, 2011/Rediff.com

End state interference, says pro-chancellor

At a time when private universities are struggling to establish their identity in the higher education sector that is still largely driven by government-backed institutions and universities, pro-chancellor Abhayamitra Chaitanya of the Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetam University, who is in charge of five campuses that teach around 130 UG and PG programmes, speaks to *Pradeep Damodaran* about the need for promoting research and for reducing the government's interference in the administration of private universities.

Q. What are the new trends among the student community in choosing courses?

Students are now opting for core engineering courses like mechanical, electrical and civil engineering. Top rankers in higher secondary exams do not opt for IT and Computer Science Engineering any more. This is a welcome trend.

The industry is also responding well by paying top salaries for mechanical engineers when compared to computer science grads. As for the non-science stream, there is a great demand for B.Com. Even some science students want to join the B.Com course.

Q. There is a general opinion that our postgraduate and doctoral students are not taking up research in a big way as in the west. Why do our universities slack in promoting research?

Even in the advanced countries, universities play only a minor role in research. While 95 per cent of the funding for research projects comes from the industry, university contribution is minimal, besides being an interface. Our industries must invest more in research activities. This is happening; there is a gradual change.

Amrita has attracted about Rs 100 crore from various sources for funding our research projects. Unfortunately, the spirit of innovation is missing in India. It has to be revived.

Q. Why are our private universities unable to reach the excellence provided by certain government universities?

Private universities are tied down by a lot of regulations laid by the government. The government defines every part of administration and infrastructure, which is a big hassle for us. And the committee that decides on the affairs of private universities does not have any representation from these universities. Hence, there is nobody to take up our cause when the government frames regulations.

It is projected that India would need 1,000 private universities to cater to the growing student population. But, we just have 360 and we are not allowed to function independently.

Q. What do you foresee as the future for private universities?

We are looking at providing greater emphasis on research. We plan to launch more programs in humanities and provide a good working environment for our faculties to contribute to society in a better way.

Source: June 7, 2011/DeccanChronicles

ICSE V S CBSE? The debate rages

Talking about parity of results among class X exams – is there any parity between the two major boards in the country, the CBSE and ICSE? Results for the pan-India class X ICSE and CBSE examinations are out and there's the usual scurry for admissions, with parents and students flocking to nearby colleges, collecting forms, and getting acquainted with the procedure for online admissions.

Meera Isaacs, principal of Cathedral and John Connon School, says, "There isn't any parity whatsoever when it comes to the quantum of effort put in by an ICSE student vis-à-vis the CBSE student at the class X level. ICSE students have 12 papers. These are brought down to seven subjects on the marksheet and from those, the top five scores are considered. I think it is unfair to our students."

When it comes to seeking knowledge, ICSE curriculum students may have an edge over their CBSE counterparts. "ICSE has three sciences, two English papers and two Hindi papers, apart from mathematics and social science. But making them prepare for all these subjects, while students from other boards prepare for just half the number of subjects is quite unfair to ICSE students," agrees Sister Rani, principal, Villa Theresa School.

The CBSE Chennai region, comprising Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Daman and Diu, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu, scored 91.32 % overall pass percentage this year. ICSE western region, which comprises Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad and Goa, had a pass percentage of 99.63 %. Despite the so-called 'burden', ICSE secured a higher pass percentage.

According to Carl Laurie, principal of Christ Church School, "Despite the fact that ICSE students have more subjects to study at the class X level, I think they are gaining that much more knowledge. I think, relatively, there's a lot of parity between these two boards although the educational ideologies that govern their curricula or evaluation patterns may differ. One cannot say that any one board is better than the other."

In terms of admission to schools of ICSE and CBSE boards as against the state board, parents are in a state of perennial confusion. "You have the coaching classes and

self-proclaimed educationists misleading parents. ICSE stresses more on English, whereas CBSE is more into application of science, maths, Hindi and social science. At the class XII level, CBSE has courses like graphic designing, geo-spatial course, which ensure that students get to prepare themselves as per the industry needs," points out Rajiv Gupta, principal DAV Public School, Airoli.

"I think we cannot compare any of the boards as it is for parents and students to decide which board they want to choose. Both foster holistic development of students," says Hema Nair, principal, DAV Public School, Thane. Board authorities of ICSE and CBSE were unavailable for comment.

Source: June 07, 2011/[Times of India/Education Times](#)

Online encyclopedia promotes itself as teaching-learning tool

Wikipedia.org, the largest online encyclopedia in the world, has invited teachers and students in [India](#) to incorporate [Wikipedia](#) as teaching and learning tool in classrooms through its Wikipedia India Education Programme. The initiative coincides with the start of this academic year, with Pune as its pilot project. Various colleges and universities are being united to participate in the initiative, with students having the opportunity to contribute by editing articles related to their syllabus on Wikipedia, in lieu of conventional paper or report submissions.

Hisham Mundol, who leads India Programmes, said, "Information about India and that which is contributed by its people is not adequately represented on Wikipedia. We want to change that by increasing the number of editors from India. The Wikipedia India Education Programme will promote this by encouraging teachers in Pune to join a global community of educators who use Wikipedia as teaching and learning tool in classrooms."

The Wikipedia team has therefore chosen 22 campus ambassadors in Pune to help them in this programme.

"The campus ambassadors are essentially volunteers who would work with teachers to incorporate Wikipedia and train students on how to write articles on Wikipedia. They would support both students as well as teachers, during the course of the semester. During the course of the initiative, we will provide teaching material and example lesson plans, expecting the professors to assign their students Wikipedia articles to write or improve, as part of the class," said Mundol, adding that the project will cover a wide range of subjects such as engineering and economics and media and law and architecture and medicine and biology and any other area of academic interest.

The team proposes to replace student reports and papers with Wikipedia articles. "We will thus work with teachers and professors through campus ambassadors to identify potential articles on Wikipedia that can be created or

improved through class work for that particular semester. Through the initiative, we also hope to create educational materials in the form of quality articles, including those about topics important to Indians, as well as people all across the globe," said Mundol.

According to Mundol, Pune was chosen as the pilot city for having the world's largest number of colleges and universities, which are attended by more than 200,000 students. "The pilot project in Pune is being used to experiment and learn from before any roll-out of a large-scale program throughout India," added Mundol.

The Wikipedia team feels that students would get a lot out of the editing assignments. "As opposed to writing a paper that they work on alone and that which is seen by a single person, the students will now work collaboratively with other Wikipedia editors. Thousands of people all over the world could then refer to their contributions for educational purposes. As for the educators who participate, they would engage and become part of a wider global community of educators who are on the forefront of implementing new teaching and learning practices, thus engaging with a larger, global academic community," said Mundol.

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

IMT: A business school that knows no boundaries

India, one of the fastest growing economies of the world, and currently the fourth largest, is uniquely poised at this moment of history as a nation of a very large young people to script a glorious future provided we are able to quickly improve the overall level of education and particularly the level of higher and professional education of our people.

It would be well-nigh impossible to make the required level of financial resources available to speedily build the traditional brick and mortar model of education at all levels. Further, one of the most important constraints is the availability of qualified teachers, particularly for professional courses such as management education.

As one of India's oldest and leading management Institutes, IMT had anticipated the changing scenario of management education in the country before most of the other management institutes and established its Centre for Distance Learning (CDL), as early as 1984, to meet the changing needs of aspirants for management education and the society.

Today, IMT-CDL is recognized as a leader in the field of distance management education. IMT-CDL offers a Two Year Post Graduate Program in Business Management that seeks to develop in the managers an in-depth understanding of the operational and strategic aspects of management by a judicious blend of courses.

In addition, IMT-CDL provides a wide spectrum of One Year Post Graduate Programs in various IMT areas of management for subject focused learning. At IMT-CDL, the methods of delivery of the courses are varied and tailor-

made to suit differing needs, be it those of our direct students or those of our corporate clients.

Personal Contact Programs with 12 hours classroom sessions (on the weekends for the direct students and specific days for corporate clients) on each subject help create an environment where in the faculty facilitates learning and manages queries from the participants. The Interactive Online classes are addressed to widely spread student population, especially the busy and time challenged managers.

The courses are delivered by utilizing broadband internet technology that allows the students to interact with the faculty through video conferencing, and chatting. One of the unique feature of the of the IMT-CDL's knowledge dissemination is the Digital Library which contains the best and the latest collection of business books which can be accessed by the IMT-CDL students through its website on 24*7 basis.

Source: June 7, 2011/ [Economic Times](#)

How an army of 20 lakh additional teachers can be unleashed by use of technology

The 2011 census results have given encouraging news in respect of literacy in the country. However, a 10-percentagepoint increase to 74% is just not enough for us right now. We need to convert literacy to education and cover the country's youth immediately to make this century truly ours.

The facts are well-known: we have 570 million people below the age of 25. In fact, we have more people than all of Australia, or 20-27 million, at every age between 0 and 25. The problem that afflicts all of these people is the poor, variable and ineffective provision of education.

Government spending is low and the education results are poor. We are now all seized of the fact that while 98% of Indian children enrol in school, 24% drop out between standards I and V, another 24% drop out between standards VI and VIII, and a further 12% fall off between standards IX and XII. Thus, only 38% finish school and only 12% go on to complete college.

Currently, on an average, we provide five years of schooling compared to the over 9.5 years in developed countries such as the UK, Japan and Germany, and 12 years in the US. The Indian government spends Rs 1,80,000 crore on education, which is less than 4% of our Budget outlay compared to 5.3% for China and 6.6% in the US, both of which have bigger budgets.

The Indian private sector spends another Rs 1,00,000 crore and, though the total spend is still not sufficient, it is significant and, yet, the results and skew are simply bad. The 22 crore school-going-age children in the country have about 10 lakh schools to go to.

What is appalling is that about 9,50,000 of these schools are municipal schools that account for teaching only 60%

of the students, and the remaining 40% are taught in just 75,000 private schools. On a typical day in these municipal schools, 25% of the teachers are absent, 50% of children in class V cannot read a story, and 21% of the children cannot recognise numbers.

The big problem is that the student-teacher ratio in the country is about the highest in the world. It is about 46 students per teacher at the primary level and 34 in the secondary level while this ratio in most other countries ranges between 15 and 25. We have about 55 lakh teachers and are short of about 20 lakh teachers to meet the right-to-education guidelines that we as a nation espouse.

Even these guidelines are just suggesting a 1-to-30 teacher-student ratio and some training for these teachers. But we cannot seem to get that done. Thus, my two pleas on education. Currently, education in India has not taken advantage of the very things that the country is now famous for in the world. The penetration of digital media in schools is less than 5%.

Given that girls in Bangalore and Chennai are providing tuition in mathematics and science to children in California, that we cannot make use of digital media on a more organised basis is disappointing. There is an urgent need to figure out how this can be done in a mission mode. Most companies now have a lot of experience in this. Many conduct a lot of training virtually. Thus, training is delivered at the convenience of the people being trained.

There are a variety of models: instructors joining over phone with the material presented via computer, over video conference or just by providing digital access on computers with drop-down menus for further inquiry and more advanced learning. We need to equip our classes with TVs, computers and connectivity. If our classes are so equipped, we can standardise course content under the supervision of local teachers delivered by TV.

The constraint is typically around power supply, not the cost of equipment. This is where we need innovation getting around the power supply bottleneck using solar batteries, etc. Innovation will have huge positive externalities. An accompanying idea comes out of the success, though at a modest level, of a programme like Teach For India.

Teach For India takes bright college graduates and young professional and gets them to commit two years of their life to teach full-time in under-resourced schools. Given the urgency and the enormity of the challenge, my idea is a bit more radical. Can we introduce conscription for education in the country? Currently, there are 1.35 crore students enrolled in 26,000 colleges in the country.

About 1.2 crore of these students are enrolled in graduate programmes. There are another 50,000 or so Indian students who are studying in universities abroad. If we can find 20 lakh potential teachers from this pool of students, we can at once meet our right-to-education guidelines and increase our teacher supply by 40%.

It will be important to recognise that we will need teachers who can teach in the regional languages and there may be some gaps in this, but combined with the use of standardised digital content, we can ensure that quality education is not compromised when students are being recruited en masse into teaching. We could select these 20 lakh students on the basis of grades and offer them tax concession equivalent to two years of a teacher's salary as incentive. If they wish not to teach, they should have to pay two years of teacher's salary to opt out.

Those that are not selected for this conscription are not given a tax break. A BCG report in 2008 had talked about whether our young population was going to turn out to be a dividend or disaster. Given that we have the fortune of being among the very few countries with this bounty (of a young population), not to act on the education agenda with alacrity is not only unjust but entirely stupid. We have the children, we know the problem, we have the means and, now, we just need to get the job done.

Source: 7 June, 2011/[Economic Times](#)

India Journal: No Country for Women

In the two months since the provisional Census results showed a continuing decline in India's child sex ratio, suggesting that up to half a million girls are being killed before birth each year, alarm and despair have been expressed in equal proportion by national and international observers. Inevitably, the conversation has moved from expressions of hopelessness about the problem to calls for greater intervention and activism from the government.

And, right on cue, the government machinery has responded, with the press reporting a meeting of ministries at the Prime Minister's Office in late May to "deal with the problem on a war footing," including the consideration of "urgent strategies" like tightened abortion rules. This is a mistake. While India faces a demographic and social challenge of consequence, policy makers and activists must stop imagining that there is an easy solution built on subversion of choices through new controls or new laws. Not only will they fail to fix the problem of sex selection but they run the risk of distracting the country from what can be a more effective long-term agenda: an agenda that does not merit the erosion of hard-earned progress in reproductive rights for women.

India's 2011 Census revealed that the child sex ratio (number of girls to boys 0-6 years of age) in the country fell, like it has in every decade since 1961. From 976 girls for every 1,000 boys in 1961, the ratio fell to 927 by 2001 and to 914 in the latest survey of 2011. These numbers are way off the country's targets articulated in the 11th Five Year Plan: 935 by 2011-12 and 950 by 2016-17. In a normal population without artificial distortions, the ratio should be closer to 950. Clearly, Indian parents are translating their preference for a boy to active choices about the sex of their babies.

The story of sex selection is a national one, cutting across urban and rural India, and income and education levels. Between 2001 and 2011, the child sex ratio declined in 27 states and union territories. The states that showed substantial improvement, including Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, have abysmally distorted sex ratios anyway, ranging from 830 to 890, where progress is only relative to the lows chalked up in 2001. If anything, what was predominantly a northwest India phenomenon has now caught the morbid imagination of other regions, too. Kerala, Chhattisgarh and the Northeast states stand as anomalies that have bypassed this expanding social regression.

India is not alone in the developing world in facing a demographic crisis of skewed sex ratios. China's child sex ratio is around 840 and has been declining since the 1980s. Both South Korea and Taiwan faced similar challenges at an equivalent stage in their economic development. But while much of the attention is on the immediate problem of the missing girls, the real challenge in all these societies is a strong son preference that, not surprisingly, results in daughter discrimination, and more broadly, discrimination against women.

In many ways, son preference is the starkest indictment on the status of women in the country. When parents make the choice to abort their unborn daughters, it is the crudest expression of a society's shared belief that women are neither equal to men nor will they experience the same opportunities. The reasons for the son preference can be traced to social norms that are deeply entrenched within what the International Center for Research on Women calls "gender-unequal, patriarchal" societies: societies that have "strong economic and social incentives to raise sons and eliminate daughters."

The incentives are obvious: the extension of lineage has been through men; women leave the houses where they are born and nurtured to be absorbed into the husband's family which gets the benefits of their economic productivity and fertility, usually preceded by hefty dowry payments; inheritance rights were usually solely for men; sons are seen to defend or exercise the family's power while daughters supposedly have to be defended and protected; men are seen as the providers of old-age support for parents. And in an era of declining fertility, there is an even greater tendency on the part of parents to try to drive an "ideal" family size and composition.

The consequences of such a significant demographic distortion are well understood. Rather than scarcity leading to enhancement in the status of women, the more likely result is one of women facing increased danger in their daily lives. Many studies have pointed out that single men are more likely to be prone to crime in a social context, especially when the poorest of them are the least likely to find partners. A Chinese think-tank pointed to a possible government strategy of co-opting poor, unmarried men into the People's Liberation Army with the only objective being

absorption of a growing surfeit of young men in the country. In India, examples are starting to emerge depicting a new pattern of social displacement with brides being imported from the southern states to states with skewed sex ratios in conditions where marriage may just be an excuse for sexual exploitation by single men in the community.

If sex selection is the worst reflection of a society's cultural norms and its consequences are debilitating for the community at large, then is the government not justified in looking for urgent strategies? Not if these strategies are predominantly focused on the belief that boy preference can be legislated away, that choices can be subverted post conception, and that quick short-term fixes exist to a deeply entrenched social mindset.

In the wake of the most recent numbers, the government is considering new measures including stricter enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, mandatory counseling for those who seek abortion, and registration of pregnancies. While all of these will help policy makers to be comfortable in the knowledge that they are doing something, and are seen to be doing something, none of these measures will really change the situation on the ground.

PCPNDT, first passed in 1993 and amended in 2003, prohibits determination or disclosure of the sex of the fetus, mandates registration and limits the use of ultrasound machines. Yet, in the nearly two decades since its introduction, the Act has not changed the reality on the ground much, and for valid reasons. Relying on a punitive law to modify entrenched social behavior may yield positive results, but not sufficiently positive to reverse the trends or eliminate discriminatory practices. With ultrasound machines being a necessary medical tool in prenatal care, and rapid technological advancements enabling easy identification of the sex of the fetus, it is unlikely that the enforcement ability of the state will ever catch up with technology or the convenient alliance between parents and practitioners.

Even worse, many of the measures being considered fundamentally undermine reproductive rights and a woman's freedom to make her own choices, including accessing safe abortion services. Putting further limitations will not reduce the incidence of abortions, it will push abortions even further underground, placing the health of women even more at risk and at the mercy of quacks and poorly trained practitioners. This in a country where almost 20,000 women already die from unsafe abortions each year.

And, as always, it will be the poorest communities that will be hit the hardest. Similarly, mandatory counseling and the registration of pregnancies swipe at the heart of privacy, the single most valued attribute for women considering abortion across urban and rural India. In considering these two measures, there is an implicit assumption that it is the

rural women and the urban poor in slums who need to be counseled into doing the right thing. As in many public health solutions, somehow there seems to be an onus on poor residents in villages to reveal private information about their lives and their health to a degree that would be unimaginable in high income, urban settings. And yet sex selection is as much of a high income, urban phenomenon as it is a rural poor issue.

Focusing on these reactive measures is a dissipation of scarce public resources and attention anyway, and does not address the underlying issue of boy preference and gender discrimination. So long as gender discrimination exists, parents will continue to have, and exercise, boy preference in one way or another.

Shifting attitudes and cultural norms on boy preference will take years, if not decades, but the elements of an effective framework (including legislation) are already in place. Punitive legislation like the PCPNDT Act that regulates discriminatory behavior is a part of this. Some of the improvements in Punjab and Haryana over the last decade have come on the back of tighter enforcement of controls and the registration of clinics. But, even more important is more effective implementation of several other laws and policies that are not punitive in nature but try to address the causes of gender discrimination, and an emerging framework of economic incentives that attempt to change the value of a girl child to her family and society.

In many ways, India has already embarked on such a program. The Hindu Succession Act of 2005 legislates that daughters can be inheritors of ancestral or joint family property. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act makes it a legal obligation for heirs to provide maintenance support to parents, attempting to influence discrimination that is rooted in the belief that sons will provide for parents in their old age. Laws against dowry, gender-based violence and child-marriage have been in place for decades. Complementing these are new, experimental programs that attempt to increase the value of the girl child through cash transfers that are conditional on the provision of educational opportunities and health services to the girl. The impact of these programs will not be truly known for years but they do represent a possible approach to addressing rational reasons behind attitudes on gender.

Research from ICRW also shows that while wealth and economic development do not reduce the preference for sons, women's education does make a difference. Educated women are less likely to prefer sons over daughters, and highly educated women are even less likely to do so. What becomes apparent, therefore, is that India's immediate national priorities in education and health are also the right priorities when it comes to addressing gender attitudes and discrimination over the long term.

South Korea, one of the few countries to reverse a decline in the child sex ratio, is evidence that a non-punitive approach will yield results. From a distorted sex ratio in the

1980s driven by similar social attitudes and gender preferences as those in India, South Korea registered normal ratios by 2007. What the country did successfully was to address the economic and social incentives that had fostered boy preference. This included changes in inheritance laws that were male-centric and creating an old-age pension system that reduced income dependence on children. Supporting these policies were broader changes in society that saw an increase in the participation of women in the workforce and a growing recognition that, in many ways, daughters remain more emotionally connected to their parents in their old age than sons.

The government's renewed focus on the agenda of sex selection is absolutely legitimate and necessary. In many ways, the issue brings together some of the toughest social and economic challenges that the country faces into a heart-wrenching headline. But, precisely because deeply entrenched social norms and attitudes are involved, there is also no easy solution available through writs and controls. The only way is to persist with policies that attempt to shape norms for the long term that stand a chance of creating a country with women as equals. And, in the meantime, there is no alternative but to start planning for the certain consequences that await the country, from the demographic distortions created by the choices of millions of parents to exercise their preference for boys.

Source: June 7, 2011/[The Wall Street Journal](#)

'I am disappointed by the lack of Mandarin teachers in India' prospect

Even in the absence of official diplomatic relations, bilateral ties between India and Taiwan are strengthening. Representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre in New Delhi, Wenchi Ong, speaks to Rudroneel Ghosh about areas of collaboration.

What is the perception about India in Taiwan?

In the past, Taiwanese people's perception about India was moulded by prominent Indian figures. First among them is Lord Buddha. Almost 85% of Taiwanese belong to various Buddhist sects. Second is the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Many of his works have been translated in Chinese and put in textbooks for 6th graders in Taiwan. All of us have grown up reading Tagore. Third is Mahatma Gandhi. He fought the British colonialists around the time we were fighting the Japanese colonial forces. Chiang Kai-shek supported India's independence during the early 1940s. These three figures are part of our collective memory. But today's generation in Taiwan knows about India through its impressive economic growth story, which is reported on a daily basis in Taiwanese media. And then there is Bollywood. 3 Idiots was a huge box-office hit in Taiwan. As we speak, My Name Is Khan is showing in theatres. Fundamentally, the two people share common values such as democracy, a plural society and emphasis on family bonds.

Despite the common values, people of the two countries appear unaware of each other. How can we remedy this?

The traditional means would be through cultural connections - movies, musical performances and tourism. We have been collaborating with ICCR to organise such events in India. But I feel the best way to reduce the gap would be through Mandarin Chinese teaching. I am disappointed by the lack of competent Mandarin teachers in India. There is a belated realisation on your part that you need to boost the number of people proficient in Mandarin. Taiwan can be a fantastic source of native Mandarin teachers. If teachers from Taiwan can train your teachers in Mandarin that would be the best way to reduce the awareness deficit.

Taiwan is big on educational collaboration. What is the philosophy behind this?

Currently foreign students in Taiwanese universities account for 3% of all students. According to policy goals announced by our president, Ma Ying-jeou, this is too little. We would like to upgrade this to 10%. When foreign students come to our campuses they gain an in-depth understanding of our culture. They become life-long friends of Taiwan. We have quality educational resources that we want to share with international students. Also, cost of studying in Taiwan is very economical - one-tenth of that in London or Boston. We have about 500 Indian students in Taiwan, almost all of them in science-related PhD programmes. I want this number to grow to about 5,000 in another 5-6 years.

How can we boost synergy in Indo-Taiwanese trade relations?

Two-way trade stood at \$6.4 billion in 2010, which is larger than India's trade with Canada or Israel. I am expecting to see double-digit growth in the foreseeable future with trade volume reaching \$10 billion in 3-4 years' time. But the most important mechanism that can really boost trade is a Free Trade Agreement. Feasibility studies are already being done by ICRIER and Chung-Hua Institution. Also, in our model investment follows trade. Currently Taiwan invests \$1 billion in India. There is huge potential for this figure to increase. Taiwan is India's natural partner if the latter wants to increase its manufacturing output to GDP ratio from 16% to 25% in the next five years.

Source: 8 June 2011 / [The Times of India](#)

Back to the class

Last year in Delhi, Prime Ministers David Cameron and Manmohan Singh had announced that both governments would help fund the UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI). Since then, we have carried out wide consultation in Britain and India leading to the recent launch of this major collaboration.

UKIERI is already a success. In its first five years, UKIERI created some 500 new partnerships between schools, colleges, universities and research institutions in our

countries. UKIERI has covered a huge range of areas that range from strengthening postgraduate research in areas as diverse as sustainable construction materials, renewable energy to mobile healthcare and internationalizing vocational training. As of this week, UKIERI is inviting proposals for collaborations in key areas of building a new generation of education leaders, innovation, skills development and student mobility.

During my visits to India, I have been fascinated to learn about Union human resource development minister Kapil Sibal's ambition to build India's "human infrastructure". I was truly staggered when I first heard that to achieve a 30% gross enrolment rate in higher education, India would have to create 40 million new university places, and that the prime minister has set a target of 500 million people to be trained in vocational skills over the next 12 years.

Britain has a clear interest in India's making this ambition a reality. As major investors in one another's economies and growing trade partners, strong sustained growth in India will have a positive effect on Britain's own growth. But our interest goes beyond GDP figures. Last year, Cameron set out his vision for a new relationship with India that goes "stronger, wider, deeper". I can think of no other area of our collaboration that has such unlimited potential to go stronger, wider, and deeper than education.

Last year, Sibal had written in a publication that "the innovative ideas and good practices of the UK have great significance for India as we enter a new era of reforms in the education sector". I, of course, agree with him. One innovating British institution is the Open University, which is actively developing plans to offer online teacher training in India. But I have also seen how much Britain can learn from India and its innovative approaches.

Which is one reason why I am determined that the new phase of UKIERI will include opportunities for more British students and researchers to spend time in India.

The British Council is working with several state governments on a train-the-trainers programme through 'Project English: English for Progress'. It aims to reach 750,000 teachers across 29 states over five years. In vocational skills, the UK-India Skills Forum brings together business skills providers from our two countries.

Science is also part of my ministerial responsibility. Here too, some of the best researchers from our two countries are working together in programmes funded by Britain's research councils and the Indian government in areas as diverse as food security, water, health and renewable energy. In March, we added cooperation in space to the list, with a new agreement between the UK Space Agency and the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro).

As well as the government-supported programmes, British educational institutions are making themselves accessible in India. It is possible to study for a British qualification in India itself through a growing number of partnerships between Indian and British institutions. Over 5,000

students are already studying this way in India. Indeed, the attractiveness of British institutions to overseas students is an important ingredient — and confirmation — of their quality. It is part of the reason that 19 of the top 100 universities in the world are British.

(David Willett is Britain's minister of state for universities and science)

Source: 12 June 2011/ [Hindustan Times](#)

The issue of exclusion in the Indian education sector

Traditionally, exclusion in primary education has been viewed on the basis of government data of the number of children who are out of school and are not enrolled. However, experts in this area feel that there is a need to understand exclusion in a more comprehensive manner.

According to R Govinda, author of the book, *Who Goes to School: Exploring Exclusion in Indian Education*, which was recently released in the Capital, "When we talk of exclusion, we think of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities. However true, it is important to look at exclusion inside the classroom too. A child can be sitting inside the classroom and still be excluded." Actual reasons can range from a discriminatory attitude, no classes, etc thus resulting in absenteeism or dropout, which is silent exclusion. The book has been published by Oxford University Press.

Govinda, vice-chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) and director, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), says that children do not dropout voluntarily. They do so either because they are ill-treated in the school or because they find it a torture to endure.

There is a small percentage, he adds, where parents withdraw them for reasons like poverty. A decade ago, there was a survey conducted on children working in roadside dhabas in Delhi. It was found that many of those children had attended school, but had opted out. Despite the long work hours, they preferred the dhaba over school. There is a need to look at what happens in these classrooms, he stresses.

Another important reason, the author points out, responsible for exclusion, is health. "If a child is looked-after in one's initial years, then s/he grows up to be a healthy individual. However, because of malnutrition, stunted growth, etc, children would have created deficits in their cognitive capacities — the capability to learn — and let us not forget that India has the largest number of undernourished children in the world," Govinda reasons.

A clear focus on schools and more importantly, on teachers, is one of the ways to work towards a solution. On a concluding note, Govinda says, "Apart from inspection, the country needs to invest in teacher-teacher guidance, hand-holding and capacity-building. We need to look at a child's early life in terms of healthcare realities and a seamless integration into the curriculum, then look at

schools to achieve a realistic synergy. Once we do that, India would have won more than half the battle."

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

Today's education system has a weak beginning

Today's education system may be good to score marks, but fails to retain the knowledge once students have completed their examinations. This leads to young minds being stifled at an age when they should be asking questions, learning and gaining knowledge, and developing a thirst for more knowledge.

If we need to solve this dubious mystery about why Indians, for decades, have not been able to invent or innovate something that could revolutionise the way we live, the answer may well lie in the kind of education system we have right from early schooling days.

Our basic education system is rigid, rusty and mundane. Among schoolchildren, it hardly evokes an interest that could ignite a scientific spark to carry forward in their lives.

That's why we lack innovating or inventing capabilities despite the fact that lakhs of engineers and scientists graduate from their respectable academic institutions year after year, but go without making any substantial contributions to the existing scientific knowledge pool.

That's again the reason why we have remained a country that squarely depends on foreign countries for our wares and we have remained fairly satisfied with the inventions of 'zero' (~400 BC) and pickles!

In 2000, Professor VK Aatre, then the chief of Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and scientific advisor to defence minister, when asked why India was taking such a long time over developing the power plant for the country's indigenously developed light combat aircraft, said: "We are a country which has not even indigenously developed a car engine. Do you expect us to come up with an aircraft engine for a quality fighter plane in a jiffy?" Now, 11 years later, the engine in question — Kaveri — continues to be in its stages of development, but it is no longer indigenous. And because Kaveri is still under development, we are forced to power the LCA prototypes using the American GE-F404 engines.

For that matter, the indigenous component of the aircraft that Kaveri was to power, the light combat aircraft, itself — planned to be 100% when its idea was conceived — has shrunk to below 70%.

Besides, despite the daily lives of common people riddled with a range of problems — be it water shortage or pollution in the cities, rising fuel prices, or mass transport systems — hardly an Indian has come forward with innovative ideas or an invention that could solve the problems or even mitigate them.

This speaks volumes — negatively — about the quality of our scientific human resource pool. And we have nothing but our basic education system to be blamed.

Savitri Rao, mother of an 11-year-old studying in fifth standard in an ICSE school in Bangalore, complains that the manner in which her son is being taught restricts him from actually thinking about what he is doing. "It's a rut more than anything else," says the disgusted mother. "And it hardly serves any purpose except for a sheet of paper that will be the licence to study further; nothing more," she adds.

For instance, in mathematics, there are several ways a particular problem can be solved. "But here, what I see is that although he gets the answer right, his marks are deducted because he has used a different method than what his teacher taught him. It is evident that the teachers want them to do precisely what they teach them, and the children blindly follow this rote learning, bookish ways," says Rao.

In a situation like this, it also restricts the children from questioning teachers as to why they can't resort to other methods when they too are the right ways of solving the sums; or even raising doubts or queries about something that they feel needs to be done.

The result is this: "You sit with him and observe his way of studying, not just mathematics, but any subject; and you realise that what he is doing is not actually learning, but cramming and mugging to score marks," says Rao.

Educational and psychological experts admit that such a style of studying may be good to score marks, but they fail to retain the knowledge once they have completed their examinations. This leads to the young minds being stifled at an age when they should actually be asking questions, learning and gaining knowledge, and developing a thirst for more knowledge. This is the seed that ignites inventive and innovative tendencies among the children even as they grow into adulthood.

Teachers that DNA spoke to say it is the system that makes the children resort to rote learning. "Students are ambitious and they also have this uncertainty about their future. And they have the fear of failure. Scoring high marks is the main objective and that is padded with pressure from all sides — from peers, teachers and parents. The students really don't care about the methods they opt for studying as long they get the marks," says Sheila Iyengar, a senior teacher in a reputed city-based school.

Worse, during class, the questions coming from students are conspicuous by their absence. Moreover, if questions do come from children, teachers tend to play them down or ask the children to just pay attention so they get it right. Some parents even complain about their children being ridiculed by teachers on raising queries in class.

Here lies the problem as explained by Iyengar. "I think one of the main reasons is deadlines. We have to adhere to portions that are to be covered in a 40-45 minute class-hour. So within this time, it may cause inconvenience for teachers to answer in detail a question that is being asked by a student," says Iyengar.

She adds: “Sometimes, we don’t even know if it’s a genuine question or not. Some of them might want to jeer the teachers. Or sometimes, we might not be able to give an answer immediately. We would have prepared for the class according to the particular portion. Any doubts or questions that come, even if related to the portion, might be a difficulty. In such cases, we either tell them that we will get back to them during the next hour or we merely admit that we don’t know about it.”

Manjula Raman, principal, Army Public School, agrees. “I think stress is part of life. In teaching, it’s because of the method. After an hour of Math classes, a totally different subject is being taught. There’s no closure.”

She feels the present education system does not allow a child to relax and learn or think about what he or she has learnt. “Schools have now become more like a growing industry. Rather, it should be more organic. Growth should be there from all sides,” she says.

Teachers admit that the problem rises from the class-oriented, syllabus-based teaching methods resorted to by the prevalent education system in India — a system in which the only thing that children wait for is the bell that marks the end of a class or the school day.

Raman, however, has a solution to this. “In the future, our country will need people from all walks of life. In schools, children need to be introduced to the basics of everything that matters to his/her life. There should be general studies, which covers the basics of all subjects. Emphasis must be given to on the child’s logical and critical thinking because at the end of the day it is about what the child has learnt, and not the number of lessons covered.”

Source: 13 June 2011/ [DNA](#)

Sobering India Day thoughts at Oxford

Strengths and weaknesses of two education systems

Oxford, June 15: Three gifted postgraduate Indian students at Oxford — Michelle Fernandes, Deeksha Sharma and Shweta Sinha — have told The Telegraph that on coming to the university, they were confronted with the strengths and weaknesses of the educational system in India.

The students found they had acquired plenty of knowledge but perhaps had not been encouraged sufficiently to think for themselves.

The three women are academic high-fliers but their sobering indictments have come as Oxford holds an ambitious “India Day” on Friday to deepen the university’s links with India.

“The amount of background knowledge Indian students have sometimes has been forced upon them,” says Michelle, 26, who is of Goan origin, studied medicine in Bangalore and is now at Exeter College doing a DPhil on how depression during pregnancy can permanently ruin the lives of poor rural women and their children.

“We collect a lot of dots but we are not taught how to join them,” she adds. “Oxford has helped me to blossom even more.”

If India is to break through in research and with scientific invention and innovation, it will require a junking of its system of learning by rote, the students feel.

Deeksha, 25, who is from Delhi and is doing a law PhD specialising in how the international system of taxation is biased in favour of developed countries and against countries such as India, agrees: “The education system we come from is very different from the education system here.”

According to Deeksha, who is also at Exeter College, “the tutorial system is not there (in India), where you write an essay and discuss it one-on-one with your tutor. Here, it is about why you think somebody is wrong or somebody is right. That form of analysis we don’t have in the Indian education system. It is the knowledge that counts — who said what.”

Deeksha goes on: “Here the emphasis is on taking it to a level beyond. ‘I read this article written by you, Mr Professor, but I don’t agree with the position that you took and I don’t agree because.....’ This (attitude) is completely new to us. Oxford is beyond what I thought it would be. Oxford offers those opportunities but you should also be ready to grab those opportunities and make the most of them.”

Shweta, 27, who is at Merton College doing a DPhil on the biochemistry of how bacteria are able to move, says: “Oxford is a wonderful place, I think, especially because I come from Allahabad and I have not lived in any of the big cities in India. The way they focus on your studies and the way they nurture your extra-curricular activities is very good. I have so much freedom — in India, a student is in a completely different situation. Your supervisors are your bosses — here it is more of a friendly thing where I can talk and discuss and do things on my own.”

Leading Indian business houses, academics and personalities have been invited for the “India Day”, which will include scholarly presentations in several disciplines, a cricket match, a concert and a reception at the Ashmolean Museum.

“I hope, at least, it’s a sign of intent,” said Lord Chris Patten, the university’s chancellor, who recalls the cricketer Nawab of Pataudi was his senior by two years at Balliol.

Pataudi, later to marry Sharmila Tagore, followed his father to Balliol, as did eventually his own daughter, Soha Ali Khan, who acted alongside Patten’s daughter, Alice, in Rang De Basanti.

Patten points out that Oxford’s engagement with India goes back 400 years and that Indian students, who include Indira Gandhi, have been coming to the university since 1871. There are currently 363 students, mostly postgraduates,

from India but Oxford would like more of the “best and the brightest”.

Patten, who was in Calcutta in February, would not turn down offers of financial help but stresses Oxford’s efforts are not directed solely towards raising more money — though more money, especially when all British universities are strapped for cash and having to charge their domestic intakes crippling tuition fees of up to £9, 000 a year, would make it possible for more scholarships to be awarded.

“We are acutely conscious that if we want to build the best world-class university, we need to search the world for the best students, best teachers, best researchers — and many of them are in India,” he says.

The “India Day” idea is partly the baby of Frances Cairncross, the rector (head) of Exeter College, who, like Patten, is a frequent visitor to India.

Cairncross, a former distinguished journalist, has several Indian students at her own college.

“I was very aware when I talked to my Indian friends with children (that) they are all going off to the United States,” says Cairncross. “They were not considering coming to Oxford. When they did consider it, they send their daughters to Oxford and their sons to the United States.”

Loren Griffith, acting director of international strategy at Oxford, says the links with India are “right across the humanities, social sciences, study of the economy and political system — all top notch — collaboration in cancer research, natural sciences, (and) physics. We are launching a push to significantly enhance them.”

There are plans to expand research collaboration; attract more donations so that the number of India-focused scholarships can be increased; create “more internships for our students at Infosys and several other Indian companies and use our alumni network of 1,000-1,500”; bring in more mid-career Indian students and officials at the Blavatnik School of Government; and celebrate the 100th anniversary of Oxford University Press in Mumbai next year in a “splashy” way.

Source: 15 June 2011/[The Telegraph](#)

India’s Education System Should be Revised

The Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay requires feedback from students and faculty from the national test scheme.

The school is hoping to gain opinion about their education policies.

The Indian Institute of Technology is an integral school that has built India. It is constructed to produce the highest quality students in India.

A Union Minister recently made a statement that IITs are known for producing world class students. And they are considered to have world class faculty.

However, it seems that today the requirements and standards for IITs are declining and there is a lack of adequate administration and financial autonomy. The demand to get into an IIT is high and therefore there are more students than there is room for.

The engineering system in Indian has become insignificant. About 10 years ago, IITs made up 10% of India’s engineering output. However, today, it makes up less than 2% and it is only declining further.

This means that India must revise the education policies and allow private sectors to “set up innovation universities”. There are currently 3,800 engineering colleges in Indian, with an annual intake of 1.2 million.

Source: 17 June 2011/[News Tonight](#)

100% cut-off symptom of a disease, says Yash Pal

For former head of the University Grants Commission, Yash Pal, students scoring 100 per cent should be given negative marking. For, in the race to ‘mug up’, they would have learnt nothing and washed out their creativity.

That’s obviously an extreme view, but Pal, who two years ago chaired a 24-member Committee on reforming higher education, has reasons to feel disappointed at the decision of Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) to fix 100 per cent cut-off marks for admission.

“We train our students to work for others. Indian colleges teach their students to make nuts and bolts, and the so-called specialisation that institutes talk about is highly unrealistic. Even IITs are nothing but undergraduation factories,” says Pal.

His report on ‘Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education’ that he gave to the Ministry of Human Resource Development in June 2009, is nowhere close to implementation.

Among other recommendations, the committee proposed a national testing scheme for university admissions on the lines of Graduate Record Examinations, an admission requirement for many colleges in the United States, open to all aspirants and to be held more than once a year.

Human resource development minister Kapil Sibal promised the same yesterday after SRCC’s decision became public, but Pal isn’t convinced. “The ministry is so caught up with little things that it does not have the time to look at bigger issues,” says Pal.

That hardly means anything for Nitya Batra, a commerce student from DPS, Indrapuram, in New Delhi. “SRCC’s decision is unrealistic. Even colleges like Kamla Nehru have raised the bar and are asking for 98-99 per cent. Students, with such high percentage marks, would rather prefer Hindu or Keshab Mahavidyalaya but not Kamla Nehru. In this process, students like us are left out,” says Batra.

Batra says it is also difficult for students to change their streams. For an Arts student to get admission in Khalsa college, the cut-off is way below 90 per cent. But for a commerce student, the cut-off is 92 per cent. "I can't change my interest to get into a good college. My parents are supporting me and I will not choose a college over a course," she says.

Batra is certainly not alone in the country, which ironically has the largest higher education system in the world in terms of number of institutions and the third-largest in terms of student enrollment. While India has 26,000 institutes across varied fields of study, the US has 6,706 higher education institutions and China has 4,000.

Since 1951, the number of universities in India has increased from 28 to 504, while the number of colleges have grown from 578 to 25,951.

A recent report of Ernst & Young estimated spends on higher education in India at nearly Rs 46,200 crore, with 92 per cent of it coming from private institutes. The report projected it to grow over Rs 150,000 crore in 10 years.

The dean of a management institute in Mumbai says the present set-up promotes nepotism. It looks at controlling the educational system by doling out licences to politicians and their kins. Distributing licences in this manner promotes distortions, and there are no transparent mechanism to ensure that information on education institutions are made available to students and their parents. "So, an area where the government shouldn't play an active role, it is extremely active. And, where it should play its role, it is either absent or doing little," the dean says.

It was due to the government's over-regulation that M L Srikant, dean of S P Jain Institute of Management and Research in Mumbai, had to discontinue a successful programme that it entered into with Virginia Tech of the US. "We had a capacity of 80 seats, where as the amount of applications we got, we could have filled 800 seats. With every student landing four job offers, we could have placed all the students, too. But the government did not allow us to continue the programme beyond two years. It was a similar struggle with the All India Council for Technical Education for four years to increase its class size from 120 to 180 at present," laments Srikant.

Last year, around 60,000, or 30 per cent, of the existing 200,000 management seats remained vacant. This is the highest vacancy ever in management education, with institutions even accepting money and selling seats to students without entrance test scores.

Engineering institutes also faced a similar situation. Nearly 530,000, or 40 per cent, of the 1.32 million seats remained unoccupied.

Sibal last year allowed an additional 200,000 engineering, 80,000 management and 2,200 architecture seats.

Amitabh Jhinghan, partner and education sector leader, Ernst & Young, says extra supply and low demand are a clear case of lack of quality institutions in the country.

"The government needs to quickly focus on expanding the capacity of quality higher education institutions. It can let some quality existing institutions to take over not-so-good institutions and improve their quality and enrollments, too," says Jhinghan.

Capacity constraint in domestic institutes offering quality programmes is one of the main reasons why more and more students are opting to study abroad, making India the second-largest source of international students after China.

For instance, between 2005 and 2009, test takers for Graduate Management Aptitude Test grew from 13,544 to 30,633, reflecting a compounded annual growth rate of 17.7 per cent. Over 50 per cent of Indian students opt to study in the US.

Source: 17 June 2011/ [Business Standard](#)

How case studies from India are being taught at Harvard Business School

Tarun Khanna is the Jorge Paulo Lemann Professor at the Harvard Business School, where he has studied and worked with companies and investors in emerging markets worldwide. He was named Harvard University's Director of the South Asia Initiative in the fall of 2010. He currently teaches in Harvard's executive education programmes and is Faculty Chair for HBS activities in India. His book, Billions of Entrepreneurs: How China and India are Reshaping Their Futures and Yours, was published in February 2008.

It focuses on the drivers of entrepreneurship in China and India and builds on over a decade of work with companies, investors and non-profits in developing countries worldwide. His most recent co-authored book, Winning in Emerging Markets: A Roadmap for Strategy and Execution, was published by Harvard Business Press in March 2010. Notably, Khanna has authored a couple of the most persuasive cases from this neck of the woods, on Indian Railways and TeamLease, a manpower solutions company. CD hooks up with Khanna to get a lowdown on the growing case studies from India being taught at HBS. Excerpts:

Take us through the scope and nature of cases at Harvard. Have they changed over the years?

Harvard Business School produces some 400 new teaching material each year. One of the advantages of the case method (as opposed to a textbook) is that the material can be kept constantly up to date, reflecting what's going on and what's changing in the world of business. This is particularly important in a rapidly growing economy like India's. Our cases are based on real companies, real people, real developments and real situations.

How are these cases selected?

Cases are selected by professors to fill a specific need in their course syllabus. They then make contact with a particular organisation, which agrees to host them and be as transparent as possible about the issue or problem, success or failure under consideration. The overwhelming majority of HBS cases are field-based, not library-based, which means that the professor and his/her research associate will travel to the company and study it on-sight. This includes a series of interviews and a review of relevant materials. The process is facilitated by the School's group of research offices around the world, including one in Mumbai. These are not campuses, but offices whose staff have deep knowledge of the region, its companies and executives.

Can't similar cases in other geographies suffice?

Not to our way of thinking. There are certainly similarities between nations and lessons learned in one country can be applied to another. But at the same time, there are things that are unique about each nation and region and we want our students to understand that as well.

Is it something to do with a change in the audience for such cases?

HBS Dean Nitin Nohria pointed out in a major address he delivered in India last summer that the 21st century is a 'global century'. We are making a concerted effort to increase the number of international cases that we do. India and the South Asia region are a very important part of the world economy, along with other nations and we want our body of cases to reflect what's happening all over the globe. In many rapidly growing nations/economies, there are lessons to be learned by the United States and other countries, not to mention those of us at Harvard Business School and Harvard University.

Does India have a disproportionate number of cases at HBS than other regions?

India is certainly well represented. Again, remember that case writing at Harvard Business School is generated by the specific needs of a course.

When the India Research Centre started, what was the portfolio of cases? What's it like today?

The India Research Center produces a portfolio of cases that focus on a variety of topics, including business, government, regulation, etc. Cases also go beyond traditional business topics. A case by Professor Rohit Deshpande, for example, deals with leadership among employees during the terrorist attack on the Taj Palace Hotel in Mumbai. I have written a case on TeamLease, a temporary work organisation. A case by Professor Stefan Thomke delves into the Dabbawala meal-delivery system. Our faculty is sensitive to the fact that businesses today have a mandate to take on a broader range of social responsibilities.

Is it sectorally diverse enough for a budding entrepreneur or an executive?

Yes, cases cover a wide range of topics, in both established companies and new ventures. Remember that entrepreneurship is of great interest at HBS. Ten to fifteen years after graduation, about half of our alumni describe themselves as entrepreneurs. The India Research Center is examining numerous trends in the region, including urbanization and sustainability, public/private partnerships, globalization, technology, innovation, leadership, social enterprise, and inclusive growth.

How do the India cases help HBS to impart executive training to companies based in India?

In the past, we have offered Executive Education programmes on Real Estate Strategies for Growth, Building a Global Enterprise in India, and Managing and Transforming Professional Service Firms. In response to the wishes of executives, friends, and alumni in India, we are now expanding our offerings to as many as six or seven programmes.

In the India research centre's pie, how much would executive training account for and what would be the share of pure-play research on cases? Is there a noticeable change in the recent past?

The IRC is looking to produce the best, most instructive materials possible. Cases can be used in both the MBA and Executive Education programmes. It is worth noting as well that Harvard Business School supplies 80% of the cases used in universities, schools and other organisations around the globe, not just HBS, so these materials have a worldwide reach. Let me add that the work of the India Research Center is being increasingly leveraged across all of Harvard, including, of course, the University's South Asia Initiative, whose mission is to 'advance teaching and research at Harvard through an interfaculty initiative that brings multiple perspectives on topics related to South Asia'.

How many more cases from India can we expect at Harvard over the next 2 years?

We cannot provide an exact number but be assured that our faculty and the members of the India Research Center will be hard at work.

Source: 17 June 2011/ [Economic Times](#)

RESOURCE

Government Investments Fuelling Growth in Indian Higher Education Sector

The annual enrollments in higher education is projected to grow at a CAGR of around 11% during 2011-12 to 2013-14, says RNCOS in its latest research report.

According to our research report "Indian Education Services – A Hot Opportunity", education is the most crucial investment and an essential element for the development of India's economy. There exist ample opportunities for growth, diversification, and investment in the education

sector. Medical education is given an important consideration in the country from the international point of view. Moreover, with rise in government investments, increase in number of colleges, the number of annual enrollments in higher education in the country will grow at a CAGR of 11% during the forecast period (2011-12 to 2013-14).

The ongoing analysis found that, there remains high growth potential for the development of higher education system in India. Economic growth will lead to a surge in the demand for more engineers and management graduates. Along with the quantity of graduates, the quality of education is anticipated to be another focus area for the Indian higher education system. With the entry of foreign players, it is expected that, the competition will intensify and correspondingly improve the quality of education.

Additionally, we have identified numerous key factors, which can act as a catalyst for the growth of higher education in the country. Besides, availability of education loan, growing demand for skilled personnel, and e-learning are some of the growth areas.

Our report “Indian Education Services – A Hot Opportunity” provides an in-depth research and rational analysis of the current status and expected position of the higher education system in India. It also presents an overview of the number of universities, technical education institutions, and colleges available and required in the country. Besides, our report presents a prudent analysis of different courses that will remain in high demand during the next few years.

The report provides coherent analysis of the need for opening up of universities (particularly foreign) in the country during the next few years. In this regard, the report presents the entry and operation regulations for foreign universities/institutions providing education in India.

Source: June 6, 2011/[SBWIRE](#)

16.1% of India's 'literate' can't read: IIM Ahmedabad study

Census-2011 reports that the effective literacy rate in India has risen to 74.04%, which is 9.2% higher than the level during the previous census. But how reliable is the Census-2011's data?

Can those declared literate at least read an elementary textbook?

A paper by two professors of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) says that a sample survey in four Hindi-speaking states had revealed that the Census-11 figures for literacy rate may be exaggerated by upto 16.1%. The main reason for this is that the Census's methodology was flawed. For Census-2011, citizens were accepted as literates if they said they could read but no practical tests were conducted to test their claims to literacy.

For their paper titled, “Can India's 'literate' Read?”, Prof Brij Kothari and Prof Tathagata Bandhopadhyay of IIMA studied the literacy level among 17,782 people in around 20 villages of 4 districts in four Hindi-speaking states.

These districts are Dausa in Rajasthan, Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, Umariya in Madhya Pradesh and Muzaffarpur in Bihar. The sample survey was done by adopting two methods - census method (by just asking head of the family or person if they are literate) and reading method (by practically make people read a paragraph).

Kothari and Bandhopadhyay used both the Census Method (asking head of the family or person if they were literate) and the Reading Method (asking people to read from a text) to determine literacy.

The paper says that the Census-2011 method indicated a literacy rate of 68.7%. Literacy among women was found to be 55.7% and among men it was 80.4%. But when a sample of the respondents was asked to read a Grade 2 text, the results were considerably disappointing. The paper says that a sample, when tested for basic reading ability, was found, at best, to be 52.6% 'Reading Literate'. In contrast, the method adopted by Census-2011 would have found the literacy level to be 68.7%.

“The Census method could be said to overestimate the literacy rate by at least 16.1%,” states the paper. The paper further says that if the definition of literacy is restricted to persons who can demonstrate a minimum reading ability of Grade 2 (Class 2) level, the reading literacy rate drops further to 25.8%.

“In that case, the Census method could be said to overestimate the literacy rate by an astounding 42.9%,” the paper says. The researcher state in their paper that an average education of Grade 9 is necessary to become a good reader in school. But to become a lifelong good reader a Grade 10 education is required given the present quality of education in rural schools, the paper states.

“A grade 4 to 7 education is more likely to result in weak reading skills in school and later in life. Those who do not complete primary education to Grade 5, are very likely to be non-readers later in life,” the paper states.

Source: 13 June 2011 /Ahmedabad / [DNA](#)

Indian students in Canada more than double in a year

The first Canada-India Education Summit this week in Ottawa is set to boost research and educational ties between the two countries.

With Canada reportedly registering more than a two-fold increase in Indian students this year from about 4000 last year, the two-day summit at Carleton University from June 17 will further boost enrolments from India.

Top educationists and researchers from India and Canada will participate in roundtable discussions at the summit to

be opened by Purundeshwari, Indian minister of state for human resources development.

Canadian foreign affairs minister John Baird will deliver the plenary address. "It is the first-ever education summit between our two countries. It will lay the path forward to ensure that students and faculty move back and forth easily. Joint research, student exchanges and degree studies in the two countries are on our agenda," Carleton University president Roseanne O'Reilly Runte told IANS.

She said, "Definitely, the number of Indian students coming to Canada will increase as a result of the education summit. We are getting representation from about 15 universities from India."

Kapil Sibal, minister for human resources development, who was to deliver the keynote address, is not coming. Instead, minister Purundeshwari will now deliver the keynote address.

Prominent participants from India include UGC chairman Ved Prakash, IGNOU vice chancellor V. N. Rajasekharan Pillai, Delhi University vice chancellor Dinesh Singh, Calcutta University vice chancellor Suranjan Das, Panjab University vice chancellor R.C. Sobti and Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute president Sunaina Singh.

Apart from a session on 'Dynamics of Higher Education in India and in Canada,' the two-day summit will have roundtable discussions on 'Co-tutelle and joint programmes,' 'Credit transfer and degree recognition,' 'Technology in international teaching,' 'Joint research,' and 'Designing the path forward.'

The summit is being held jointly by the Indian high commission, Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute that promotes educational and research cooperation between India and Canada.

As speakers at the just concluded Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) here said, the number of students from India coming to Canada is set to rise sharply in the next few years.

The education summit is part of the on-going 'Year of India in Canada' celebrations.

Source: 15 June 2011/Toronto/[The Economic Times](#)

India Lacks 'Depth of Learning': OECD

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, in its report released Tuesday, included a big section on education, commending India for improving enrollment and attendance in schools, but cautioning that the, "average levels of educational attainment and basic skill acquisition, including reading and writing, remain low by international standards."

The number of educated workers in India will rise, the report said, but it added that acquiring actual skills, rather than amassing degrees and certificates, "is what matters

most for both the earnings potential of the individual as well as their contribution to economic growth at the aggregate level."

- OECD: India Should Rethink Subsidy Policy
- OECD Praises India's Economic Zone Policy
- OECD Adds Voice to Chorus for India Reforms

India recently reported that basic literacy had climbed to 74% from about 65% a decade earlier. But the report presented serious concerns about the skills being imparted to students at all levels, saying, "surveys of student learning suggest this improvement in headline literacy rates may mask problems with the depth of learning occurring in India schools."

India has been increasing spending at an annual rate of about 6% since the early 1990s, but by the financial year from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, public spending still amounted to only 3.8% of the Gross Domestic Product. This is similar to other large emerging countries, such as China, but far below most of the 34 countries that make up the OECD organization that aims to promote economic development. The report generally concluded that higher government investment and legislative initiatives had increased the number and proportion of Indians at all levels of education, but that more reforms were vital to improving the quality of education imparted, which is vital for economic growth.

The report noted that school retention rates are improving, but still, only a little more than half of those who started primary school in 2001 reached the eighth grade by March 31, 2008. The report said student attendance on a day-to-day basis is hurt by the poor health of children, suggesting investment in public health could boost educational achievement.

The report said that the high rate of teacher absences and the low levels of effort put in by them when they are present have a major "deleterious impact on school learning." As a result, there has been a proliferation of low-cost private schools.

"The strong demand from parents, even those of modest means, for private school education reflects dissatisfaction with public schools and a view that private schools offer higher-quality education," the report said.

Public school teachers are employed by state governments on permanent contracts, whereas private school teachers are employed at the school level on fixed-term contracts, the report noted.

"Teachers in private schools therefore face a stronger accountability," the report said, suggesting that India find a way to strengthen the mechanism for dismissal of public school teachers due to repeated absences, but conceding that this is politically very difficult to do.

"Moving away from permanent contracts and increasing monitoring for public school teachers would have a

significant positive impact on teacher effort and ultimately the quality of education,” the report said.

In higher education, the proportion of the college-aged population enrolled continues to be far lower than comparable countries, the report noted, calling for better access to student loans.

The report said an “important indicator of the weakness in the higher education system is the seemingly poor employability of many Indian graduates.”

The report cited as an example 2010 research by University of Pennsylvania politics professor Devesh Kapur that found that of thousands of applicants taking a recent civil service entrance exam in order to fill 30 specialized positions in economics and statistics, only 23 were found to be up to the mark.

India enrolled 13.6% of college-aged students in higher education in the 2007-2008 financial year, but that ratio remains low by international standards, the report said, noting that the Russian Federation, Brazil, China and Indonesia have significantly higher proportions of that age group in colleges and universities. India aims to increase this ratio to 30% by 2020, the report noted.

Source: 14/06/2011/[The Wall Street Journal](#)

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

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