



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 2012. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Stya University announces admission for the session 2012

Apeejay Stya University is offering diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the Fall Admission 2012-13. 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, SAT-II. **For more,** [click here](#)

Apeejay Stya University announces Founder's Scholarship

On the Death anniversary of our beloved founder Dr. Stya Paul, Apeejay Stya University (ASU), Haryana announces a Merit - Based Scholarship Scheme for Undergraduate, Post Graduate and MBA Courses

Please visit our website for more: [click here](#)

Get Involved

Fellowship opportunities

Fellowships for six months to two years in variety of fields.

Workshops/Guest Lectures

Regular workshops and lectures on a variety of subjects.

Scholarships

Need-based financial aid to deserving student

Faculty Sponsorships

By seeding a named faculty seat or fellowship

Internships/Mentoring

The University has many students looking for opportunities to put their skills to practical use. Internships can be in diverse areas from services, government and nonprofit.

Please visit our website for more: [click here](#)

Also discover the Apeejay Edge: [click here](#)

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

Flexible Learning

With a cumulative enrolment of 2.02 million learners, Sitansu S Jena, Chairman, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), talks to Tirna Ray on how open schooling can educate India

What has been one of the most important developments in the area of open schooling?

ICT has brought about a significant change in this area. Today all information is available online. It has gone beyond the 'confines' of classrooms and teachers. Teachers today have turned into facilitators from classroom instructors. Nowadays, a student may have access to more information than the teacher. Also, the learner's needs have changed. So unless and until teachers keep up with that change, learning won't be able to cater to the needs of the new breed of students. The only way to help teachers keep up with the changing times is through teacher training. As of now, the private sector is playing a lead role in this area, but it is time universities took over the responsibility.

How is NIOS using ICT to cater to its student population?

NIOS is making use of ICT to provide education to its learners in a flexible and learner-friendly manner. Admissions to both academic and vocational courses are done through online and offline mode. Admission in NIOS is 100% online for secondary and senior secondary level students. A single window student information system has been put in place and facilitated through the NIOS website. Online counselling and learner support centre (LSC) with the toll free number take care of learner queries. Also, mobile support for information regarding admission and examination is available at all regional centres. Also, an ICT-based 'On demand examination (ODE)' system is available. It gives freedom to secondary and senior secondary level learners to appear in examination in the subjects of one's choice whenever one wants to take the exam.

As to 2012, what is NIOS' agenda?

We will be concentrating on expansion and on skill training through vocational education. As for expansion, we have identified the eastern and north-eastern region as they have the most inadequate institutional infrastructure. As for vocational education, skill training will be one of our priorities. In fact, we have already integrated vocational education into the secondary and senior secondary courses.

Could you elaborate on the flexibility that NIOS offers to students?

Freedom to choose subjects, credit accumulation facility

Once a student registers, the registration is valid for five years

Provision of re-admission after five years

Nine chances in five years to complete a course

Transfer of credits up to two subjects from various other boards, amongst others

What are the challenges as far as open schooling is concerned in India?

There has been a paradigm shift in learning at all levels of education, primarily in the school education system. This shift is based on:

Learning from classroom to anywhere

Teacher centric to learner centric approach

Role of teacher from mere instructor to facilitator for learning

Institutional based instruction to learner based instruction

Oral strategy of instruction to technology supported learning

Fixed time to any time for learning

One time education to life long education

Open distance learning system is based on the principle of 'education anytime, any place, and for anybody.' Hence, the basic challenge is to build confidence and fight the prevailing mindset that it is a second rated system.

How do you change the mindset?

By quality enhancement and meeting the expectation of learners so that they can be ambassadors of open schooling. This is possible if the focus is on creating a learner- friendly system by having an effective and efficient student support system.

What is your vision for NIOS?

To go to every doorstep and bring everyone within the fold of open schooling. So every person in India is brought into the preview of basic education.

Source: January 16, 2012/[Education Times](#)

NEWS

First PPP-model school in IT Park soon

Government to handle construction, private parties to manage teaching

In view of the increasing demand for schools in the city, the UT Administration has planned to set up a

Public Private Partnership (PPP) model school at the IT Park in the academic year 2013-14.

Being in line with Ministry of Human Resource Development's (MHRD) policy draft on 'PPPs in school education', the development of the city's first such school will be divided into core and non-core processes.

The government will take care of the non-core processes like acquiring land, construction and maintenance of the school campus. Private partners will perform core processes comprising administrative functions, teaching and learning activities. The UT Education Department has sent a draft proposal to MHRD after including the project in its next five year plan, which begins in April.

"We have already directed the Department of Architecture to earmark the land area to us. After acquiring land, we will invite private partners for bidding," said DPI (Schools), Sandeep Hans.

The school will admit a total of 2,500 students. According to officials, the model school's fees will be lesser than that in private schools.

"Since the school's infrastructure maintenance will be looked after totally by the government, the fee will be much lesser than that of any private (unaided) school in the city. However, the exact amount can only be finalised after the administrative set up comes into being," added Hans.

In its policy draft on 'PPPs in school education', MHRD had recommended the state governments to take BOOT model, being used in Information Communication Technology (ICT) in many Indian states, as an exemplar.

In the BOOT model the government pays the private party periodically on the basis of number of students and the private party holds the responsibility of running the school. Similar projects were taken up in Punjab in 2010, wherein five schools based PPP model (called Adarsh schools) were established.

However, out of the 110 sites set aside for these schools across the state, Punjab Education Development Board managed to allot only 62 to the private bidders.

Owing to disagreement of private partners over the allotment rules, the department had failed to find many contenders for the schools since some of the allottees wanted the department to relax its allotment conditions to let them to use school premises for commercial teaching after school hours.

Source: January 16, 2012/ [Indian Express](#)

UNESCO chief stresses need for innovation to ensure equitable education

The head of the United Nations agency tasked with promoting education today underscored the role that information and communications technologies can play in ensuring quality education and equal opportunities to learning even in countries that lag behind because of limited resources.

"Progress is more than a question of money – it is all about matching. Matching capacity with needs," Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), told delegates at the Global Summit for Education Ministers under way in London.

"This means making the most of innovation, notably in technology. It means building innovative partnerships with the private sector, such as through the Global Alliance of Corporate Partners for Education that we are aiming to establish this year," Ms. Bokova told the forum, whose theme is 'Learning from the Best for a World of Change.'

I am convinced public-private partnership is a new form of 'civilian power' that will help shape the 21st century.

She underlined the need to make education a "transformational power for human dignity," as well as for social, economic and political change.

"In times of economic uncertainty, this message has never been so important," Ms. Bokova added.

The younger generation required an education that equips them with modern skills and utilizes new technologies for the labour market, she said.

"Technology can be a powerful education multiplier – but, for this, it must be integrated into learning and accompanied by new teaching styles. In many countries, this calls for a profound shift towards more interactive, project-based learning," she said.

She pointed out that UNESCO is working to improve the skills of teachers and to promote competency standards through its 'Information and Communication Technology Competency Framework for Teachers' project, which sets guidelines to help educators develop skills to make the best use of technology for improved learning.

"Research shows that the success in using information and communication technologies in education depends largely on the ability of teachers to integrate these technologies into the teaching process," she said, stressing that the UNESCO framework is a core part of its vision to provide global leadership for teacher training.

The framework, which can be downloaded from the UNESCO website, is a collaboration between private

sector partners, such as Cisco, Intel and Microsoft, as well the International Society for Technology in Education and experts from the Commonwealth of Learning.

“I am convinced public-private partnership is a new form of ‘civilian power’ that will help shape the 21st century,” she said.

She also stressed the need to make education build socially stable communities through the promotion of good citizenship and respect for human rights. She announced that UNESCO will next week launch an initiative with the United States on teaching respect for all – a new curriculum on anti-racism and tolerance.

On primary school enrolment, Ms. Bokova said that despite an impressive improvement since 2000, the world is still not on track to meet the goal of universal basic education by 2015.

There were 67 million children out of primary school in 2007, and a similar number of adolescents out of secondary school. An estimated 793 million adults across the world remain illiterate – two thirds of them women.

An additional 1.9 million teachers are needed to achieve universal primary education by 2015, she added.

Source: January 16, 2012/ [United Nations](#)

Appoint ombudsman in higher education institutions, directs HRD ministry

Finding its Unfair Practices Bill stuck in Rajya Sabha for almost a year, the HRD has found a way-out to deal with educational malpractices in majority of higher education institutes.

The ministry on Monday decided that every educational institution affiliated to a Central University and under control of a Central regulator such as University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to have an ombudsman to deal with grievances.

“The new system would be in place before the next academic year,” said HRD minister Kapil Sibal. Every institution would be required to have an ombudsman – a person with judicial or legal experience to be appointed from a panel suggested by the affiliating university for technical and management institutions, by the Central Government for deemed universities and by the regulator for non-degree granting institutions.

The new direction would cover over all educational institutions, except state universities and colleges affiliated to these universities. Sibal would soon be requesting the state governments to have a similar

grievance redress mechanism for the state higher educational institutions.

The ombudsman will have power to instruct the institutions to take corrective measures on complaints regarding denial of admission, non-observance of declared merit in admission, withholding of documents and non-refund of fees in case of withdrawal of admission.

“In case of matters concerning weaker sections such as SCs/STs/OBCs or minorities, the ombudsman can co-opt a person of eminence from the area coming from the weaker section to assist him/her in arriving at a decision,” Sibal said.

The ombudsman will have to issue an order within a month of receiving a complaint with specific direction to the concerned institution.

A Parliamentary Standing Committee, while examining the Bill to prohibit and punish unfair practices in higher education had recommended that pro-active steps be taken to constitute grievance redressal mechanisms in higher education institution. The bill, which envisages setting up of national and state level tribunals to hear complaint of unfair practices, is pending in Rajya Sabha.

Source: January 16, 2012/ [Hindustan Times](#)

Grievance Redressal Mechanism for Students and Applicants for Admission in Higher Educational Institutions

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development stated today that there would now be a Grievance Redressal mechanisms in higher educational institutions. UGC, AICTE and NCTE would be requiring all Central Educational Institutions, institutions deemed to be universities, technical and management institutions under AICTE and teacher education institutions under NCTE to establish a Grievance Redressal Mechanism for Students and applicants for admission before the commencement of the admission this academic year. Every institution would be required to constitute an Ombudsman; person with judicial or legal experience to be appointed from a panel suggested by the affiliating university for technical and management institutions, by the Central Government for deemed universities and by the regulator for non-degree granting institutions. The concerned regulators would issue the detailed instructions to the educational institutions shortly.

There are several grievances that arise relating to students and applicants for admission in higher educational institutions. These grievances require prompt redressal in order to provide timely succor to aggrieved students and applicants. The Parliamentary Standing Committee, while

examining the Bill to prohibit and punish unfair practices, had recommended that pro-active steps be taken to constitute Grievance Redressal mechanisms in higher education institution.

Applicants for admission and students can apply to the Ombudsman for redressal of grievances and the Ombudsman shall deliver his/her order within one month. Although the order would not be binding on the institution, the regulator would rely on the frequency of non-observance to decide on continued recognition to such institutions.

The Ombudsman shall have the jurisdiction to hear grievances concerning denial of admission, non-observance of declared merit in admission, non-observance of applicable regulations for reservation, with-holding of documents and non refund of fees in case of withdrawal of admission, discrimination and other such matters concerning students in pursuit of studies in the institution. In case of matters concerning weaker sections such as SCs/STs/OBCs or minorities, the Ombudsman can co-opt a person of eminence from the area coming from the weaker section to assist him/her in arriving at a decision.

Source: January 16, 2012/[PIB](#)

Education Department looks the other way as Delhi schools fleece parents

The claims of the Delhi Government's Directorate of Education notwithstanding, public schools in the Capital have violated the norms pertaining to sale of forms at a prescribed rate of Rs.25 with impunity. And, as the parents allege, the Directorate looked the other way while the schools fleeced the hapless citizens over the past fortnight.

"I applied for the admission of my son in nearly 16 schools. Ideally, the overall application charges should have been around Rs.400 at the government prescribed rate, but I ended up spending over Rs.4,000 as many of the schools are charging up to Rs.500 for the prospectus, whose purchase they had made mandatory for procuring a form," said a parent, who did not wish to be identified for fear of his child being discriminated against in the admission process.

Delhi Education Minister Arvinder Singh Lovely had recently clarified that the schools are not allowed to charge more than Rs.25 for the sale of forms and complaints in this regard could be made with the respective District Admission Monitoring Committee that would be chaired by the Deputy Director Education concerned.

A closer look at the admission scenario has revealed that these Committees have failed to ensure that the parents were not fleeced by the

schools in the name of admissions. "The schools were charging such exorbitant rates for the forms without any impunity. Many of them even accepted drafts for the extra amounts and issued receipts. The Delhi Government did not conduct any raids and did not deal with the schools in a stern manner," said a parent.

Another grouse of the parents is that the Minister, who claimed that over 50 per cent of the complaints pertaining to admissions had been addressed, had not devised any mechanism to refund the extra amounts charged from the parents. "By allowing the schools to retain the money, the Delhi Government has shown that it is hand in glove with the administration of these schools."

A resident of Rohini, who applied for his son in several schools, said it was wrong to brand all the schools as bad. "Many schools like DPS Rohini, NK Bagrodia Schools in Sector 13, Rohini; Ryan International in Sector 25, Rohini; Montfort School in Ashok Vihar and Goodley School in Shalimar Bagh charged Rs 25 for the form."

But such schools were few. A majority used the opportunity to mint money. "VSPK School in Sector 13, Rohini, and Lancer's Convent in Sector 14, Rohini, made us buy a Rs. 500-prospectus each and VSPK also gave a receipt for it; Gita Ratan Jindal School in Sector 7, Rohini, sold a prospectus for Rs.300; Vikas Bharati in Sector 24, Rohini, charged Rs.250 for the prospectus while Agarsain Public School in Pitampura also charged Rs.100 for the mandatory prospectus."

The complaints do not end with the sale of prospectus. In many cases, the schools also charged varying amounts along with deposit of print-outs of the online registration forms.

Source: January 17, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

India's higher education challenges

India has a tough task ahead of it. In order to keep up its economic growth, the country will need to educate 100 million young people by 2020, reports the [Christian Science Monitor](#). This translates into a need to build 1,000 more universities and 50,000 colleges in the next ten years, according to the government.

"India is not just trying to build thousands of American-style campuses with neat quads," says the *Monitor*. "Many of its new schools will be virtual, for-profit, and integrated closely with workplaces. It may, in fact, end up pushing the concept of online education further than any other country. As a result, what India comes up with will not only affect its economic competitiveness in the 21st century. It

may become a petri dish for how to build an educational system in the Information Age.”

The Indian government is being strategic about its building. For instance, they’re planning 374 “model” colleges in remote areas to serve as examples. *The Hechinger Report* recently took a look at [India’s building boom](#) in Bihar, its poorest state and a future college hub. There, the government has opened the Central University of Bihar - “one of 15 new government-sponsored universities that aims to compete with the global elite.”

But there are many issues still to tackle, including finding qualified faculty to teach at these new universities. “According to a government report published last year, a massive expansion in higher education combined with a poor supply of Ph.D.’s, delays in recruitment and the lack of incentives to attract and nurture talent has led to a situation in which 40 percent of existing faculty positions remain vacant,” according to [The New York Times](#). “The report’s authors, mostly academics, found that if the shortfall is calculated using the class size recommended by the government, this figure jumps to 54 percent.

Source: January 17, 2012/[Lessons from Abroad](#)

12 Inconvenient Truths About American Higher Education

Below is an abstract of a speech summarizing my thoughts on some of the shortcomings of American higher education today, although let me note that in the speech (which I gave at St. Cloud State University, in Minnesota), I also talk of the strengths of our system of colleges and universities:

Let me enumerate in a very sketchy way what I believe are 12 “inconvenient truths about American higher education,” which will be forming the basis of longer writings over the course of the year, some of which probably will be mentioned in this space. While not all of these truths are self-evident, I think they all have enough basis in fact to suggest cumulatively American universities have a lot of problems.

Inconvenient Truth #1: College Costs Are Rising Both for Students and Society

We all know that tuition fees, adjusted for inflation, are rising a lot over time, even after allowing for tuition discounting. More important, higher education absorbs more than triple the share of the nation’s productive efforts than it did when John F. Kennedy was president. College costs to individuals are rising faster than incomes, not a sustainable phenomenon.

Inconvenient Truth #2: Too Many Students Pursue Traditional Bachelor’s Degrees

A huge number of students enter college with high prospects of failure, which is reflected in high dropout rates. More persons get degrees than the available pool of professional, managerial, and technical jobs—even when we have a jobs boom. All this has watered down rigor and led to declining academic standards.

Inconvenient Truth #3: Increased College Spending No Longer Usually Enhances Economic Growth

The law of diminishing returns is working—in most doses spending on higher education has a growth pay-off, but too much of it takes resources from productive, market disciplined economic actors and reallocates to a less efficient university sector that, at the margin, does not use the resources terribly productively.

Inconvenient Truth #4: Many Students Study and Learn Little

Arum and Roksa’s great book, [Academically Adrift](#), reaffirms what many long-time professors believe: students today typically read less, study less, etc., than they ought and thus gain fewer critical-thinking and writing skills, etc. during their course of collegiate study.

Inconvenient Truth #5 Undergraduate Students Are Often Neglected

At schools with lots of graduate students and/or research grants, often the faculty emphasis is not on undergraduate instruction. Big classes taught by inexperienced or marginally qualified individuals are often common, and faculty reward systems strongly favor research over teaching, as often do state appropriations in some settings.

Inconvenient Truth #6: Most Students Do Not Graduate on Time

More full-time students entering college fail to graduate within the four-year traditional span than do so. Nationally, at least 40 percent fail to graduate in six years. Dropout rates are scandalously high, especially in public institutions. Again, this probably reflects the marginal preparation of many students as much as or more than financial constraints.

Inconvenient Truth #7: Colleges Hide (or Don’t Collect) Vital Consumer Information

Did Sam Houston State University have a good year in 2011? Who knows? We don’t know whether seniors know more than freshman, whether the students are engaged in their college activities, or whether they fare well after graduation as measured by post-graduate earnings. Moreover, some internal scandals are often largely hidden

from students and sometimes even trustees. Transparency is lacking, big time.

Inconvenient Truth #8: Colleges Often Restrict Freedom of Expression

Colleges are supposed to be havens for the free expression of ideas, but political correctness has led some administrations to ban certain types of expression that are permitted in society at large. Intellectual diversity is also restricted by the fact that faculty in many policy-oriented academic areas at most schools have a predominantly leftist orientation, so alternative points of view receive a less extensive hearing by students.

Inconvenient Truth #9: Colleges Are Not a Vehicle for Promoting Economic Equality

The vast growth in higher education over the past four decades has been accompanied by rising income inequality. Elite private schools are dominated by kids from upper-income families, Even flagship state universities like the University of Virginia often have a lower proportion of Pell Grant recipients than swanky Ivy League institutions.

Inconvenient Truth #10: Colleges Are Run to Benefit Staff Often More Than Students

Senior faculty often teach what they want, when they want, and to whom they want, independent of student or societal needs. The multimillion-dollar football coach has been joined by the million-dollar college president and one-third-million-dollar professorial superstar. A lot of resources go to make life pleasant for faculty and administrators.

Inconvenient Truth #11: Federal Student Financial Aid Doesn't Work

Originally federal aid was designed to increase access by those with low incomes, but the proportion of low-income students amongst new college graduates is lower today than in 1970—before Pell Grants even began and federal student loans were in their infancy. Huge portions of aid go to moderately affluent students who would attend college without the assistance.

Inconvenient Truth #12: Intercollegiate Athletics Are Costly and Increasingly Corrupt

The Penn State scandal, while horrific, is not a unique phenomenon. Big-time college sports (which is not all of intercollegiate athletics, to be sure) have gone amuck. Academic values are subordinated, lying and cheating is endemic, and exploitation of students by rich adults (coaches) is not only accepted, but vigorously enforced by the Taliban of college sports, the NCAA.

Source: January 18, 2012/[The Chronicle](#)

New accounting system for government educational institutions from 2013

All government higher educational institutions will have to mandatorily follow a standardised accounting system from 2013 academic session to bring in more transparency, accountability and good governance.

Announcing this here on Wednesday, Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal said all central educational institutions, universities under the University Grants Commission (UGC), and institutions recognised by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and the schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will have to follow the new accounting system. The government will go for negotiations with the private institutions before making it mandatory for them.

“We would like all schools in the country to following the new accounting system for which we will take the matter to Central Advisory Board for Education (CABE) to arrive at a consensus,” he said.

The accounting system has been recommended by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) that had been asked by the Ministry last year to suggest a transparency accounting system in the educational institutions.

The new format will be helpful for presenting general purpose financial statements to ensure proper accountability, financial discipline, end-use of funds and to meet the needs of stakeholders. It will define transparently the revenue earned through various sources – tuition fee and other charges, income from consultancy or from intellectual property owned by the institution. It will also identify costs and revenue separately for under graduate and post graduate programmes and for research and teaching activities. It will help define relevant financial ratios derived from accounts for comparison on research to total expenditure, income from fees to total income, salary expenditure to total expenditure among other things.

Source: January 18, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

Planning Commission appoints Narayana Murthy to channelize corporate funding in higher education

With an eye on channeling corporate sector funding to promote innovation and research in the higher education sector, the [Planning Commission](#) has roped in NR Narayana Murthy to develop a "framework for engagement."

The [Narayana Murthy Committee](#) has been charged with the task of creating a framework which will bring in private funding into the domestic higher education sector.

The idea is to create an enabling structure that will encourage Indian corporate houses to endow funds to institutions in the country rather than foreign institutions as has been the recent trend. In the last few years, [Tata Group](#) and [Mahindra Group](#) donated \$50 million and \$10 million, respectively, to [Harvard University](#).

The exercise, which is part of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan process, will help bring in focused private sector investment into the sector geared towards research, development and innovation. It will also address the issue of lack of adequately "trained" and "qualified" manpower that industry desperately seeks.

"This is a systematic attempt to articulate and conceive the role and participation of the corporate sector in higher education and the principles and guidelines that will determine it. Despite all the efforts, corporate sector financing in education has been limited. This committee appears to be an opportunity to bring in corporate sector to engage with relevant education, quality, inclusiveness and innovation," former UGC chairman Sukhdeo Thorat said.

The corporate sector (both public sector undertakings and private enterprise) has consistently pushed for a greater role in the higher education sector.

The nature of this "greater role" has never been clearly spelt out. Over the past thirty years is a spectacular rise of private investment in education, matched by a steady decline in the government's education expenditure. But this increased private funding has been limited to setting up institutions - the majority of the engineering and management institutions are in the private sector.

"This committee will force the corporate sector to put down what it really means by engagement with higher education. Every year this theme comes up at education summits hosted by industry chambers, but when it comes to a real and meaningful engagement or leveraging of private finance for education there is very little to show for it," a senior government official said.

Source: January 18, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

India priority for Irish varsities'

India is a priority for Irish universities looking to draw students from across the world, said Ms Orla Battersby, Head, Education In Ireland.

Speaking to Indian mediapersons visiting Dublin at the invitation of the Dublin Airport Authority, she said the country is promoting post-graduate and Ph.D programmes in India.

Why Ireland?

The country's safety scores (Ireland was ranked 11th in the Global Peace Index 2011) will be attractive to parents, and students can be assured of a very personal teaching experience, she said. Pointing to companies such as Google, Apple, Pfizer, Citi and IBM being present in the country, she claimed: "These companies don't just focus on our science and technology graduates - their CEOs also highly rate the Irish-educated graduates in the arts and humanities, who they regard as having the creativity, collaboration, flexibility and other core skills necessary for modern business."

This year seven universities and a ministerial delegation will visit the country to acquaint students with studying in Ireland. IIT Delhi and University of Pune are among those which are conducting research projects with Irish educational institutions.

Students can opt for flexible approaches to international programmes such as blended courses and one-year exchanges.

International graduates can remain in Ireland for a year to find a job or develop a business idea, Ms Battersby said.

Education costs

A note from Education In Ireland says a Masters could cost between €7,500 and €22,000 per annum, while a Ph D could cost €6,000 to €9,000. Living costs range from €6,000 to €9,000.

To a query, she said there were more efforts by the Irish government to focus scholarships on a smaller number of countries, of which India will be given top preference.

Currently, about 1,000 Indian students study in Ireland. About 33 per cent study business and administration, 26 per cent computing and engineering-related courses and 18 per cent sciences. Fifty-seven per cent are post-graduate students.

Source: January 19, 2012/[The Hindu Business Line](#)

HRD ministry's nod for uniform accounting system in educational institutions

Paving the way for [uniform accounting system](#) in educational institutions, the [HRD ministry](#) has accepted the recommendations of a committee of the [Institute of Chartered Accountants of India \(ICAI\)](#).

To evolve consensus, recommendations would be put before the next state education ministers'

conference. The ministry would be organizing consultations with higher educational institutions and schools on the recommendations of [ICAI Committee](#). The accounting standards would be made applicable to all Central educational institutions, universities under the regulatory ambit of UGC or receiving grants from UGC, technical institutions under regulatory ambit of AICTE, teacher education institutions under the regulatory ambit of NCTE and schools affiliated to CBSE.

The panel, while stating that educational institutions need an accounting system that presents a true and correct picture, said all educational institutions should be mandated to apply accrual basis of accounting.

The committee said accounting standards issued by the ICAI should be made mandatory to educational institutions. Fund-based accounting may be introduced for earmarked/ designated funds, all educational institutions should follow a common format for presentation of its general purpose financial statements to ensure proper accountability, financial discipline, end-use of funds and to meet the needs of stakeholders.

These recommendations would make accounting in educational standards more transparent and accountable. Though the new system is less intrusive it would help in more effective regulation of the education sector as well as help in preventing malpractices that plague the sector.

Now, the accounting and financial reporting practices of educational institutions in India are oriented towards meeting the needs of the governing bodies running them and educational institutions follow not only diverse accounting practices, but also different basis of accounting.

The committee said the accounting standards should enable the society, student and citizen to define transparently the revenue earned through various sources - tuition fees and other charges, income from consultancy or from intellectual property owned by the institution (for higher educational institutions).

Source: January 19, 2012/[Times of India](#)

Embrace private schools

A system of school vouchers could help school choice, and also put pressure on government schools to shape up if they want money to come their way

Most news reports on the latest report on Indian education focused on its evidence about how poorly educated Indian schoolchildren are. The starkest indications are the fact that half of children in class V cannot even read the class II textbook or that 40% of class V students cannot

deal with a simple two-digit subtraction that involves carrying over.

However, the Pratham report also throws light on another trend: the gradual privatization of Indian school education. As Rukhmini Banerji of Pratham said in *The Indian Express* on Thursday, nearly one out of every two children in rural India pays for his or her education in a private school or tuition classes. The rise of private schooling is the natural response of parents to the broken system of public education.

Independent researchers, such as James Tooley of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, have already documented the rise of private education in even the poorest communities in India, such as the slums of Hyderabad. Others such as Geeta Kingdon of Oxford University have noted in their research work that students from private schools do better than their peers in government schools, controlling for other factors such as family background.

It is not hard to guess why Indian parents are increasingly choosing to send their children to education providers in the private sector, even in the case of those families that have a meagre income. There is growing recognition of the high returns on human capital in a country such as India, and at least part of the readiness to send children to paying schools in the private sector rather than free or cheap public schools can be explained by the drive to acquire skills that could help children move up the income ladder.

The government response to this trend has been predictable. The Right to Education Act aims for the praiseworthy goal to make education a constitutional right. But the government has then gone ahead with rules on teacher-student ratios, classroom size and school facilities that will make it difficult for budget private schools that serve poor communities to remain open. In fact, activists have already pointed out to threat of widespread closures of private schools in slums and villages. The ability of the government to replace them is in doubt.

A better solution is to recognize that parents want to send their children to private schools. A system of school vouchers could help school choice, and also put pressure on government schools to shape up if they want money to come their way. For the record: the average government spending per child is more than Rs 6,000 a year.

Source: January 19, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

SSA model for higher education

The success of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the Central government's flagship scheme for attaining universal elementary education in the

country, has prompted the University Grants Commission to pitch in for a Rashtriya Uchch Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) scheme under the 12th Plan period (2012-17).

The RUSA, aimed at drastically increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in universities and colleges, is a key feature of the UGC's concept document on reforms in higher education during the new plan period.

According to University of Madras former Vice Chancellor S P Thyagarajan, who is a co-author of the Plan document, the RUSA mission is intended to increase the GER in higher education from the current 11-12 per cent to 25 per cent over the next five years across the nation. "The RUSA proposal has been accepted in principle. The modalities for rolling this out are being worked out," Thyagarajan told Express on Friday.

Source: January 21, 2012/[Express Buzz](#)

Vice chancellors work under huge pressure: AIU secretary general

Secretary general of Association of Indian Universities (AIU) ADN Bajpayee on Saturday expressed serious concern over host of problems faced by the vice-chancellors in recent times all over the country.

He was speaking to TOI during his visit to the city regarding 27th Inter-university National Youth Festival (Unifest) which would be inaugurated on Sunday at Vasant Rao Deshpande Hall at 11am. AIU chairman Pankaj Chande would grace the occasion.

Deliberating on the issue, Bajpayee said VC is a chief executive officer (CEO) of the university and his vision should be turned into reality. "But they are in the dicey situation and their voice is not listened to properly. They remain in a catch-22 situation and AIU is helping them in this aspect by regularly organizing their meetings and trying to resolve certain issues," he said.

The secretary general pointed out that increasing number of affiliated colleges, just like Nagpur University which is having highest number of colleges in Maharashtra with over 800, was another area of concern for the VCs. "They've to deal with host of problems," he said.

Speaking on quality of higher education, Bajpayee admitted that it is a major concern and AIU is working in this direction. "We had discussed about introducing public-private partnership (PPP) model in the education and also trying to bring uniformity in the teaching and exam patterns all over the country. We also helped the government in drafting bill regarding reforms in education," he said, adding that bills like foreign direct investment

(FDI) in higher education, education tribunal bill and national academic deposit bill were pending.

He informed that the UGC had sought Rs1,18,644 crore funds from the government under 12th five year plan for improving quality of [higher education](#) in the country.

On huge vacancy of qualified lecturers which is plaguing the higher education sector in India, the vice-chancellor of Himachal University stated that though the jurisdiction lies with the respective state governments, the vacancies must be filled up to maintain academic standards.

Explaining the role of AIU, Bajpayee said that they generally provide equivalence between the universities in India and abroad as well. "AIU is world's oldest organization of its kind established in 1925 in Shimla by then viceroy Lord Reading. The basic concept was to have interuniversity board for India, Burma ([Myanmar](#)) and Ceylon ([Sri Lanka](#))."

He concluded by stating that AIU actively participates in deciding contents of courses, traditional knowledge system, pattern of syllabus, UGC norms, conduct of examination, and timely declaration of results, and guide the universities.

Source: January 22, 2012/[Times of India](#)

UGC for 400 cluster varsities, IIT-style

For the first time in the history of Indian higher education, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has recommended the creation of 400 "college cluster universities" in the country with greater administrative and full academic freedom on the lines of Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT).

Each cluster university will consist of 20 high-quality government and aided colleges.

The UGC has also suggested that colleges with minimum 5-acre land can admit 1,000 students and universities, which have 200 to 500 acres, can admit 5,000 to 10,000 students every year.

Speaking to this newspaper on Saturday, Prof. S.P. Thyagarajan, pro-chancellor (research), Sri Ramachandra University, who, with four others, has compiled and edited the UGC's 12th five-year plan, said that the commission would recommend the ministry of human resource development (MHRD) to bring 20,000 government and its aided colleges under section 12B of the UGC Act to provide them government grants and create 400 college cluster universities.

State governments would create these universities by enacting a legislation based on a model Act to be provided by HRD ministry and the commission.

Source: January 29, 2012/[Deccan Chronicle](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE**India: What Will It Look Like in 2025?**

What will India and other South Asian countries look like in 2025? The optimistic view is that India will achieve double digit growth rates but the pessimistic view is that growth will be derailed by several transformational challenges. This column introduces a new book asking what the story between now and 2025 might involve, and what can be done to reshape tomorrow.

What will India, and the other South Asian countries, look like in 2025? There are two contrasting views on this, the optimistic and the pessimistic. The optimistic outlook is that India will achieve double-digit growth rates (Buiter and Rahbari 2011). South Asia too will experience strong growth, primarily due to India. The pessimistic outlook is that growth will be derailed by many transformational challenges the region faces. Which of these two outlooks will prevail? We examine this in a recent book called *Reshaping Tomorrow* (Ghani 2011).

The optimistic outlook

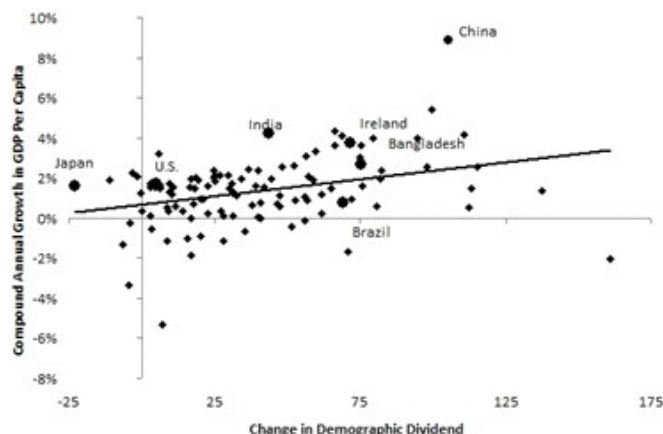
The optimistic outlook is based on the favourable structural trends including improved governance, the demographic dividend, the rise of the middle class, and the new faces of globalisation.

All countries in the region have an elected government for the first time since independence. Governance has improved in two ways that will enhance the politics of democratic accountability (Mehta 2003). The first is the diminishing importance of identity politics, and the second is that the rates of incumbency – the likelihood of a sitting legislator or state government being re-elected – are down. This is leading to governance that is more focused on development.

While China's spectacular growth has already benefitted from demographic dividend, India is yet to do so (Figure 1). By 2025 India will be more populous than China. Its population will also be much younger. More than 10 million new workers will join the labour force, every year, for the next two decades. This is equivalent to the entire population of Sweden joining the labour force. The demographic dividend will benefit growth not only through the swelling of the labour force, as the baby boomers reach working age, but also due to society's ability to save more because working age happens to be the prime years for savings, and the increased fiscal space that will divert resources from spending on children to investing in infrastructure and technology (Bloom *et al* 2011).

A massive shift towards a middle class society is already in the making. India's middle class (daily expenditure of \$10-\$100 in PPP terms) will rise more rapidly compared to China, because Indian households will benefit more from growth than Chinese households, given the prevailing distribution of income (Kharas 2011). The size of the middle class will increase from 60 million in 2010 to more than one billion people by 2025 (Table 1). Growth, education, home ownership, formal-sector jobs, and better economic security are cause and consequence of an expanding middle class.

Figure 1. The demographic dividend and growth in GDP per capita 1980–2009



Source: World Development Indicators, 2010.

Notes: “Demographic Dividend” (DD) is calculated as the ratio: (working-age population)/(non-working age population)*100. Change in DD represents 2009 value minus 1980 value. Growth rate in GDP per capita uses GDP per capita in 2005 constant.

Table 1. South Asia's middle class 2010–25

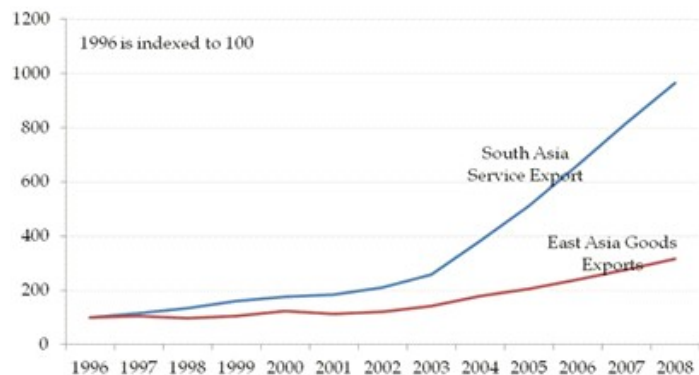
	Number of people millions				Share of country population	
	global share					
	2010	2025	2010	2025	2010	2025
Bangladesh	1.8	4.9	0.10%	0.10%	1.10%	2.40%
India	59.5	1026.1	3.20%	24.80%	4.90%	70.90%
Nepal	0.3	0.8	0.00%	0.00%	0.90%	2.10%
Pakistan	7.1	28.9	0.40%	0.70%	4.10%	12.80%
Sri Lanka	3.6	6.2	0.20%	0.10%	18.50%	30.30%
South Asia	72.2	1066.9	3.80%	25.80%	4.50%	55.10%
Memo: China	169.3	844.5	9.00%	20.40%	12.50%	58.40%
US	232	198.5	12.30%	4.80%	73.70%	55.90%
World	1889.1	4136.4	100%	100%	28.20%	53.40%

Source: Kharas (2011)

The world has already benefited from global capital flows and trade in goods. It is now the turn of trade in services and migration. Technology has enabled services to be digitised, transported, and traded, long distance, at low cost, without compromising on quality. Trade in services are the fastest growing component of world trade during the last two

decades. India's service export is growing at a much faster pace compared to goods export from China (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Service revolution



Global migration rates have been sluggish over the last 50 years. But this will change. Current demographic trends suggest a rapidly ageing population in OECD countries, and a young population in South Asia (Ozden and Parsons 2011). This generates powerful incentives for labour mobility, as well as unique opportunities for improved global efficiency. But there is an alternative outlook.

The pessimistic outlook

The pessimistic outlook is backed by equally strong arguments. History tells us that there are no more than a dozen countries that have managed to sustain an average growth rate of 7% a year for 25 years. Many have reached middle-income status, but very few have gone beyond.

Growth in the region could be derailed by lopsided spatial transformation, lack of entrepreneurship, large informal sectors, high levels of conflict, gender disparities, and deep pockets of poverty.

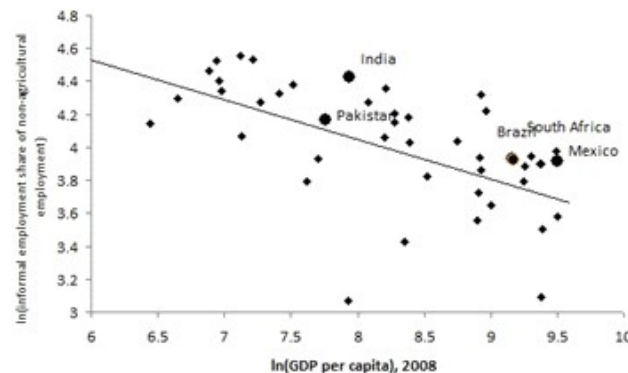
Rapid growth has produced billionaires in India. But, the broad character of the region remains agrarian and rural. This has more to do with the peculiarities of growth patterns — services-led growth, which is more skill-intensive, compared to manufacturing-led growth, which is less skill-intensive, and the fragmented nature of transformation, than the pace of growth (Panagaria 2011). Slow growth in manufacturing despite rapid GDP growth should by itself not be a worry, provided it is not in the way of growth in employment opportunities for unskilled and low-skilled workers at decent wages in industry and services so that these sectors still manage to rapidly pull the underemployed workers in agriculture into gainful employment. With the changes in technology that have taken place, it is an open question whether labour-intensive industry

will be able to survive and grow in the manner that the East Asian countries experienced.

Entrepreneurship is central to job creation. But South Asia has too few entrepreneurs. While India has a disproportionately high rate of self-employment and many small firms, this has not as readily translated into as many young entrepreneurial firms as could be hoped. Yet there is no question that entrepreneurship works. Formal-sector job growth has been strongest in regions and industries that have exhibited high rates of entrepreneurship and dynamic economies.

The informal sector remains overwhelmingly large and persistent (Figure 3). Around nine out of ten employees in India do not have formal jobs. What is worrying is that informal employment does not seem to disappear with rapid growth. There is a strong association between informality and poverty (Figure 4).

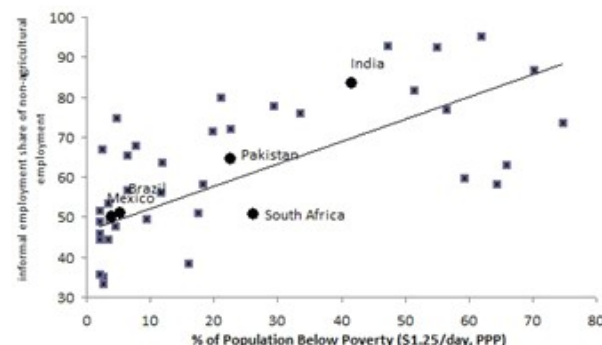
Figure 3. High concentration of informal jobs in South Asia



Source: OECD, 2009. World Development indicators 2010.

Note: Forty-eight countries with available data shown. Chart uses latest data on informal share of employment available (1995–99 or 2000–07). GDP per capita is in 2005 constant PPP international \$.

Figure 4. Strong association between informality and poverty



Source: OECD, 2009. World Development indicators 2010.

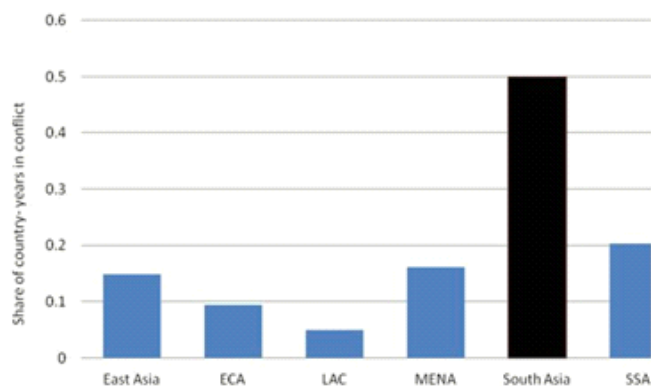


Note: Forty-five countries with available data shown. Chart uses latest available data on informal share of employment (1995–99 or 2000–07).

South Asia has experienced high levels of internal conflict (Figure 5). Most countries in South Asia are currently immersed in, or are just emerging from, conflicts of varying nature and scope, ranging from the recently ended civil wars in Sri Lanka and Nepal and insurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan to low-level localised insurgency in India. The result is human misery, destruction of infrastructure and social cohesion, and death. The knock-on effects are huge (Iyer 2011).

Figure 5. High levels of conflict in the past decade in South Asia

Proportion of country-years in armed conflict, 2000–08



Source: Iyer (2011).

India, despite reaching middle-income status, is home to the largest concentration of poor people in the world. More than one billion people lived on less than \$2 a day in 2005 in South Asia. Nearly 250 million children are undernourished and suffer from hidden hunger. Child mortality and malnutrition levels are among the highest in the world. More than one third of adult women are anaemic. One woman dies every five minutes from preventable, pregnancy-related causes. The share of female employment in total employment is among the lowest in the world.

What can be done?

Growth cannot be taken for granted. The link between demographics and growth is not automatic. A demographic dividend could morph into a demographic disaster, if people are not healthy, educated, and trained.

Globalisation also does not automatically engender growth. India needs the infrastructure – ports, transport, and communications – to take advantage of trade. This is not just about the shift away from agriculture and into industry and services. It is also about the transformation required to move into higher-quality goods and services.

Growth, however, is not an end in itself. Policymakers should not think of growth separately from inclusion. Increased income disparities should not be viewed as the price to pay for higher growth. A development response that aims to promote growth first and then deal with human misery later is not sustainable.

The demographic dividend is a time-bound opportunity. It provides policymakers an incentive to redouble their efforts to promote the skills of the working-age cohort so that it has the ability to contribute productively to the economy. Time is of the essence. Policymakers need to take action today to reshape tomorrow.

Disclaimer: This draws upon the work in *Reshaping Tomorrow*. The views expressed here are those of the author and not the World Bank.

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Source: Source: January 16, 2012/[Global Economic Intersection](#)

Soumitra Dutta for closer links between Cornell and Indian researchers

Preparing to assume charge as Dean of the Ivy league Cornell University's [Johnson Business School](#), [Soumitra Dutta](#) plans to build stronger links with researchers and thinkers in India as part of his strategy to "take Johnson to the world, and bring the world to Johnson."

Dutta, an IIT Delhi alumnus, will become the 11th dean of the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell on July 1, becoming the first Indian- origin head in the institution's 66-year old history.

"It is a very exciting challenge because Cornell is a great brand and Johnson is a great school and the challenge is to take something that is already very good and make it even better," Dutta told PTI in a telephone interview from France.

Dutta, 48, is currently a professor of business and technology and founder and faculty director of a new-media and technology innovation lab at leading global business school INSEAD's French campus.

Outlining the key areas he will focus on as Johnson's dean, Dutta said a multipolar world has made it important for America to be much more global in its outlook as the superpower cannot solve its problems or the world's problems alone anymore.

"As a consequence of this increased focus on globalisation, Cornell, by hiring me, is trying to have more aggressive stance in bringing the world to Cornell and taking Cornell to the world.

"In this context, the institution needs to have "deeper knowledge about the phenomena and activities happening in emerging markets, including India," he said. "I would see that we form stronger links with top researchers and some of the leading thinkers in India and try to understand where India is leading and see how we can integrate that into the global knowledge space.

"With increased focus being given to "inclusive innovation" in India, it is important to see how this Indian phenomenon fits in the global thinking.

"Integration and assimilation of knowledge is a two way process - that is something that is only possible if we build close links with Indian universities and also have professionals from

Cornell spending more time in the field in India," Dutta added.

The emerging market institute inside Johnson can also be developed much more strongly to integrate better with the world, he said.

Dutta points out that in today's day and age, business has to address much more than just a general set of needs and provide solutions for global challenges of sustainability, climate, food, water and energy.

"Johnson has to build more stronger links to try to come up with innovative solutions for some of these global challenges.

I see these areas where Johnson can improve and where I will focus on as part of my mandate," he said.

Dutta did his Master's in business administration, computer science and a PhD in computer science from the University of California-Berkeley and has been at INSEAD for the past two decades.

Johnson became the first major business school in the US to hire a dean from a business school outside the country.

Cornell President David Skorton termed Dutta's appointment as a "natural fit" with Johnson's increasingly global outlook.

Dutta says his Indian education and upbringing has taught him to handle diversity, an attribute that will help him at Cornell. "On the professional side, what I value a lot from my Indian background is the ability to handle diversity since in India we grow up in diversity.

That is something which is very important in leading an institution of any kind in any country," he said.

Dutta joins the growing club of Indian-origin academicians heading prestigious universities in the US.

In 2010, Harvard Business School named as its Dean Nitin Nohria, who became the first Indian-origin head of the top ranking business school.

In the same year, University of Chicago's Booth School of Business had named Stanford University professor Sunil Kumar as its Dean.

Noted Indian-American academician Dipak Jain took over as Dean of INSEAD in March 2011. Before this, Jain was Dean at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management from 2001-2009.

Source: Source: January 16, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

A 27-year-old in India takes on challenge of building new university

Here's a job most 27-year-olds never get: starting up a new university – from scratch. Like an

Athenian at the dawn of Greece, Dhawal Sharma is converting 25 acres of farmland outside New Delhi worked by man and ox for millenniums into the kind of marble-and-grass campus that launches odysseys of the mind.

But Mr. Sharma, a recent business-school graduate, is also young enough to still be in a band. He drums in a metal-rock group that plays the songs of 1970s headbangers like Judas Priest.

"I really wonder if any other person who is doing the same job is as inexperienced as I am," says Sharma, who is the project manager for the future Ashoka University. "I've been told this in a number of government offices as well – 'you look too young.'"

The truth is India needs the young, the entrepreneurial – and maybe especially the headbanging cymbal-crashers – to help carry out what may be the most ambitious experiment in higher education in the world today. It may also be the most daunting.

Consider just these statistics:

- Rippling through India's education system are giant waves of young people who by 2020 will swell the country's labor pool by 100 million workers. And more will be coming behind them: Half the 1.2 billion people here are younger than age 25. By contrast, China, Europe, and other major economies face shrinking workforces because of aging populations.

- To accommodate this crush of young people, the Indian government says the country must build 1,000 universities and 50,000 colleges within the next decade. By comparison, the total number of colleges in the United States, including two-year institutions, is 4,200.

Simply put, this country needs more institutions of higher learning if it is going to be an economic powerhouse in the 21st century. It also needs better schools. And it needs them now.

A recent study by the McKinsey Global Institute, a consulting firm, found that less than 17 percent of India's graduates were immediately employable. As a result, top Indian firms often have to put new hires through months of in-house schooling to train them for jobs for which they were supposed to be qualified.

Granted, this is not the image of Indian students that many outsiders, particularly Americans, hold. US medical schools and engineering programs seem to be full of Indians excelling in the theoretical math and biochemistry courses that many other students often struggle with or shun.

Yet this shouldn't be surprising. The Indians who come to the US are usually the top "1 percenters" – the sons and daughters of doctors and computer scientists who have the wherewithal to send their kids to the best primary schools and then abroad to the best universities.

Some of these students end up attending schools in India, eventually working for top firms like outsourcing giants Infosys and Wipro. What India wants to do now is expand that 1 percent club, plus open up higher education to a far broader section of middle-class families as the country's youth population rises dramatically.

Schools are already springing up across the landscape – from big campuses in suburban fields to one-room boutiques in teeming malls. As they do, Americans who feel inadequate about their education system can take solace in at least one fact: Indians are looking at US institutions as models. In the five-star hotels of New Delhi, delegations of presidents and deans from various American universities meet regularly with teams of Indian officials and administrators to set up partnerships, faculty mentoring, and study-abroad programs.

And yet – as in other sectors of rapidly developing countries – India isn't looking just to mimic the West in education. It is hoping to leapfrog it. In some ways, the country has no choice. "The way education is today in the global market is not scalable," says Sam Pitroda, an education adviser to the government. "The cost of education has really increased substantially, mainly because IT has not been used effectively the world over in education."

This means that India is not just trying to build thousands of American-style campuses with neat quads. Many of its new schools will be virtual, for-profit, and integrated closely with workplaces. It may, in fact, end up pushing the concept of online education further than any other country. As a result, what India comes up with will not only affect its economic competitiveness in the 21st century. It may become a petri dish for how to build an educational system in the Information Age.

Yet questions loom. Is India on the verge of a new renaissance or is this effort an overreaching bound to fall of its own ambition? How do you maintain any kind of quality control in such a massive scale-up of schools? Will the legendary bureaucracy of India stifle its quest to be the world's new cerebellum?

In India, where higher education is often specialized and rote, Sharma is something of a Renaissance man himself. He can shift easily between wearing an elegant Indian salwar kameez to an evening gala

and showing up at a coffee shop in MBA garb – dress pants, button-up shirt, and neatly-parted hair. He can talk eruditely about education policy, then banter about the merits of Ozzy Osbourne versus Ronnie James Dio.

In many respects, he has the type of well-rounded persona that Ashoka University would like to produce. He doesn't put it that way, of course. He says the models for Ashoka are Harvard and Yale: Take top students, put them through a liberal arts curriculum directed by quality faculty, and offer sports, all on one sprawling campus.

"We are actually looking to give students an education rather than training," says Sharma.

It's an ideal as old as Oxford, but most of Indian higher education looks remarkably different. Currently, the best students jostle to get into one of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) – a group of engineering and technical training academies established after India's independence. The IITs pick about 7,500 students a year from a pool of 1 million exam-takers.

Most of the other new schools created since the British left are similarly focused on professional training. Top students looking for more of a liberal arts education reach for a few schools in New Delhi, some of which are so deluged that the rejects are showing up at US Ivies. Below these options, the quality drops off sharply in the remaining 600 universities and 31,000 colleges that make up the world's largest higher education system.

"There is a very thin layer of excellence at the top where you have the IITs," says Ben Wildavsky, senior scholar at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, which is based in Kansas City, Mo.

Until recently, new colleges wanting to offer degrees were required to be affiliated with a state- or central-government university. That's a heavy yoke because powerful – but stagnant – university regulatory boards control everything from curricula and exams to teachers' salaries.

Sharma's alma mater, the decade-old Indian School of Business (ISB), found the accreditation process so burdensome that the nonprofit school skipped it entirely. Ironically, the ISB is one of the few world-class institutions of higher education in India. No Indian school made this year's Times Higher Education ranking of the world's top 200 universities. But the ISB took No. 13 on a Financial Times list of global MBA programs. Yet it cannot grant MBA degrees – instead it awards certificates – as a penalty for its independence.

Some states, however, are starting to rework their rules to attract new schools. Ashoka will be private,

unaffiliated, and able to confer degrees under a 2006 law in Haryana, a state bordering New Delhi. The state government acquired 2,000 acres on the edge of the capital; laid some pipes, wire, and asphalt; and carved it up for campuses.

Sharma was hired after the land was in hand. It's his job now to get all the government approvals to build and open the school. For all of the reforms, one constant remains: India's notorious bureaucratic web.

"Each day you deal with a government department it's frustrating," says Sharma.

Sharma's boss, Pramath Sinha, who also set up the ISB and a journalism institute, argues that Indian regulators have the system backward. "What [other] governments do the world over is they monitor the quality – they monitor the output," says Dr. Sinha. "So they don't make it difficult for you to enter the sector, but they do make it quite strict that whatever you provide is adequately rated."

Beyond bureaucracy, new schools face two competing shortages – land and instructors. India maintains fixed pay scales for faculty, which makes it hard to attract good professors. Salaries have increased dramatically over the past five years, says Vibha Puri Das, India's higher education secretary, though she admits the system is short 1 million teachers. Given such demand, teachers can be choosy about location.

"The dilemma is, yes, if you make a good university next to a metro you can attract students, faculty, corporates, but then the cost of land becomes a problem," says Jitin Chadha, director of the Indian School of Business & Finance, a private school in New Delhi linked with the University of London. Conversely, "I've seen private universities set up in the back-of-beyond that have everything but faculty."

His school, by contrast, remains a boutique, catering to just 150 students in one building on one acre of Delhi land.

Ashoka's backers hope they have the right location to surmount both problems: enough land to expand, but also a site close enough to Delhi, one hour away, that students and faculty will be willing to commute. The campus, now just a patch of dirt, lies along the fabled Grand Trunk Road that, in British colonial times, linked Calcutta to Kabul.

They are also banking on a new expressway and shopping mall, currently under construction, to boost the area's fortunes, as well as the exurban creep of Delhi toward their coming ivory towers.

It is in name, at least, a university, even though it operates out of only two small rooms, a few doors

down from a Domino's Pizza and above a tailoring shop. Students learn how to navigate the Internet and the New Economy here amid the thrum of daily existence, with its chatter of sewing machines and scent of pizza topped with capsicum and paneer.

Oceanic Eduversity, a newly opened academy on the second floor of a small shopping center in the city of Ghaziabad, may symbolize the future of India's grand education experiment more than Ashoka. Given the country's limitations with faculty, accreditation, and land, many of the new school seats India will create over the next 10 years will be bootstrap operations like Oceanic. Call it education on the cheap and flexible.

The idea behind the schools is to be accessible, with challenges set low. Everything about the institutions, from the faculty to curriculum to classroom space, is usually borrowed from other sources. One such school across town actually operates out of the basement of a Domino's, offering law classes for aspiring judges next to a pile of pizza boxes.

Dr. Chadha says, in effect, these are degree-buying institutions. "You buy a pizza and get a degree free."

But for all the shortcomings, schools like Oceanic are at least giving some training to students and showing how to start up new schools despite the overwhelming obstacles.

Teachers? No problem. By holding weekend classes, Oceanic can get moonlighters from local colleges – as well as professionals from its parent company, a small software outsourcing firm called Sunasa IT Solutions.

When Bhuwan Mittal, a former Wipro employee, joined Sunasa as a computer programmer, he was offered the chance to teach a Java course as well. Mr. Mittal agreed. But because teaching isn't as "prestigious," he has no intention of making it a full-time career – for now. "When my kids grow up, they will need more of my time, and a teaching job may give me more time," he says.

In a nearby classroom, one of Mittal's co-workers writes computer terms – but very little programming code – on a small white board as five students take notes. Some of the material for this master's level course seems a bit elementary. "What are some languages?" the teacher asks at one point, with students rattling off a few like Java and C++.

Mittal admits that some of his students entered his course not knowing how to program any languages. "We have to start with the basics," he says.

And the basics in Indian education mean first defining a lot of terms and concepts before applying them to a problem – in contrast to how it is often taught in America, where concepts are explained through problem-solving. Oceanic officials say the school does take a practical approach, noting that students get exposed to real world issues that crop up in the firm's outsourcing work.

Vinod Bisht seems pleased with the school for his own pragmatic reasons. The 23-year-old Oceanic student works full time as a network technician around Delhi. His family now depends on him to send money back home, meaning he can't quit his job to study, but his employer is enticing him with more money if he gets an advanced degree.

"It does not matter to them if it's a regular college I attend," says Mr. Bisht. "But it does matter that I get a degree from a university."

Oceanic can deliver that because it's affiliated as a "distance education" program with a state university located across the country. Distance programs like Oceanic have surfaced all across India, offering some 2 million students everything from degrees in law and computer science to MBAs. It's a loose partnership: The home university sends courseware to the local schools, which hire their own teachers and administrators. Students take tests at special exam centers, the results of which are sent back to the parent university for grading.

Boosters of distance education expect the sector to double its enrollment over the next decade, though these schools face looming competition from one other emerging trend in Indian education – the digital professor.

On this day, Kama Koti is teaching his usual class on electronics at one of India's IITs. He paces in front of his students, occasionally scrawling an equation on the chalkboard. His students, dutifully attentive, take notes and raise their hands. He closely polices their level of interest. There is plenty of interaction.

This wouldn't be unusual for a college class, except in this case Dr. Koti is in the southern city of Chennai while 20 of his students are sitting in "virtual classrooms" 400 miles north in Hyderabad and 1,600 miles away in Mandi.

As much as any of the attempts to solve India's higher education crisis, the Internet may hold the potential to transform the system the most. This is in part because the country embraces online learning more than many Western nations. It's also because the technology is improving so fast.

No longer do students squint at a professor on a grainy TV screen, while talking on their cellphones or thumbing text messages to friends just off camera. With this setup, as Koti strides back and

forth in front of his chalkboard, a camera broadcasts his image on 55-inch, high-definition screens in the three connected classrooms. The chalk on his fingers is visible as he gestures. When the spirited professor strides to the board to write something, the feed cuts to a close-up shot with a second camera.

Nor is this just a one-way broadcast. "I am able to catch people with a mobile phone" sitting in the far-off classrooms, says Koti with a grin.

At one point in class, a student in Mandi interrupts him. Audio sensors pick it up, and the feed automatically cuts to a view of the student. The teacher and student talk naturally, a one-on-one exchange made possible by a new nationwide network of gigabit-speed cables.

Known as the National Knowledge Network, the \$1.5 billion government-built system links the IITs and premier universities, and will soon bring on state universities and other institutions. Right now it's being used mostly to fill faculty gaps as new IIT campuses are built. But the network's promoters believe the system could take India's impossible school-building needs and make them possible.

"Ultimately, to my mind, we will be running virtual universities and virtual colleges," says B.K. Gairola, head of the National Knowledge Network. "This is 10 years, 15 years down the road."

Dr. Pitroda, an education adviser to the prime minister, sees the Internet fundamentally reshaping how colleges function. "You can begin to share teachers," he says. "If you have a good professor at an IIT, he can be seen and heard by 600 other colleges." Eventually, he adds, "the teacher as we know today will not exist."

Teachers, he says, will no longer be re-creating individual curricula – that will be done by a few top scholars. Nor will they be delivering it – that will happen by the most effective lecturers over the National Knowledge Network. "The teacher will be the role of mentor," says Pitroda.

"If I were to start a university of 2050, would I build it the same way as Harvard, or Cambridge, or Delhi University?" he asks. "I wouldn't."

Not everyone is enthralled with the idea. Sinha, the builder of colleges on the classic model, agrees that higher education in India will go more virtual, but he's not celebrating it. "I just feel doing [student-teacher ratios of] 1 to a 1,000, 1 to 500 is unfair to our students. They deserve better than that," he says. "We are being forced to resort to these things because we have no possibility of creating the bricks and mortar. The challenges are so staggering."

How successful India is at educating its next generation of youth will shape the country's standing in the world over the next few decades – and perhaps the pace of progress elsewhere around the globe as well. Kapil Sibal, the country's human resources minister, calls it nothing less than India's shot at being the workforce of the world.

"This will be a great potential resource only if they are empowered with education and skills to leverage available global opportunities," he said in a speech in October. "If we fail to do this, our demographic advantage will be lost and our youth alienated."

Others put the cost of failure more bluntly. "If they are not skilled and trained to be absorbed in industry, the Libyas of the world will be a joke [by comparison]," says Ajay Kela, president of the Wadhvani Foundation, which is bringing the community college concept to India.

India is striving for a skilled workforce of 500 million by 2022 to sustain its economic growth. To reach that, Mr. Sibal is trying to raise higher education enrollment among college-age students from roughly 12 percent to 30 percent by 2020. That's how he arrives at his dizzying goal of 1,000 new universities and 50,000 new colleges.

Achieving that, however, will require the country to build schools at 10 times the rate it has been since independence. Sibal says frankly that the Indian government cannot do it alone.

"I don't think any government in the world has the resources and expertise to set up higher education institutions in those numbers," he says.

In its quest to try, the government is pursuing many approaches. It is trying to squeeze out more capacity from existing schools by upgrading some colleges to universities, allowing campuses to be used at night, and encouraging schools to add seats through distance learning.

It is trying to pass legislation to attract foreign university investment and is giving states more power to open schools. Sibal has refused to allow for-profit colleges. But he has given the go-ahead for two-year community college degrees. The numbers sometimes seem "daunting," admits Ms. Das, the higher education secretary, but new schools are "increasing by the day."

Many analysts are skeptical that the country can reach its goals. "If they go at the current pace, I don't think this could happen," says Arvind Panagariya, an economics professor at Columbia University in New York. "The ramifications are that the transformation of India into a more modern country will be much slower than one might think."

In 2000, 8 percent of China's youth went on to college, compared with 10 percent in India. By 2007, China's enrollment rate had risen to 23 percent versus 12 percent in India. Dr. Panagariya's conclusion: "The Chinese don't worry so much about these issues of quality. [They just say] we need to provide some education."

Indian employers, however, are deeply worried about quality because so few graduates are employable. S. Nagarjuna, with outsourcing giant Wipro, tells the story of an electrical engineering graduate with good marks who came in to interview.

"They asked him basic questions about electricity in the home, and this boy was quite unable to answer," says Mr. Nagarjuna. It eventually came out he had never replaced so much as a fuse. "If you can't relate the theory to small practical situations at home, it's very difficult for you to relate to applications in industry like hydroelectric projects."

Wipro decided it had had enough. The company started a nonprofit venture called Mission10X, which provides mentoring to faculty members. Nagarjuna heads the program, whose vast network of advisers now works with 17,800 teachers at 1,074 engineering colleges. The program teaches professors how to capture students' attention in the opening minutes of class and how to get them talking and problem-solving by breaking into teams.

"We realized in our research that there were some students who never spoke during their entire education career," says Nagarjuna.

Many Indian employers, in fact, worry as much about the lack of communication skills among young people as gaps in technical know-how. Denise Ireland, an Indian who has set up corporate training programs for top multinationals, describes how she would give new employees case studies and make them work in groups. The goal was to instill a problem-solving attitude. More often than not she would end up telling them, "Stop giving me the 99 ways it can't happen; give me the one way it will."

These days, when recruiting for her own small consulting firm, she looks for a particular type of worker – Indians who have studied in America. "They are able to better understand what it takes to work in a start-up," she says.

What Indian employers are searching for looks a lot like what American education excels at. And what Indian higher education needs is something America produces in abundance: professors.

Eric Saranovitz was an American scholar comfortably teaching at various colleges in the Midwestern United States when he decided he'd like to try something different – something more urban. So the international communications professor made a bold move: Rather than take another job in a place like Des Moines, he went to Delhi, to head a new media studies institute called the 9.9 School of Convergence.

His students, graduates of Indian college programs, had little exposure to any subjects outside their degree and no practice applying or connecting what they learned. It unnerved a professor whose style was to jump between disciplines like art, film, and journalism. "I used to think of creative thinking as the ability to create something from nothing," says Dr. Saranovitz. "Now, after working with their students, I realize that creative thinking is taking two elements and understanding the connections between these two elements."

For decades, bright students and faculty from India have gone to the US to study and teach but relatively few Americans have come here. Saranovitz is one of the few to make the reverse journey. Differences in culture and compensation are two major reasons.

"With kids here, it's been a real strain in terms of finances," says Saranovitz, the associate dean of the School of Convergence (where this reporter taught a course for one semester). Time abroad also interrupts efforts to get tenure in the US, and the challenges inside and outside the classroom in India are different – and daunting. "I can't see this mass exodus of Americans going abroad," he says. "And if I hadn't lived in Israel, I don't know how well I would have adjusted to here."

Yet Indian universities, by most accounts, need just the kind of problem-solving and innovation that is a hallmark of American schools. Saranovitz puts much of the blame for the roteness here on university regulatory boards.

"Eighty percent of the curriculum is decided by these boards and that curriculum hasn't changed since the 1970s," he says. The faculty and the students work off decade-old class notes. "The professors have no incentive to teach anything new, and there's no reason to go to class."

Instead, most students do nothing until the final weeks when they memorize the notes for final exams, which are also set by the boards. He noticed no real difference between students coming out of full-time university programs and those from distance programs like Oceanic. While India has increased funding for PhD students in order to bring

on new faculty, Saranovitz worries that will just result in more of the same kind of teaching.

To get more Americans to teach here, Saranovitz suggests that US universities start by encouraging faculty to come for six-month sabbaticals and other exchange programs. US schools are already thinking that way. Many rule out setting up satellite campuses or even joint degree programs the way they have in the Middle East, where the initiatives have been bankrolled by oil-rich governments. No such funding is forthcoming in India.

"We would certainly have no presumption that there was something we could do here on our own," said Jack DeGioia, president of Georgetown University in Washington D.C., on a recent visit to New Delhi. "I do think the model of partnership is going to be the defining model."

Western partnerships have helped establish the credibility of pioneering private schools that operate outside India's burdensome accreditation. ISB got a boost from ties to the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., and with the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

Many would like to see more US students studying in India, too. On a recent visit to New Delhi, Michael McRobbie, president of Indiana University, touted his success at getting more American students to study abroad. But he bemoaned how most focus on Europe rather than Asia.

More cross-cultural education may be just what is needed to help solve the pressing problems of the future. As Sibal, India's human resources minister, put it in his recent speech: "Nations are defined by boundaries, but in the 21st century nations will have to transcend them in thought and action for sustainable and affordable solutions. Food security, global warming, and the environment; demands on energy, water; security in physical and virtual spaces; health care are all matters that we need to address together."

Source: January 16, 2012/[Alaska dispatch](#)

President DeGioia enthusiastic about University's initiatives in India

In his semesterly interview with campus media last week, President *John DeGioia* discussed the growth of Georgetown's connections in India and his optimistic vision for the future of the University's initiatives there.

In 2009, Kapil Sibal, the Indian Minister of Human Resources and Development, visited Georgetown, participating in a two-hour workshop and delivering a speech. During the same trip he also visited other elite American universities, including Yale.

According to DeGioia, ties with foreign universities are essential for India's further economic growth:

Part of the challenge for India is they simply don't have enough higher education infrastructure. If you look at some of their recent reports, they may need as many as 600 new universities to meet the demand now to be able to accomplish what the Chinese have done in the last generation in this next generation in India which is essentially to double the level of college attendance. They have a very strong need for infrastructure, and they're trying to encourage institutions who have a history of delivering higher education to consider coming in and doing some of that, helping the Indian government move forward in building that infrastructure.

In November 2010, DeGioia delivered the keynote address at a higher education summit held in Delhi by the Indian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. That visit led to two of the defining aspects of the University's expanding initiatives in India. At the summit, DeGioia first learned of high-level plans for a US-India Higher Education Summit. After lengthy talks with the State Department, Georgetown hosted that summit in October. Sibal and Secretary of State *Hillary Clinton* opened the summit with [speeches](#) in Gaston Hall.

The 2009 Delhi summit also inspired the administration to pursue connections with India's Jesuit educational institutions as a jumping-off point for Georgetown in India:

While there, we had an opportunity with a number of leaders across the higher education sector, just trying to understand the need, the opportunity, what might make sense for Georgetown. What we also learned is that there are eighteen Jesuit colleges, about 150 or so Jesuit high schools- all of them are among the best in the country. And so for Georgetown and India right now, what we're thinking of is how might we be able to cooperate or collaborate with one or two of those institutions, of the Jesuit colleges, to learn how to work in India and to see what it would be like to create opportunities for students and faculty in India.

DeGioia also suggested that SFS-Qatar would play a significant role in the University's collaborations in India:

Delhi, where we've been working most, New Delhi in particular, is about a three-hour plane flight from Doha. So we're seeing a strong potential collaboration between our campus in Doha and the opportunities in India. And we'll just see how those play out over time.

Source: January 2012/[Blog George Town Voice](#)

Shorten degree courses to two years

There is no reason why we should ape the West by stretching our educational courses beyond a reasonable period. We are unnecessarily adding time and expense to education. This is as true of pre-school training as it is of college education

Education is becoming expensive, time-consuming and cumbersome, and possibly a minefield of unscrupulous activities. Schools, according to an Assocham survey, earn Rs 1,200 crore through the sales of forms in Delhi alone. All over the nation they extort a few trillion rupees from aspiring parents for a three-year unnecessary pre-schooling.

Systematically, a nation which does not find enough funds to ensure primary education is trying to make education more cumbersome. The desire for good education has led to the introduction of pre-schooling for three years so that parents could prepare their children for a 'good' school. The fee per child per month varies from Rs 1,000 to Rs 5,000, though in most cases teachers are paid a paltry Rs 1,500 to Rs 3,000 a month. It provides an immense earning opportunity for those setting up such schools.

Now the Planning Commission has come out with an idea, vigorously being pursued by Delhi University, for increasing the duration of the bachelor's degree to four years from the present three on the specious argument that this would increase employability.

How it would do that, no one has answered except saying that one extra year invested in the university — mostly that would be internships, often unpaid — would help students specialise in some area.

The Education Policy of 1968, which recommended three-year degree courses, had given similar arguments for scrapping the two-year bachelor courses. Universities in Delhi and Calcutta were the first to opt for it. It did not help the students. They found that the curriculum studied in two years had been stretched to three.

Neither were those who had obtained their degrees in two years less smart nor were those who got their degrees in three years extraordinary.

Policy planners stretched the duration of obtaining degree by one year and successfully put off the number of job seekers that much longer.

They quietly increased the cost of obtaining the degree by one third. There was little faculty addition. Facilities remained all these 40 years at abysmal levels and quality did not improve. Many

aver that it has led to reduction in teaching quality in many cases and increased investment.

It only means that a two-year degree course is as good as a three-year one. Then why did this nation go for a three-year course? The US and Europe had given up the two-year degree under pressure from the education lobbies, which had got into private business hands. India wanted to 'integrate' with the West.

Now, again, the private businesses and universities in the West have started four-year bachelor's courses to add to their coffers. India is opening up higher education to foreign businesses. The longer the duration of courses the more profitable it is for these businesses.

In fact, the lobbying for four-year courses has come at a time when, some of the Government universities in the US like Texas Tech University have introduced a medical degree that students will be able to complete in three years, rather than the usual four.

Union Minister for Health Ghulam Nabi Azad also plans to introduce it in India for the rural health sector. The arguments of the Texas University and Mr Azad are the same — the nation faces a shortage of primary-care physicians, and medical educators. In the US, as in India, medical students graduate with debts averaging \$1,56,000. In India it varies from four lakh rupees to seven lakh rupees.

And who is opposing it? The private doctors' body — Indian Medical Association.

Mr Azad and Texas University understand that durations are not important but what can be imparted in the shortest possible time matters more.

This is a case for considering how to reduce the duration of higher education, which is being stretched for no valid reasons except one that suits the businesses.

Adding each year to one's education is an expensive proposition for those aspiring to get degrees.

The nation is not calculating money wasted in such thoughtless addition to number of years spent at universities or institutions of higher education.

India does not have enormous funds to invest in education. It has to look for opportunities to reduce the duration. Such cut in time-frame is possible as the syllabus in almost all subjects is loosely tailored.

In subjects like journalism, UGC is insisting on two-year post graduation, while at many universities it is a one-year course and it should be so. The country has to reduce the PG course as a practice to one year.

Thus with a two-year bachelor's and one year of PG, higher education in 95 cent of subjects can be completed in three years — a saving of two years and billions of rupees.

Similarly, pre-schooling should mandatorily be fixed at one year. After three years, they learn the same when children reach grade one. India need not go by the practices in the West. The West is suffering today for such extravagance.

India has got the opportunity to look at the issue afresh and make education cost effective. The world is going through a severe monetary and financial crisis. India can take the lead in showing that the best could be provided in a shorter time-frame.

Schools and universities should be seen as sacred places. Whether it is Government or private, money has to be spent sparingly. After all, schools and colleges are not for profiteering.

Source: January 17, 2012/[Daily Pioneer](#)

Brick in the wall

Three reports in three months paint a grim picture of school education in India. First, a leading corporate published the Quality Education Survey on high-end schools in metropolitan cities, which found them lacking on quality parameters and indicted them for excessive reliance on rote learning. Second, the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment ranked Indian higher secondary students only better than those from [Kyrgyzstan](#) among 74 participating countries. And third, Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2011, assessing schools in rural India, found declining attendance, over-reliance on private tuitions and declining reading and mathematical abilities of children in the six to 14 years age category.

Taken together, the three reports make it amply clear that despite a welcome high enrolment rate - around 96.7% - at the primary and upper primary levels, the quality of school learning is simply not up to the mark. Most government schools lack basic infrastructure such as blackboards and textbooks. Teaching standards are poor, with high teacher absenteeism. It is little wonder then that only 48.2% of class V students surveyed under ASER were able to read class II-level texts, among other depressing statistics.

Unless school education is rescued from this quagmire of mediocrity, all talk about developing a skilled human resource pool and realising the country's demographic dividend will be without substance. In this regard, the Right To Education (RTE) Act, with its objective of providing free and

compulsory education to all primary schoolchildren, misses the quality issue. Two years after the RTE's introduction, government schools have continued to wallow in pathetic conditions. Meanwhile, by imposing strict parameters on private schools, the RTE has squeezed the few entrepreneurs engaged in this field, disincentivising further investment.

There is no denying that in the quest for universal education the public sector must take the lead. Private schools can only play a supporting role, and that too needs to be incentivised. Issues of quality can only be addressed by raising the standards of public schools. This can be done by ensuring they have enough resources and introducing better pedagogy as well as oversight of teaching staff, so that pay and promotions are linked to performance. It's an administrative rather than legislative issue. The human resources ministry as well as education departments of states can't duck their responsibility.

Source: January 18, 2012/[Times of India](#)

Should we subsidize higher education? A response to Jeff Sachs

Willy Oppenheim is a doctoral student in the Education department at Oxford University, and the founder and director of [Omprakash](#). Willy's research has included fieldwork-based projects in Tibet and India, and archival projects focused on Brazil and South Africa. His current research concerns the demand for girls' education in rural Pakistan.

In [Monday's podcast](#), Professor Sachs makes a valuable effort to avoid two extremes that have become prevalent in today's popular explanations of our economic woes: either that we need 'less' government, and that we should cut taxes, entitlements, and regulation, or that we need 'more' government, at least in the critical areas that matter to the so-called 99%. Sachs suggests that both positions are oversimplified and that the critical question is not 'if' government should intervene in market processes, but rather what forms this necessary interaction should assume. However, Sachs himself might be guilty of oversimplifying certain aspects of this question, and I want to highlight one particular aspect today.

Around the 30 minute mark of the episode, Professor Sachs cites some startling numbers about access to higher education in America, and he convincingly shows that bachelor's degree attainment rates are unequally distributed between white and non-white populations. Echoing a common grievance of the Occupy movement, Sachs implies that smarter government spending would include interventions in the market for higher education so that post-secondary degrees become

more accessible and affordable for everyday Americans. Later, around the 35 minute mark, Sachs adds that manufacturers in the United States are “crying out” for skilled workers but that few can be found. The solution seems so simple: more government investment in higher education would mean more jobs for more Americans and more prosperity for all. This basic assumption of human capital theory has driven government investments in education around the world for decades, so one can hardly fault Sachs for referencing it in the podcast. However, like most neat theories, it happens to be grossly oversimplified.

There should be no question of whether or not we should worry about the discrepancies in educational attainment between white and non-white Americans, or between Americans from high-income and low-income families: we should. Likewise, there should be no question of whether or not governments should work to improve the relevant skills and knowledge of their future labor forces: they should. However, acknowledging these points is not the same as arguing that it makes sense for governments to directly subsidize the costs of conventional higher education.

First of all, abundant research suggests that investments in education produce higher social returns when directed towards lower levels of education — even all the way down to early childhood education (e.g., the American federal Head Start program). Such research doesn't in itself rule out the logic of investing in higher education, but it does suggest that investing in higher education probably won't be the most effective way to address the achievement gaps that Sachs references.

Secondly, and more to the point: recent research has shown that the relationship between skills, knowledge, and jobs is more complex than we tend to imagine. [Numerous publications by Oxford University's SKOPE institute](#) have shown that the United Kingdom government's efforts to promote skill acquisition through investments in higher education have resulted in a relative over-supply of skills and a lack of demand from companies for more skilled (and therefore more expensive) workers. Some economists and academics in America have begun to worry about 'degree inflation' and the decreasing value of a bachelor's degree — or even a master's degree — in today's labor market. Some even argue that *too many* Americans go to college and that they would be better off pursuing less conventional forms of skill acquisition and avoiding the burden of student debt. An interesting debate on the topic, along

with a number of related articles, can be found at [Intelligence Squared](#).

So, what's my position? How about this: rather than intervening in the education/labor market by incentivizing young Americans to sacrifice time, money, and credit for a degree that employers may or may not actually value, what if the government instead created more incentives for employers to train high school graduates (or even high school students) through programs such as apprenticeships and internships? This sort of initiative is a far cry from the sort of hands-off, 'trickle-down' logic of Reaganomics that Sachs rightly delegitimizes, but it can also be distinguished from the interventionist 'handouts' that conservatives love to hate.

While I share Sachs' sentiment that unequal access to educational opportunities in America is a burden on our economy and an ugly contradiction to our meritocratic ideals, I think that the road towards greater equality and prosperity will demand more than simple investments in educational infrastructure. If indeed it is true that manufacturers in America are crying out for more skilled workers, I would ask how we can get those firms involved in the process of creating the educated workforce that they seek.

Source: January 19, 2012/[Sense and Sensibility](#)

A renaissance in Indian science

India needs to liberalize higher education, introduce competition across industry sectors and evolve a coherent defence spending strategy to have a renaissance in science

At the recently concluded 99th Indian Science Congress in Bhubaneswar, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh lamented the decline of India's scientific prowess relative to China and other nations, while listing several of the government's initiatives to promote research and development. The press caught on to the comparison with China and largely ignored the achievements that the Prime Minister tried to draw attention to.

Scientific research and technological innovation form the bedrock on which nations build competitive economic strength in the globalized world. Research and innovation are also well-documented as engines of productive employment-generation and wealth-creation. Indeed, scientific research should have the mandate to create jobs and wealth for broader society. Moreover, scientific prowess is fundamental to national security and defence readiness - not only does it help in developing defense capacity indigenously, advanced military technology is imperative for India to play a meaningful role world affairs and to be secure given its antagonistic

neighbors. In international relations, one is well advised to talk softly but carry a big stick.

In this sense, India's national scientific strength is linked to and aligned with policies in the spheres of education and defense too. A nation's capacity for scientific research and development (R&D) is tied closely to its higher education and research infrastructure. Without high-quality research institutions and the people to lead them, it's impossible to have world-class research output. Manmohan Singh also claimed that Indian industry needs to dramatically increase research spending if India is to move towards spending 2% of gross domestic product (GDP) on R&D. It is true that India Inc can invest more in research - the Prime Minister can create incentives for the same by introducing more competition. Large sectors of India's economy, such as power, mining, transportation, oil and gas, aerospace and defense could easily absorb substantially more private sector participation and increased competition. Many of these sectors are off limits to competition and are government-mandated monopolies or oligopolies. When firms have to compete for customers and profits, they are forced to innovate, and hence invest in R&D.

Manmohan Singh's seven-plus year tenure as Prime Minister stands in marked contrast to other administrations - unlike others, he entered office when optimism was high and people looked to the future with firm expectations of a new India in the new century. India's economy was poised for takeoff on the back of over a decade of continued economic reforms. An average GDP growth rate of around 8% since 2004 helped tax revenues almost double to nearly Rs. 12 trillion for 2009-10. No government in the history of independent India has enjoyed such a financial bounty - most have had to deal with severe economic scarcity. It is in this background that the government's record must be judged.

The UPA government's policies in the areas of education and defence have hardly been beneficiaries of this abundance of capital in the treasury. Arjun Singh, HRD Minister in UPA 1, busied himself with increasing student quotas in central educational institutions. Where the debate should have been about capacity expansion so that there is enough opportunity for all sections of society, Manmohan Singh presided over the rationing of existing capacity first on the basis of caste, and more recently on the basis of religion, disregarding merit and capability. Ad hoc creation of new IITs is damaging their brand - no less an authority than C.N.R. Rao, chairman of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Council and one of

India's most distinguished scientists, has strongly criticized this policy. The reality is that without deregulating higher education and building privately-operated universities, India will never be able to meet domestic demand for higher education.

More recently, UPA 2 put forth the Right to Education (RTE) Act under the new HRD Minister Kapil Sibal. Besides enforcing quotas in private schools, RTE has put such draconian restrictions and regulations that many private schools will be forced shut. Study after independent study has shown how India's poorest have rejected government schools and choose to enroll their children in private schools - but the government has ignored them all and enacted laws that hurt the poor the most. Separate from RTE, Kapil Sibal has tried to offer affordable computing to the poor by pouring public funds into the creation of a low-cost tablet computer, which recently failed conclusively in its first field trial. Despite consumer rejection of their misconceived pet project, the Minister and his bureaucrats have gone back to the drawing board, vowing to return with a better tablet by April. Does the government care about learning outcomes or is it simply too short-sighted to realize the grave damage its flawed priorities are causing by denying basic schooling to millions of children?

With millions of our citizens either denied access to effective schooling or divided on identity when entering universities, can we nurture the human capital needed to lead in science?

There is evidence to suggest that investment in defense research can spur scientific and technological advancement. In the United States, 55% of federal R&D spending goes to the Department of Defense, which has been a pioneer of several technologies born from scientific research that have had substantial impact outside of the defence sector. The Internet and GPS navigation are two such technologies.

Integration and cooperation between universities, research institutions and private industry can dramatically grow the pie and multiply quality output manifold. India never really had the money to make large investments and purchases for national security until recently, but it is time now that the research activities of existing institutions such as Defence Research & Development Organization (DRDO) are reformed. Recent research that DRDO has tried to commercialize include mosquito repellents, a spray that can keep clothes moth-free, body creams to keep away bugs, a high altitude toilet that was 15 years in the making, and a new fabric for bras. Clearly, India needs to rethink its defence research priorities.

China has managed to build scientific strength because it has made thoughtful and substantial investments in building universities and defense capacity. For India to witness a renaissance in science, it will also have to encourage symbiosis between defense spending, educational and research institutions, and private industry. Without such a holistic approach, comparisons with China will prove to be facile, and India's tremendous potential to be a world-leader in science and technology will not be realized.

Source: January 19, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

Education System of India: Its Functions, Drawbacks and Its Contribution

Why is [India](#) still a developing country and what is stopping it from being a developed country? This particular question strikes me every time when I [read](#) something about India's [education system](#). I see India's education system as a stumbling block towards its objectives of achieving inclusive growth.

Let me inform you about certain startling facts. India is going to experience a paradox of nearly 90 million people joining the workforce but most of them will lack requisite skills and the mindset for productive [employment](#) according to a report in DNA. India has about 550 million people under the age of 25 years out of which only 11% are enrolled in tertiary institutions compared to the world average of 23%.

I wouldn't be laying too much emphasis on the drawbacks of India's public education system because it has been an issue well debated over in the past and the main flaws have already been pointed out before. I will be focussing on how the education system's failure is leading to another social issue of income inequality and hence, suggest certain policies to improve India's education system and reduce inequality.

The really critical aspect of Indian public education system is its low quality. The actual quantity of schooling that children experience and the quality of teaching they receive are extremely insufficient in [government schools](#). A common feature in all government schools is the [poor](#) quality of education, with weak infrastructure and inadequate pedagogic attention.

What the government is not realising right now is that education which is a source of human capital can create wide income inequalities. It will be surprising to see how income inequalities are created within the same group of educated people. Let me illustrate this with the help of an example:

Let us take P be an individual who has had no primary or higher education. His human capital is zero and hence it bears no returns. Let Q be an individual who completed his MBA from S.P Jain college and let R be an individual who completed his MBA from IIM Ahmadabad. The average rate of return for an MBA student is 7.5% (hypothetical). Q gets a rate of return of 5% and R gets a rate of return of 10% due to the difference in the reputation and quality of the management school. Let the income of P, Q and R be 1. In a period of 10 years, P will be having the same income as he does not possess human capital. For the same time period Q will earn an income of $(1+0.05)^{10}=1.63$ and R will earn an income of $(1+0.10)^{10}=2.59$. Now lets see what happens when the rate of return on human capital doubles. Earnings of P will not change since he does not have any human capital. Now Q is going to earn $(1+0.10)^{10}=1.63$ and R is going to earn $(1+0.20)^{10}=6.19$. Flabbergasting! As soon as return on human capital increases proportionately income inequality increases. With return on human capital doubling, Q'S income increases by 59% and R's income increases by 139%.

The above example just shows the effect of the quality of human capital n income inequality. So if the government does not improve education system particularly in rural areas the rich will become richer and the poor will get poorer.

Hence, it is imperative for the government to correct the blemishes in India's education system which will also be a step towards reducing income inequality.

Certain policy measures need to be taken by the government. The basic thrust of government education spending today must surely be to ensure that all children have access to government schools and to raise the quality of education in those schools. One of the ways in which the problem of poor quality of education can be tackled is through common schooling. This essentially means sharing of resources between private and public schools. Shift system is one of the ways through which common schooling can be achieved. The private school can use the resources during the first half of the day and the government school can use it during the second half. It is important to remember that the quality of education is directly linked to the resources available and it is important for the government to improve resource allocation to bring about qualitative changes in the field of education. Common schooling is one of the ways in which government can use limited resources in an efficient way and thus improve resource allocation.

Another reason for poor quality of education is the poor quality of teachers in government schools. Government schools are unable to attract good quality teachers due to inadequate teaching facilities and low salaries. The government currently spends only 3% of its GDP on education which is inadequate and insufficient. To improve the quality of education, the government needs to spend more money from its coffers on education.

Most economists feel that the only panacea to the ills of the public schooling system is the voucher scheme. Under the voucher system, parents are allowed to choose a school for their children and they get full or partial reimbursement for the expenses from the government. But however, the voucher system will further aggravate the problem of poor quality of education in government schools. Such a system will shift resources from government schools to private schools. This will worsen the situation of government schools which are already under-funded. Moreover, if the same amount given as vouchers can be used to build infrastructure in schools then the government can realize economies of scale. For example- The centre for civil society is providing vouchers worth Rs 4000 per annum to 308 girls. This means that the total amount of money given as vouchers is Rs 1232000. If the same amount can be used to construct a school and employ high quality teachers who are paid well then a larger section of the society will enjoy the benefit of education. A school can definitely accommodate a minimum of 1000 students.

I hope government takes certain appropriate policy measures to improve the education system otherwise inequalities are going to be widespread and India's basic capabilities will remain stunted. Let us strengthen the case for a stronger education system.

Source: January 19, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

Harvard's Indian Connection

In Mumbai, the university's president makes her case for liberal arts and notes the role of Indians on her campus.

On her first visit to India, the president of Harvard University addressed several hundred people at a lunch at the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower hotel in Mumbai on Thursday, evoking an Indian cricketer, a poet and myriad national leaders in describing the increased relevance of a liberal arts education today — and the huge role students and administrators from the subcontinent play in her academic institution.

Drew Gilpin Faust, the university's president since 2007, said students from India now comprise the

fourth largest group of any country in the world—the top three being China, South Korea and Canada, although it wasn't clear it was necessarily in that order. There are currently 225 students from India enrolled at Harvard, she said.

India and the U.S. have a lot in common, she said, because, "we value unity in diversity." She went on to say that both countries "value the education of our children as a foundation of civil life and opportunity."

Ms. Faust, who is the first female president of Harvard, was introduced by Nita Ambani, wife of one of India's richest men, Mukesh Ambani, chairman of Indian energy and petrochemicals giant Reliance Industries Ltd. Ms. Ambani founded one of Mumbai's top private schools, the Dhirubhai Ambani International School, and runs many other schools. She is also a board member of the Asia Society India Center, which hosted the event.

In addition to comprising a large part of the student body, Indians also play a big role in the college administration, Ms. Faust said, noting that she appointed Nitin Nohria, the Indian native who is dean of the Harvard Business School. She said two other senior administrators were of Indian origin.

In a wide-ranging speech lapped up by the audience, many of whom praised her eloquence as a prelude to their questions, Ms. Faust argued that education was more vital than ever before in this fast-changing, knowledge-based world.

"Knowledge has become the primary driver of social mobility," she said.

In trying to keep up with changing technology and rapid globalization, universities should not forget the importance of "free roaming discussions" and of arts and humanities to developing creativity and imagination, she said.

She quoted Steve Jobs who described the magical place that existed at the intersection of technology and liberal arts. Seizing every moment to add an Indian connection to the discussion, she added that Anand Mahindra, head of the Indian conglomerate Mahindra Group, "understands that intersection Jobs described," noting that Mr. Mahindra was a student of film as an undergraduate at Harvard. Mr. Mahindra donated \$10 million to Harvard a couple years ago.

To help countries solve problems creatively, a liberal arts education was more important than ever before, she said, so people "understand not just the measure of things but their meaning."

But in response to a question, she also said the challenge for liberal arts institutions was to find a way to make the education more affordable. U.S.

students are about a trillion dollars in debt to institutions of higher education, she said.

A professor of American history, Ms. Faust seemed exceedingly well-prepared for her speech. Not only did it include quotations from cricketer Rahul Dravid, poet Rabindranath Tagore and the country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, but she also referenced the movies "Lagaan" and "3 Idiots."

Source: January 20, 2012/[Blog Wall Street Journal](#)

The fading dream of higher education in the US

Once an engine of social mobility, higher education in the US now signifies debt and lack of opportunity

New York, NY - It seems fitting that some of the activity inaugurated by the Occupy Wall Street movement migrated from city squares to college campuses, where students, from Berkeley to the City University of New York (CUNY), are protesting against the rising cost of their educations. Undeterred by pepper spray or police batons, they struggle to preserve the evanescent American dream of a top-flight affordable college education available to all. But, unless there are major transformations within academe and the rest of society, they may be fighting a losing battle.

Just as the frontier once allowed an enterprising individual to get ahead (or so the story went), by the middle of the 20th century, higher education had become the main engine of social mobility in the United States. A college degree, it was believed, would boost its holders into the middle class and then keep them and their children there. Recently, however, as the US economy turned sour, that promise no longer holds. Not only have rising tuitions and unmanageable student debt threatened to put a first-rate higher education out of reach for many of the 99 per cent, but it has also become harder for graduates to enter the well-paying careers they went to college for.

The economic insecurities that have blasted so many students' hopes did not originate on campus. They stem in large part from the ascendance of a neoliberal polity that worships the corporate sector and seeks to shrink the state. Businesses pursue the bottom line by shedding jobs, while demanding lower taxes and fewer regulations. The very concept of a common good, of a system that nurtures citizenship and offers all in the US the benefits the market does not provide, has lost its meaning.

In response, higher education has also abandoned the common good. Most in the US now view it solely from a narrowly economic perspective.

Vocational training has replaced the liberal arts, while administrators strive to make their campuses engines of economic growth, rather than sites for intellectual experimentation and meaningful cultural encounters. Of course, graduates need to earn a living, but they also need to have a life worth living. And adapting colleges and universities to today's profit-driven environment imposes financial and educational costs that may simply be too high - for students, for the academy and for that elusive common good.

The current fiscal crisis only exacerbates a bad situation. Public institutions of higher learning, which educate 80 per cent of the nation's graduate and undergraduate students, have been in trouble for years. State legislatures that once proudly funded their local colleges and universities now have cut way back. Even well-endowed private schools are feeling the pinch. As a result, the academy scrambles for every penny it can get. Administrators adopt corporate practices - patenting faculty research, licensing the logos of winning teams, building office parks on university property and, of course, raising tuitions and fees.

Higher costs, lower quality

Where one could once get a BA for free at the New York City municipal colleges, it will soon cost nearly US \$7,000 a year. Nor is CUNY unique. Almost every college and university has imposed similarly steep increases in its tuition and fees. Not only that, but because they rely so heavily on student dollars, those institutions are engaged in a brutal competition for warm tuition-paying bodies.

Much of that competition consists of what one observer has called an "amenities arms race". Schools now build elaborate fitness centres, gourmet dining halls and state-of-the-art computer facilities. Others invest in faculty stars and applicants with high SAT scores to gain an edge in the all-important US News and World Report rankings. They also tailor their curricula to the demand for vocational programmes that may or may not prepare graduates for the careers that will let them repay their student loans.

Worse yet, the long-term impact of the academy's financial crisis has not only made higher education increasingly unaffordable, but has also impaired its quality. Students and their families now pay more for an inferior product. No wonder graduation rates are low.

That situation - higher costs, lower quality - has created a weird love-hate relationship between the US public and the academy. More than ever, higher education is perceived as crucial for both national and individual success, yet its apparent inability to

deliver the goods occasions considerable hand wringing, as well as demands for accountability. Most of the time, however, those who deplore the decline of the university pick the wrong targets. Instead of recognising that the same political and ideological configuration that defunded the public sector and forced schools to raise tuitions also undermines the educational experience, critics of the university blame the faculty for everything that's wrong on the nation's campuses.

Admittedly, professors are not angels, but they are hardly the demonised individuals the current scenario depicts. For several decades now, a concerted campaign by conservative pundits and politicians has managed to convince the public that US academics are tenured radicals who indoctrinate their students, conduct arcane research and only work 12 hours a week. Of course, the nation's faculties do contain a few deadbeats, ideologues and careerists who brush off their classes, but most college and university teachers are responsible professionals who strive to provide the best possible education for their students - if only they had the resources to do so.

But they don't - at least most of them don't.

Stressed public sector

The great economic divide that has pushed so many ordinary citizens to the margins exists within the academic world as well. The top-tier public and private research universities and liberal arts colleges still provide financial security and satisfying work to their faculties, while offering their students a potentially rich educational experience - as well as entree into elite careers. That they also occasionally provide social mobility - as the ascent of the current US president via Hawaii's best prep school, Columbia University, and Harvard Law School indicates - is the window-dressing that legitimises the myth of educational opportunity. The reality is quite different; higher education has become a highly stratified system that rewards those individuals and institutions with the resources to game it.

Within the increasingly stressed public sector, flagship universities can still replace the loss of state funding with research grants, private gifts and higher out-of-state tuitions. The less prestigious second- and third-tier public institutions and community colleges that harbour most of the nation's undergraduates have fewer options and so are forced to perform major surgery on their core academic functions - while also raising tuitions. There is a similar polarisation within the private sector, not to mention the for-profit institutions that all too often train their students for non-

existent jobs while leaving them with unpayable debts.

But elite or proletarian, all schools are cutting costs and doing so in ways that affect educational quality and create obstacles to the kind of personal attention that encourages intellectual growth - and keeps students from dropping out. Programmes are eliminated and classes are enlarged, that is, if they are not cancelled, a practice that makes it hard for students to fulfill their graduation requirements.

The most serious problem, however, is the hollowing out of the faculty through the substitution of part-time and temporary instructors for full-time tenured and tenure-track ones. At the moment, more than 70 per cent of all faculty members in US institutions of higher learning hold contingent appointments that are off the tenure track.

"At the moment, more than 70 per cent of all faculty members in US institutions of higher learning hold contingent appointments that are off the tenure track."

The stereotypical professor with a lifetime sinecure is a dying breed on all but the nation's most affluent campuses (and, even at those schools, graduate students or temporary instructors do much of the teaching). While they are often as gifted and well-qualified as their tenured and tenure-track colleagues, the men and (mostly) women with part-time and short-term appointments work under such unfavourable conditions that they cannot always offer a comparable education.

To begin with, they have no job security or academic freedom. They are often hired at the last minute and can be let go at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. In addition, they are so poorly paid - sometimes less than \$2,000 a course - that they must often teach at several institutions simply to pay the rent. Moreover, unless they are represented by a union, they rarely have benefits, let alone the professional support that enables them to conduct research or publish it. Often they lack offices and must meet their students - if they have the time between commutes - in cafeterias or their own parked cars.

Faculty members not invested

Their students suffer, especially in classes such as freshman composition or remedial math where individual attention can be crucial. The lack of continuity is another drawback, one that affects students who need recommendations and discover that their favourite teachers are no longer around. And, because hiring decisions are often based on student evaluations, adjuncts and temporary instructors are under pressure not to upset their students with controversial material or give them

bad grades. Such problems are especially rife at schools where administrators seek to improve graduation rates by easing up on the rigour of their programmes.

As the percentage of non-tenure-track instructors increases, traditional faculty members find themselves increasingly burdened by the administrative chores that people with contingent appointments do not handle. In many cases, those chores end up in the hands of administrators whose ranks have increased so rapidly that there are now more administrative staff members than instructional ones. That's right, more administrators than faculty members.

And unlike earlier generations of administrators who rose from and returned to the faculty's ranks, today's do not necessarily have an academic background. All too often, they operate in a universe where corporate-style decision-making short-changes educational priorities.

Faculty members who, after all, have made a lifetime commitment to higher education are shunted aside - especially if their fields have little connection to the market - while their business-oriented superiors follow the latest fads by adding or eliminating programs that, they hope, will save money or promote the growth of their institutions.

Such practices can lead to disaster, as the following example from a California State University campus illustrates. Several years ago, the administration decided to replace the classroom-based freshman remedial mathematics course with a computerised online programme. It dismissed the temporary instructors who had been handling the 40-person sections and put the entire course of 400 undergraduates in the hands of a single non-tenure-track faculty member. The outcome could have been predicted: whereas about 70 per cent of the students had previously passed the course, only about 45 per cent made it through the online version.

Perhaps the time has come to rethink the basic function of higher education. Vocationalising it may not work, especially in an economy where most people will change their careers several times during their lifetimes.

Perhaps, we need to jettison the short-term business model and concentrate, instead, on the long haul and on restoring a commitment to the common good that will help students understand themselves and the ever-changing world they live in. Such a reform will require reinvesting in the academy's core educational functions, but it may also be the only way to create the educated and

competent citizens upon whom our faltering democratic polity depends.

Source: January 20, 2012/[Aljazeera](#)

Fill in the blanks

We have got to pick up the pace...because the world has gotten competitive. The Chinese, the Indians, they are coming at us and they're coming at us hard...Their kids watch a lot less TV than our kids do, play a lot fewer video games, they are in the classroom a lot longer."

While Barack Obama's oft-quoted speech was met with thundering applause by the people of Wisconsin, three recent reports on the quality of education in India can set some of his fears at rest when it comes to competing with India. He might want to focus his energies on China instead.

The results of the Programme For International Student Assessment (Pisa), which tests 15-year-olds from 74 countries/provinces, shows that while [Shanghai](#) ranks No. 1 in reading, science literacy and math, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh are at the bottom, better only than Kyrgyzstan. In science, [Kyrgyzstan](#) beats Himachal.

While it's debatable whether Shanghai alone represents China, there's little doubt that China beats India on the education front. "It is surely rather silly to be obsessed about India's overtaking China in the rate of growth of GNP, while not comparing India with China in other respects, like education, basic health, or life expectancy... The mean years of schooling in India were estimated to be 4.4 years, compared with 7.5 years in China. China's adult literacy rate is 94%, compared with India's 74%," writes economist [Amartya Sen](#) in *The New York Review of Books*.

And yet we pride ourselves on our education system every time an Indian student wins America's Spelling Bee, or an IITian excels in the US. Former NCERT chairperson Krishna Kumar calls this the Lotus Syndrome - we admire the lotus but ignore the mud around it.

While the UN's latest Human Development Report shows that China's expenditure on education as percentage of GDP is actually lower than India's, Vinod Raina, an architect of India's Right to Education (RTE) Act, says that China achieved universal education long ago, and has met most of its infrastructural needs. "But India has a shortage of 1.5 million teachers and several gaps in its education infrastructure," he says.

And yet, an [OECD](#) research paper shows a decline in public spending on education as percentage of GDP (See box). "While the cabinet clearance works out to Rs 48,000 crore annually for the RTE, the Centre

has given only Rs 21,000 crore for 2011-12, a crucial year for RTE implementation. While we can expect another Rs 7 crore from states, this is much lower than the sanctioned amount," says Raina.

The RTE itself was in danger of being shelved a few years ago. It was only when a mid-census correction reduced child population by six million, drastically reducing the budget for RTE, that the government resurrected the law.

But higher expenditure alone may not improve learning. "A large amount allocated for education is left unspent," says R Govinda, vicechancellor of the National University of Education, Planning and Assessment, adding that the one thing government should spend on is teacher education. Of 7.5 lakh candidates who appeared for CBSE's all-India teacher recruitment test, only 93,000 passed.

Maharashtra's former education secretary Sumit Mullick, who introduced baseline tests in state schools five years ago, believes in holding teachers responsible for the way children perform. He feels assessment results should be computerized so that they are accessible across the country.

While Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is credited with increasing enrolment, S Parasuraman, director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, blames it for lowering educational standards and allowing ill-trained teachers to run poorly equipped schools.

"If teachers don't teach, how will students learn? Nobody, from parents to the private sector, is interested in teaching. People only want to push children from one class to the next and ensure they score well," says Govinda.

Raina also points out that many children have learning problems as the language they speak at home is different from the one in the textbooks. "Even in the Hindi belt, there are 37 variations of the language which are different from what's in the textbook," says Raina. He says there should be a bridging programme, where the native language and the one followed in schools are allowed to co-exist in the classroom for a period of time.

Meanwhile, NGO Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report (Aser) shows that nearly 47% Class V students cannot read Class II texts, while over 63% of Class III students cannot subtract.

Source: January 22, 2012/[Times of India](http://timesofindia.com)

Need to reshape education: Azim Premji

Azim Premji, chairman of Wipro Ltd, believes the educational system in the country needs to be completely retooled.

"If a balance is to be achieved, then it is fundamental to our education system that there is

more focus on urban schools," Premji told students on Saturday during the first edition of the company's Earthian Awards 2011-12. "There is need for a reorientation and the way we measure educational standards should be more competent in nature."

Students from schools and colleges across the country had sent in papers on key challenges or themes related to sustainability, such as climate change, sustainable cities and water management. From over 1,700 applications, the best five papers from each category were recognized by the Wipro Foundation.

Premji said the Earthian programme itself was a means of including environmental issues in the curriculum. "The objective of Earthian is to have environmental studies incorporated into school curriculum," he said.

"While some urban schools have it already, it should reach out to government schools." Anurag Behar, chief sustainability officer, Wipro Ltd, said it was important to sensitize students to environmental issues since they would be the policymakers in the future. "Sustainability and its challenges are too critical and must involve tomorrow's citizens," he said.

"Today's students will have to lead the long-overdue transformation of our planet and society to one that is more ecologically and socially sustainable."

The winning schools included Prakriya Green Wisdom School, Bangalore; Rishi Valley School, Andhra Pradesh; Kendriya Vidyalaya, Delhi; Anubhuti School, Maharashtra; and Sri Kumaran Children's Home, Bangalore.

The winning colleges included the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, and various IITs and IIMs.

Source: January 22, 2012/[DNA India](http://dna.com)

The movement for gender justice should begin in the classroom

As women studies gain visibility in colleges and universities, academics call for an attitudinal change towards facilitating gender equity.

The University Grants Commission, as a method of empowerment, has created several centres of women's studies by implementing a scheme on 'Development of Women Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges.'

Gender perspective

For the last two decades, such centres have been playing an interventionist role by initiating gender perspective in many domains in generation of knowledge; in the policy designs and practice. Seven universities started Women Studies Centres

(WSC) in 1986 and the number has now grown to 160 in 2011. Thanks to women's organisations and groups who have contributed to a national movement through sensitisation exercises in universities and colleges. These centres have contributed to visibility of women's issues in their endeavour to facilitate gender equity. Recently, 26 women's study centres in south Indian universities and colleges came together to form Regional Association of Women's Studies (RAWS) to serve as a forum for healthy dialogue between the various stakeholders including individuals, NGOs, policy-makers, researchers, academicians and those in power.

Despite increase in women's upward mobility, dismal sex ratio, female infanticide, sexual harassment and female child labour were worrying indicators, according to N. Manimekalai, Secretary, RAWS, and Head, Department of Women's Studies, Bharathidasan University. At a day-long workshop on 'Relevance of Women's Studies in the Present Context' that the RAWS conducted earlier this month, speakers opined that violence against women was a manifestation of patriarchy and that the society did not protect them. The violence had its roots in denial of economic rights, they said.

Collective steps

According to Prof. Susheela Kaushik, Former Director, Centre for Women's Studies, Delhi University, and Co-Chair, Committee on UGC Capacity Building of Women Managers in Higher Education, there was an imperative need for society and academics to take collective steps for research and social action. Women have to be trained to be independent. The glass ceiling between men and women should be researched by women study centres, she advocated. WSCs should work towards bringing attitudinal change through sensitisation, document the contributions of women, undertake research and bring it to the curriculum and to classroom. According to her, the movement for gender justice could begin in classroom through involvement of both boys and girls.

The society must understand the differences between sex and gender which indicate biological and sociological differences respectively. The differences and the ways in which they impact life should be understood in a right perspective, explained Regina Pappa, former Director Centre for Women's Studies, Alagappa University.

Source: January 23, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

Rediscovery of India

The time is right for India to make dramatic and continuous improvements in health, education and

public services to keep pace with the high GDP growth rate.

In the late 1950s, Ved Mehta, a blind writer from Oxford, spent a summer in India, a good part of it going around the country with the poet Dom Moraes.

One of the high points of his trip was a meeting with the then prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. He had lunch with Nehru and his family (his daughter Indira Gandhi and his 'two quiet grandsons in their teens') and a long chat later on.

His account of that conversation—published in a book *Walking the Indian Streets*—is marked by youthful optimism.

"I am left feeling that the problems we are facing are of epic proportions, and that men who wish to do their duty must measure up to the heroic possibilities. While heroism seems to be playing out in the West, it is just beginning in the East."

Mehta was not the only one to see the heroic possibilities those days. India seemed to be a huge canvas and a giant laboratory—coaxing people to think big.

It was in this spirit that Milton Friedman, in 1955, wrote a memo at the invitation of the Indian government.

"The great untapped resource of technical and scientific knowledge available to India for the taking is the economic equivalent of the untapped continent available to the United States 150 years ago," he wrote and went on to prescribe policies that would yield a higher growth rate, and to criticise the path India seemed to be taking.

One of the objects of his criticism, Prashant Mahalanobis, whose capital goods investment-led model that India was set to pursue, was no less fired by the same spirit of heroism. A friend of mathematical genius S. Ramanujan at Cambridge, Mahalanobis came back to India in the 1930s to set up the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) and eventually influenced the second five-year plan.

J.B.S. Haldane, a British biologist who joined Mahalanobis at ISI, pointing to India's diversity, called it a model for a possible world organisation. "It may of course break up, but it is a wonderful experiment." Nehru's midnight speech—the past is over and it is the future that beckons us now—still echoed then.

It's tempting to think India today is a different country and the fundamentals are in place. Democracy has taken strong roots.

Economic reforms have placed it in a growth path. All you need now is to fine-tune the system, make incremental improvements, and all will be well.

But to do so would be to close our eyes to the problems of epic proportions hiding behind the GDP (gross domestic product) growth rate. The latest Global Hunger Index places India at a lowly 67 out of the 88 worst countries.

The Prime Minister recently called abysmal levels of malnutrition and health a national shame. India still has almost 60 percent of its population stuck in an un-remunerative agriculture sector.

No surprises then that even by the minimum standards of Rs. 25 a day, we have over 40 percent of the rural population living below the poverty line. Among those living in urban areas and lucky enough to be educated, there is a growing problem of employability.

Worse, the idea of being an Indian is lost on a good number of citizens. The case of Kashmir is well known, thanks to Pakistani involvement. In over a third of districts, armed Naxals are making sure that the country's attention is turned towards them.

One cannot blame this government for not attempting to solve some of the issues. In the last few years, it passed a right to information act, right to education act, a rural employment guarantee act and more recently it introduced a food security bill.

In this series, perhaps the most debated was the anti-corruption bill. An interesting strand in this debate was whether we need such a far-reaching legislation at all. Wouldn't tweaking the existing laws solve the problem?

This dilemma is not unique to policymaking. Businesses face it too: Re-engineering vs. Kaizen. Re-engineering refers to fundamental rethinking of a system resulting in dramatic improvements.

Kaizen is about small, but continuous, improvements. History shows the best companies do both. They constantly try to become better every day. But once in a while, businesses are hived off, bought, old systems are thrown out and new ones take their place.

The idea behind this exercise is to apply re-engineering to some of the most important areas—health, education, skill development, public services, Centre-state relationship. The timing is appropriate. It would be sad to let go off this moment.

In the book, Ved Mehta quotes his friend Moraes: "Nehru is doing with India, what poets do with words." In the following pages, our essayists do with words, what we hope our leaders will do with India.

Source: January 23, 2012/[Forbes India](#)

Higher education in 2012: a global perspective

Economic and political pressures as well as international competition will force US higher education to keep adapting, but at what cost to quality?

In addressing what the future holds for US higher education, we must acknowledge that the recession has brought about a series of transformative trends that will endure long past the current economic moment and fundamentally change our industry. Further, I believe the pace of change will only continue to accelerate, due to political and economic pressures as well as disruptive technological innovations.

I foresee several areas where higher education will experience ongoing change in 2012:

Heightened international economic competition, whether it comes from the United Kingdom, China, India or other countries, will continue to force the US to produce more college-educated graduates and expand centers of graduate education and scientific research.

In the context of the recession, endowment funds have dropped and states have cut budgets for higher education. Thus the federal government's financial stake in higher education is now greater than ever and it will continue to grow.

Higher education leaders will continue to seek efficiencies and reforms in our basic business model and our models for teaching and learning.

The for-profit sector, which has been fueled to some extent by increased demand and lack of capacity in the public sector, has reshaped the higher education landscape and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

While the adaptability and flexibility universities show in responding to these factors has been tremendous, every one of these factors has placed additional pressure on our system of quality assurance. Our policy-makers will retain their focus on higher productivity, better consumer protection and increased evidence of learning outcomes.

The new year brings enormous challenges for US higher education. But in every challenge are the seeds of opportunity, and I know leaders at our colleges and universities will have the vision to see beyond our immediate problems and show the courage to embrace new ideas and new ways of doing business. To me, the outlook for 2012 is unpredictable, but also full of promise.

Dr Glenn Withers, chief executive officer, Universities Australia, a body representing Australia's universities

Regulatory reform has built a strong higher education sector in Australia, but in 2012, success will be determined by the implementation process

In recent years, a new Labour government under the challenge of the global financial crisis has infused higher education with infrastructure funding and set about reform of the government's regulatory apparatus, with the goal of 'taking the foot of government off the throat of the universities'.

The result has been a thorough review of the regulatory structures for universities and of the system's fiscal constitution. There was also review of the special area of international education following student safety concerns. In each case progressive new legislation has resulted. This includes a risk-based national regulatory framework that limits ministerial and executive discretion, and a more supportive funding framework to allow student-demand driven enrolments and with better indexation and indirect research cost funding.

On the international front a new student protection regime has been legislated and a risk-managed student visa system focused on high quality students has been introduced.

Does this mean that 2012 is the year that universities can finally just get on with their business? Regrettably, not quite. For, as ever, there is devil in the detail. The implementation process can still make or break reform. 2012 is also the year in which a remaining major piece of the puzzle will be resolved: student funding. An independent review has found student places underfunded.

If micro-regulation and fiscal timidity can be avoided, 2012 will look good Down-Under. With half of Australia's universities ranked in the top one per cent of global universities, and the rest close by, we are proving that size is not an obstacle to success. Increased collaboration and partnership with neighbouring countries will also place Australia in an ideal position for growth as we enter the 'Asian century'.

Professor Loyiso Nongxa, vice-chancellor and principal, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg, South Africa

South African universities will have to confront rapid changes in technology, emerging fields of study and a skills gap in order to have an impact across geographic and intellectual borders

When academics Abrahams and Melody, looked ahead to 2014, they made the following predictions about South African higher education in the knowledge economy:

High levels of talent mobility across national borders and the generation of new knowledge through real and virtual knowledge clusters or networks irrespective of geographical location.

Intensification of the pace of innovation in all spheres of human endeavour, for example, the rate of production of new knowledge and the shortening of time between discovery or inventions and innovations for socio-economic development.

Relative ease of accessibility of knowledge through global research networks and the internet.

Increased importance of research and development and the creation and promotion of new knowledge in the form of innovations that are commercialised and generate revenue, as well as in the form of social innovations that have positive development impacts.

Significant value attributed to human knowledge capital compared to valuating an enterprise solely on its fixed capital assets.

Value of information and communication technologies in promoting the capturing, access and analysis of complex and voluminous data sets, and the value of ICT networks in promoting rapid knowledge exchange – irrespective of time and distance and dependent only on access to people and institutional networks; and

Emergence of entirely new disciplines and fields of knowledge in advanced manufacturing, nanotechnology, next generation communication networks, and so on.

This confronts universities like Wits with new challenges that include, among others, the need to define niche areas of scholarship for different disciplines to work together while integrating across disciplines. It encourages the integration into international efforts and networks and the ability to train the next generation of researchers to fit into large teams, yet to retain their own individual identity and allow room for individual creativity.

The recruitment of talent (students, staff, researchers and academics) from global markets is imperative as is the development of high level critical skills. There is no doubt that students have to be trained to participate in the international context and that they are assured that they are provided with the best opportunities available to lead from the front and to leave a global footprint in their wake.

Finally, there is a need to explore the new means of knowledge sharing and appropriation across geographic and intellectual borders. We need to provide platforms for the development of multinational, multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral

intellectual projects that generate the high level and scarce skills required to address development in our country and on the continent, while we foster intellectual communities and promote sustainable social and economic development in a globally competitive environment.

Sally Goggin, director of education, British Council India

Increasingly sophisticated partnerships will further open up India's HE sector but policy makers must prioritise vocational courses

This is now my fourth year in India. I remember clearly the post-2009 election excitement around the plans to open up the Indian education market to foreign institutions, to develop new centres of innovation and to bring back Indian academics to these new institutions. Two years on, and the legislation for these proposals is not moving as quickly as most Indian and foreign institutions would like.

So will 2012 just be a year of maintaining the status quo for foreign institutions?

I don't think so. India is a key player in higher education international strategies. The trend for building international partnerships will continue. It is hoped this will help to bring about the long-term change of fully opening up the market to foreign university campuses. These partnerships will get more sophisticated in nature. While we may see one or two more institutions explore having campuses here, we are more likely to see small partnership centres develop first in the hope of opening something bigger when the legislation allows.

Therefore 2012 will lead to record number of new partnerships, new courses being offered here and more research being shared.

Despite this good news, the main focus for India in 2012 must be developing vocational education and training schemes. With 500 million people to train by 2020, this huge task got underway in 2010, started to build momentum 2011 but needs to go full steam ahead in 2012.

In terms of change agents, the use of technology will also bring about the biggest changes this year in India – from the \$35 USD tablet in schools, to teacher training being delivered by open and distance learning – 'digital' will be the buzz word here.

James Pitman, managing director HE, UK and Europe, Study Group, an international HE provider, with students from 140 countries taking English language degrees at partner universities

Education tourists will remain valuable to the UK's HE sector

The past year has been a tumultuous one for the Tier 4 international student visa system in the UK. January saw stakeholders including the UUK, NUS, UKCISA and English UK join forces, and rally for revisions to the new Tier 4 guidelines the government had proposed to cut net migration. The guidelines suggested that international students had to be able to speak English at CEFR B2 to gain a visa - 80% of students that arrive to study in the UK with us have levels of English proficiency under B2 and yet 98% of them advance to successful degree study at British universities. The HE sector was therefore at risk of losing thousands of potential international students. Ministers considered the effects and sensibly dropped the level to B1 in most cases.

Tier 4 was then fine-tuned until a complete set of guidelines was published in September – the new rules come into force in April 2012. The UUK has since released a report reflecting on the importance of HE as an export sector, revealing that it was worth £8.25 billion in 2010 and international students contributed the majority of this in tuition fees and off campus expenditure. To add to that, Oxford think-tank, The Migration Observatory, recently confirmed that only 6% of international students remain in the UK after five years. This combined with the Home Affairs Committee's July warning to Theresa May about the damage ill judged Tier 4 revisions could do, would suggest the government needs to think carefully about the negative rhetoric attached to the issue, and separate these 'education tourists' from the larger, messier migration debate.

We wait for April's Tier 4 enforcement with trepidation as our main competitors, the US and Australia, revise their international student visa systems in order to capture the UK's lost market share.

Source: January 24, 2012/[The Guardian](#)

Education in India at the crossroads

Roughly one decade ago, there was a strong debate in [India](#) about how we should tackle the problem of education. There were two views:

Intensification

On one side were those who felt that nothing was fundamentally wrong; all that was needed was more [money](#). So we should just continue building more government schools and hiring more civil servants to act as school teachers, and we'll be fine.

Reform

On the other side were the reformers, who argued that the basic incentives in Indian education were wrong. Putting more money down a dysfunctional system was pointless.

The Intensifiers won this debate. An informal coalition of educationists (i.e. the incumbent education system) and leftists came together, supported by the World Bank, which pushed for mere enlargement of Indian education, without questioning the foundations.

All of us are involved in this story at many levels. At the simplest, we are the customers of the education establishment. We pay income tax and VAT and a few other taxes. On top of this, we pay the 2% education cess. In return for this, we get certain educational services. These influence our kids, and they influence all the young people that we encounter in this young country. Trillions of rupees have been spent, and more than a decade has gone by. It is time to assess the performance of this strategy.

Three blocks of evidence are now visible, which tell us that the Intensifiers were wrong. The old strategy, which was invigorated by a vast rise in spending, was the wrong one.

Evidence #1: OECD PISA results for India

This story is well told in [a recent blog post by Lant Pritchett](#). Bottom line: The first internationally comparable measurement of what children learn has been done. The sample correctly includes urban and rural children; it correctly includes children going to private or public schools; there are no first order mistakes in what was done. It tells us that Indian education policy has failed miserably: the results have come out at the bottom of the world.

Evidence #2: ASER 2011 results

Pratham has been running surveys which measure characteristics of children and schools in rural India (only). Their latest survey results, for 2011 show the following facts. First, rural kids learn less at public school. Here's a simple example of what the evidence shows. Surveyors ask kids in class III to recognise numbers upto 100. Here are the numbers, for the proportion of kids in class III who cannot recognise numbers upto 100:

In 2008, the failure rate with private schools was roughly 17 per cent. Government schools were much worse at over 30 per cent. A short three years later, conditions had deteriorated sharply in government schools. The failure rate had gone up to 40 per cent. Private schools had also worsened slightly, to a failure rate of 20 per cent. By 2011, a big gap had opened up between the two: private schools are failing to teach 20 per cent of the kids

while government schools are failing with a full 40 per cent of their kids.

Parents in India face the *choice* between sending their children to a government school, which is free and serves a mid-day meal, versus sending them to a private school where they pay fees. Yet, an increasing fraction of parents *choose* to send their children to a private school, paying tuition fees from their own pockets, while government schools are free. The relationship between a parent and a private school is a transaction between consenting adults. The relationship between a parent and a government school involves all of us, because we are paying for it.

Given the low income of parents in India, their use of private schools is a striking indictment of what the Intensifiers have wrought:

At class II, the fraction of rural children in private school went up from 19 per cent (2007) to 23 per cent (2011). At class VII, this rose more slowly to levels slightly above 20 per cent.

Evidence #3: CMIE household survey

CMIE has data for the year ended March 2011 about the behaviour of 169,492 households, about their expenditure on school/college fees and tuition fees. Here's [the picture](#) for the quarter ended September 2011; all values as percent of overall expenditure:

Income class	School/ college fees	Private tuition fees
Rich – I	4.79	0.66
Rich – II	3.79	0.51
High Middle Income – I	3.54	0.63
High Middle Income – II	3.12	0.65
High Middle Income – III	2.44	0.68
Middle Income – I	1.93	0.59
Middle Income – II	1.62	0.45
Lower Middle Income – I	1.38	0.49
Lower Middle Income – II	1.05	0.60
Poor – I	0.76	0.58
Poor – II	1.13	0.28
Overall	2.10	0.57

If parents chose to stay within public sector schools, their expenditure on fees would have been zero. The table shows that across all income groups of India, there is movement towards private provision of education, both by paying fees at schools and by paying for private tuition classes. These two elements add up to 2.67 per cent of overall expenses of households. (The CMIE household survey separately measures expenses on books, journals, stationary, additional professional education, education overseas, hobby classes and other education expenses. This helps us gain confidence in the extent to which the two fields in

the table above narrowly pin down the feature of interest).

These decisions of well intentioned parents are the strongest indictment of education policy in India. The product being given out by the Intensifiers is such a terrible one, the parents of India are walking away from it even though it is free and the alternative is not and the parents are poor.

Implications

For more than a decade, the Intensifiers have controlled Indian education policy. They have said: *Leave education to the education establishment, do nothing radical, just give us more money, we will deliver results.* Now we know that they were wrong. They took the money, but failed to deliver the results.

Kapil Sibal has said that his ministry should not be held responsible for the stream of bad news that is coming out. This seems to me to be dodging accountability. His ministry is responsible for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, for the Right To Education Act, for blocking OECD PISA from being done in India, etc. The bureaucratic consensus of his ministry represents the education establishment.

This brings us to accountability. If a contractor took money from you, and failed to deliver on building your house, you would sack him. (You would also take him to court, to recover the money that was paid to him, for services not delivered). In similar fashion, education is too important to be left to the educationists. We need to start over.

What is to be done

- We need to start over in the field of education, with a fresh management team, one that is not a part of the status quo, one that is rooted in the worlds of incentives, public policy and public administration.
- The flow of public money into the status quo needs to go down sharply. There is no reason to put money into something that fails to deliver the goods. **First** we must prove that a mechanism delivers results, and only after that should we put money into it. This is the common sense that a housewife would apply. She would not spent gigabucks on promises from people who have failed to deliver.
- OECD PISA measurement needs to take place every year at every district.
- The education cess was always a mistake and needs to go. Public expenditures on education should always have come out of

general tax revenues; there is no need to have a cess.

- Civil servant teachers, who have tenured (permanent) have no incentive to teach well, regardless of their qualifications or high income. We can't sack them, but what we need to do on a massive scale is to stop recruiting them. The existing stock can be reallocated to other civil servant functions where staff is in short supply. Through this, it would become possible to whittle away at the accumulated stock over the coming 20 years.

Source: January 27, 2012/[Citizen economist](#)

Mutual Benefits

Jeffrey Reneau is the public affairs officer and director, American Center Kolkata. Reneau studied International Education and Policy Administration at Harvard University and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Georgetown University. Prior to starting his tenure in India in October 2011, he was part of the United States Mission to the United Nations (USUN), where he served as the special advisor to the US representative for UN management and reform. At an interactive session on 'Strategic collaboration between US and India in Higher Education' organised by the US Consulate General at the American Center, Kolkata, Reneau spoke about key issues pertaining to Indo-US academic cooperation.

What are the key areas which would benefit from US-India collaboration in higher education?

The key areas are people based, an increase in student and faculty exchange occurring both ways with US scholars coming to India and vice versa. With higher education being one of the pillars of US engagement with India, we need to work with the people of education who will help build a stronger bilateral relationship. As the world changes, the questions of the future will not be borders or policies but issues such as food security, water resources, land availability and sustainability which will demand our attention. In West Bengal, the target areas would be information technology and agriculture when it comes to collaboration.

Can such collaborations bring about a renaissance in the research scene in India?

When you link this to the US-India Higher Education Summit, it becomes evident that not just research but the whole education scenario can be stimulated by jointly addressing such issues. Research automatically becomes part of the equation as an integral part of educational exchange. The Fulbright scholarship and the

Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative are instances of research as a fundamental aspect of our collaboration.

What are the drawbacks of the Indian higher education system and any remedies to tackle them?

I think a shortage of access to opportunities is common in any country with a large population. Kolkata alone has such a huge population but it is a young and vibrant populace who can suffer due to a lack of opportunities. Access to education and further opportunities are critical elements that the US and India can explore together. India's own institutions need to determine the best way forward and identify areas where they can improve.

Faculty shortage is a global problem. Can Indo-US collaboration lead to greater exchange of faculty?

Yes, it will open up opportunities for US scholars to come here and for Indian ones to go there. It does not necessarily mean an increase in numbers but there will be an increase in the exchange of scholars. We can bring scholars who will participate in Indian academics and vice versa. They will be able to fill the gaps and facilitate increased faculty participation. Indians are already teaching abroad, for example, Professor Sugata Bose who is at Harvard University.

Considering the grim economic situation, is the future bright for Indo-US collaborative projects?

Unquestionably yes. The foundation of education is based on questions and challenges and people learning how to overcome them. There has been resurgence in education due to the economic slowdown thus opening up opportunities for exchange. We have a world economy now and by forging international partnerships, we can pull each other up to a better place.

Source: January 27, 2012/[Education Times](#)

Sibal decries education politics: HRD minister says states not doing enough to implement central policies

Union human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal on Friday spoke against the politicisation of education in the country.

He was critical of the state governments and lamented their reluctance to reform the education system.

Citing the example of 13 key Bills of his ministry that are stuck in Parliament, Sibal, who was speaking at the India Today Aspire Education Summit 2012, made a strong case for distancing politics from education.

'Everybody is thinking of when and how we will come to power. Where is the national vision? Nothing can be done unless political parties come together and realise that education is an area of national importance and should be a priority,' he said.

'I want to give degrees to students in the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), but I cannot because there is no political consensus in the House,' he added, referring to the non-passage of the NIT Act (Amendment) Bill 2011 in the Rajya Sabha.

This means that the students of IISER in Pune and Kolkata who completed their five-year course in the summer of 2011 are left in the lurch, without any degree.

The minister, who has been on the defensive in the wake of recent disparaging reports (Programme for International Student Assessment and Assessment Survey Evaluation Research) on the state of education in India, went on to illustrate how the central government - even though it attracts the maximum flak for deficiencies in the education system - has little role to play in on-ground improvement.

The biggest challenge, he said, was to get the states to implement the reform policies introduced by the Centre. And any bid to exert pressure is misinterpreted as 'interference' in state governance.

'We (the Centre) can introduce policies and allocate funds. But it's impossible for us to monitor if a child is receiving quality education in Bihar or Orissa. The reality is that the implementation of policies happens at the state level,' he said.

Calling the task of empowering 20million children through education 'herculean', Sibal said India would not be able to join the ranks of developed countries unless it created a 'critical mass' of youngsters who will pursue higher education.

Currently, 16 of every 100 students in India reach university level, whereas the figure is 40 in the developed world.

The government aims to increase the number of university-going students from 16million to 45million by 2020. This gap, Sibal said, can be bridged through effective implementation of the Right to Education Act which was introduced almost two years ago. It promotes inclusivity in education and will democratise classrooms.

'The Act will create an environment to nurture that critical mass that will go to university by 2020,' the minister added.

The Act will lead to efforts to admit and retain more children in schools, which would, in turn, lead to a build-up of pressure at the university level.

The minister also asked the states to increase their budget allocation for education and called on them, as well as the private players, to help meet the need of an additional 1,000 universities in the future.

Policymakers are finding the wrong solutions

More than 800 scholarships are earmarked for humanities at Bombay University but, according to a faculty member, it ends up receiving barely a dozen applications.

Filmmaker Prakash Jha pointed out this startling statistic as evidence of the dire state of Indian education.

'We have almost forgotten the essence of education, and have started considering it the manufacturing of managers,' Jha said at a panel discussion on 'Redefining the Classroom' at the India Today Aspire Education Summit 2012.

Jha, whose film Aarakshan covered the problems with reservations in education, said the policymakers are picking the wrong techniques to attack systemic problems.

'With affirmative action, I found dissatisfaction at every level,' he said. 'The story of reservation never ends... politicians have to plant reservations within reservations.'

He called for the government to ensure that all students have the opportunity to get the education they want.

This, he said, needs to be done even if it pushes spending on education from four per cent of the GDP to 14. He also decried the way education has turned almost into a commercial transaction - with teachers as service providers and students as clients.

'We have learnt the art of management,' Jha said. 'There is a huge paucity of good universities with good teachers. People who don't get any other job end up applying for a teacher's job.'

As an example of an alternative approach, Jha pointed to Super 30, a Patna-based educational initiative. The organisation, founded by mathematician Anand Kumar, selects 30 talented students from extremely poor backgrounds and prepares them for the IIT-JEE.

DUV-C trashes foreign tie-ups

The mushrooming of private higher education institutions in the country has made foreign collaboration a significant factor for the institutions when it comes to attracting prospective students.

But how far do the collaborations benefit students in terms of landing better jobs and drawing fatter pay packages? Or is it just an admission gimmick?

Friday's India Today Aspire Education Summit 2012 saw some of the distinguished academics and educators in the country giving a piece of their mind on a topic that has already generated much heat and dust in the academic sector.

While the predominant sentiment among speakers appeared to be in favour of international linkages, Dinesh Singh, vice-chancellor, Delhi University, remained sceptical. He articulated his reservations rather vociferously, pointing out a rather ineffective collaboration which IIT Delhi had with the Imperial College, London.

Singh narrated his own experience of studying at the Imperial College for his Ph.D, later coming back to India and taking up a teaching assignment at IIT.

'I could see the stark contrast,' said Singh about the two institutions.

'The programmes at Imperial were outstanding. They met the needs of the society in diverse ways,' he said.

'Great things have happened at IITs too, but they have not come through tie-ups,' he added.

Striking a pragmatic note, the vice chancellor urged the delegates comprising academics, educationists and university officials to do some soul searching on the need for a foreign collaboration.

'We should look at the issue of why we need a tie-up and the philosophy behind that,' he said.

According to him, going for foreign partnerships makes sense only if they benefit the society at large. 'The focus of the tie-ups should be on how to solve urban transport, health and sanitation issues in our cities.'

Singh also advocated the need to go for more inter-university linkages within the country, such as Delhi University and IIT Delhi having more frequent academic interaction, and professional linkages with Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Vidya Yeravdekar, principal director, Symbiosis International University, Pune, however, did not have any doubt over the merits of an international partnership.

'The staff room ambience changes the moment we have international faculty members. There is a higher level of motivation,' she said.

'The exposure which the students and faculty members gain from a foreign collaboration is immense.'

CURRICULA RESTRUCTURING

Delhi University will begin a four-year undergraduate programme by 2013, Dinesh Singh said, adding that the university was currently in the process of restructuring its academic curricula.

But he stopped short of providing details. He dismissed a comparison that Delhi University was toeing the American model of education, where students have to study for four years to earn their undergraduate degree.

The time that a student spends on an international campus can also boost his/her resume.

'It is benefiting the students economically,' said Vijay Gupta, director of G.D. Goenka World Institute. 'Good companies show greater interest in students who have an international study programme.'

He called for greater public spending on education to raise India's gross enrollment ratio to 30 per cent by 2030.

Source: January 28, 2012/[Daily mail](#)

'Education should not be about finding the right answer'

The Indian education system should follow that of Finland or Singapore, not that of the United States of America. This was what Howard Gardner, dubbed one of the most influential thinkers in the world, had to say. The developmental psychologist, famous for his theory on multiple intelligences (MI), made the comment along the sidelines of his second public lecture in India at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM-B) here Friday.

The talk, 'Creativity and Genius and Good Work', is part of the three-week Howard Gardner India Tour. Elaborating on the USPs of the education systems in Finland and Singapore, he said: "Education in the two countries is much more even across income disparities. In India, there is a huge disparity between those who can get into prestigious institutions here or abroad, and those who have meagre human capital."

Too many engineers?

Prof. Gardner, asked to comment on the prevailing scenario of "too many" engineering students in India, said: "I'm sceptical about any profession being valorised over others. Who knows what is going to be needed in the next 25 years? In the U.S. and in India, schools should not be preparing people for professions; professions should do that themselves. Instead, schools should prepare them to understand arts and science better. The point of developing intelligence is to become a competent human being." Supplementing this, his psychologist wife, Ellen Winner, said: "There is no one-to-one mapping between children's intelligence and

profession. It helps to know what you are strong at, but you can choose what you want to focus on."

No racial differences

In his talk, Prof. Gardner pointed out that the problem with the Indian education system is the emphasis on correct answers. "Avoid the right answer syndrome; pause on irregularities and uncommon answers. Education should not be about finding the right answer. That is where the teachers of non-elite schools in India are going wrong."

Source: January 28, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

We need Mayos and Doons for rural poor: Shiv Nadar

Bridging the rural-urban divide is the biggest challenge faced by the Indian education system today and the country needs Mayos and Doons for the rural poor, said HCL founder and educationist Shiv Nadar at the India Today Aspire Education Summit 2012 on Friday.

Delivering the keynote address, he said 70 per cent of the Indian population is rural and a large chunk of it is children and young adults. The knowledge disparity between them and their urban counterparts is staggering and needs to be bridged, he said.

"Both the urban child and the rural child have the spark, the ambition, the genius, the only difference is their access to information about the world. We need a world class institution which will create leaders out of the children who have not had a good start in life. We need a Mayo for the poor," said Nadar.

"The need is schools dedicated exclusively to the rural segment. If we have a child from a village and a city studying in the same class room, the former is bound to lag behind because children from the urban areas have a better start," he added.

Outlining his vision for these institutions, Nadar, whose foundation runs the VidyaGyan schools, said that they have to be residential and focus on both knowledge transfer and creation of leadership qualities.

"A residential school also takes care of the problem of malnourishment and interaction with their peers and their teachers help build the qualities of a leader. Any school which wants to create an impact on the society should work on creating leaders," said Nadar.

The iconic entrepreneur said that the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are the best examples of the "stunning impact" of education on the country.

"Alumni of IIT are part of the world's leading companies and have created some 20 million jobs through their own start-ups. This is the vertical impact. And the IITians created a ripple effect of aspiration. Their siblings, peer group, families who live on the same street, all now aspired for the same success. That is the horizontal impact," said Nadar, who began HCL decades ago as a start-up with just Rs 2.5 lakh as seed money.

The Shiv Nadar foundation runs two VidyaGyan school in Uttar Pradesh which cater to children selected from state-run institutions on the basis of merit. Nadar plans to open up a third one in the coming year.

"VidyaGyan was a leap of faith. We need more such initiatives because ours is a vast country and our children are the future. Our government too has a brilliant track record when it comes to creating good educational institutions, the case in point being the IITs," said Nadar.

Source: January 28, 2012/[India Today](#)

India: Mid-Day Meal Scheme Lacks Enthusiasm In Toto – Analysis

The mid-day meal scheme in rural areas of Punjab has failed to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education as prescribed by the UN Millennium Development Goals (2000) and followed by Government of India. Total Enrollment of selected schools belonging to three districts, namely, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and Gurdaspur Districts of Rural Punjab was 33085 during the base year (average of 2007 to 2009). This enrollment declined to 31667 during the current year (average of 2010-12). Almost similar decline with varying degree was noticed in all the three selected districts. However the decline in enrollment of girls' students was slightly more than their boys' counterpart.

Moreover, the enrollment in primary standard of the selected districts of Rural Punjab has declined by 2.35 per cent which is attributed to the bogus admission made in the base period. In Upper Primary Section, Base year Enrollment was 10583 and Current year Enrollment was 11124. However, the enrollment in the upper primary standard has shown an improvement (the percentage change in the enrollment was 105.11).

These facts are revealed from in-depth analysis under taken by Dr Gursharan Singh Kainth ICSSR Senior Fellow of Amritsar based Guru Arjan Dev Institute of Development Studies. The study is restricted to Majha region of rural areas of Punjab consisting of three districts, namely, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Tarn Taran and a part of the bigger project sponsored by Indian Council of Social

Sciences Research, Ministry of Human Resources Government of India under their Senior Fellowship Program.

Another salient feature of the analysis is that a lion share of the enrollment at the elementary schools was claimed by the Schedule caste (SC) and schedule tribes (ST), their percentage being 69.36 per cent. In addition 17.66 per cent belong to Other Backward Categories (OBCs). Apparently, government schools are dominated by the reserved categories students due to obvious reason. The question arises: Why the other categories parents did not sent their students to these government schools. This needs a thorough examination.

In almost all the schools there was shortage of teaching staff because of unplanned opening of elementary schools in the rural areas.

Moreover, one-fourth of the schools have only up to two teachers whereas minimum classes in these schools are five. The government has recommended the number of teachers according to the strength of students i.e. one teacher for 30 students. But these norms should be revised. These norms should be set on the basis of number of classes but not on the basis of number of students. Due to lack of teachers, there is a negative impact on the study of children. During the survey it was observed that there is no academic atmosphere in the school due to lack of teaching staff. There should be at least one teacher for every class irrespective of the student strength. There is a strong need to rationalize the opening of school.

The study further reveals total lack of enthusiasm in the implementation of the scheme in too and found lopsided functioning on various components of the schemes. Under MDM scheme the government provide food grains like wheat, rice etc. to the schools. But schools are not getting food grains on time and in short. In most of schools, there is a negative balance of food grains due to which they are unable to provide the food to children as per menu specified by government under Mid Day Meal Scheme. The government provides food grains gunny bags with specified quantity. But generally the schools get less quantity of food grains. There are many holes on the gunny bags of food grains and the quantity is less even up to 15 kgs. School authorities have to accept those gunny bags due to shortage of supply and under pressure. Quality of food grains at the initial stage was below average, but there is a continuous improvement in the quality of food grains. Moreover, there is lack of scientific storage of grains in the school premises, although some schools are provided with bins.

For storing the food grains, drums are not available in majority of the schools. Shortage of drums couple with insufficient space for storage, no proper caring of food grains etc. results into wastage of food grains. Moreover food grains also get exhausted when they are not properly stored.

Under MDM Scheme, Schools are facing the acute scarcity of funds. They do not get enough funds on time. Their funds are showing the negative balances from last many years. Generally one fourth or little more than that of the monthly expenditure is reimbursed to schools rendering school funds into negatives which cumulative balance into thousands. Even funds are delayed for months- some schools had reported negative balance of more than Rs 25 thousands and even up to Rs 50 thousand. The question again arises: How they manage the scheme?

Moreover schools with less strength are easily getting funds whereas schools with more strength are not getting any funds which have resulted into negative balances. For smooth functioning of MDM scheme, the schools authorities are investing their personal cash or borrow from the grocers.

Although cook- cum- helpers are appointed in all the schools but they are not trained. Moreover, they lack enthusiasm again due to delayed payments even up to four to six months. Moreover, they demand that their remuneration should be increased and provided on time to them.

Cooks should be appointed in schools on permanent basis. According to schools, only those cooks should be appointed in the schools that have some degree in cooking. They must be fully trained in cooking Under MDM schemes, schools are provided gas cylinders for cooking foods. Schools are facing the problem of shortage of gas cylinders.

Moreover, in most of schools the delivery of gas cylinders is not easily available. They have to cover long distance and pay more freight for getting gas cylinders. In some schools, gas cylinders have been stolen or there is a fear of stealing of gas cylinders. Due to these problems, the schools do not prefer to use gas cylinders for making food. Although the government has banned the use of cow dungs, firewood etc. due to their ill-effects but still most of schools are using this firewood and cow dung paste for making food because these are easily available. Less cost is involved in their procurement. The main disadvantage of using firewood is health problems to cooks and children.

In majority of schools, utensils are not provided to children for eating. Children bring their own utensils from their homes. Half an hour is not sufficient for distribution of food to the children.

More time is involved which results into negative impact on studies. Hence there is wastage of time in washing the utensils after fooding.

Moreover, time span for fooding is very little. The government should provide utensils to schools authorities for serving the food to children. Cooking utensils are also inadequate in many schools. The most liked dish of the menu was Karri Chawal followed by Dal Chawal. Sweet rice was least liked by the students in almost all the schools and needs to be replaced with salty rice in the menu.

Alternatively curd should be provided with the sweet rice. Children insist that there must be some alteration in food menu. According to them, Rajma-chawal, Cheese, Dalia, fruits, green vegetables, Salty rice, curd etc should be added in the menu. The government should also make alteration in the food menu after considering the preferences of children or school authority may be permitted to change the menu according to local conditions.

Source: January 28, 2012/[Eurasia Review](#)

Higher education in 2012: a global perspective

In the last of our predictions series, we ask HE leaders in the US, Australia, India and South Africa to share what trends and issues could have the most impact on the sector. "Where will the road ahead lead for HE sectors across the world?"

Economic and political pressures as well as international competition will force US higher education to keep adapting, but at what cost to quality?

In addressing what the future holds for US higher education, we must acknowledge that the recession has brought about a series of transformative trends that will endure long past the current economic moment and fundamentally change our industry. Further, I believe the pace of change will only continue to accelerate, due to political and economic pressures as well as disruptive technological innovations.

I foresee several areas where higher education will experience ongoing change in 2012:

- Heightened international economic competition, whether it comes from the United Kingdom, China, India or other countries, will continue to force the US to produce more college-educated graduates and expand centers of graduate education and scientific research.
- In the context of the recession, endowment funds have dropped and states have cut budgets for higher education. Thus the federal government's financial stake in higher education is now greater than ever and it will continue to grow.

- Higher education leaders will continue to seek efficiencies and reforms in our basic business model and our models for teaching and learning.
- The for-profit sector, which has been fueled to some extent by increased demand and lack of capacity in the public sector, has reshaped the higher education landscape and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.
- While the adaptability and flexibility universities show in responding to these factors has been tremendous, every one of these factors has placed additional pressure on our system of quality assurance. Our policy-makers will retain their focus on higher productivity, better consumer protection and increased evidence of learning outcomes.

The new year brings enormous challenges for US higher education. But in every challenge are the seeds of opportunity, and I know leaders at our colleges and universities will have the vision to see beyond our immediate problems and show the courage to embrace new ideas and new ways of doing business. To me, the outlook for 2012 is unpredictable, but also full of promise.

Dr Glenn Withers, chief executive officer, Universities Australia, a body representing Australia's universities

Regulatory reform has built a strong higher education sector in Australia, but in 2012, success will be determined by the implementation process

In recent years, a new Labour government under the challenge of the global financial crisis has infused higher education with infrastructure funding and set about reform of the government's regulatory apparatus, with the goal of 'taking the foot of government off the throat of the universities'.

The result has been a thorough review of the regulatory structures for universities and of the system's fiscal constitution. There was also review of the special area of international education following student safety concerns. In each case progressive new legislation has resulted. This includes a risk-based national regulatory framework that limits ministerial and executive discretion, and a more supportive funding framework to allow student-demand driven enrolments and with better indexation and indirect research cost funding.

On the international front a new student protection regime has been legislated and a risk-managed student visa system focused on high quality students has been introduced.

Does this mean that 2012 is the year that universities can finally just get on with their

business? Regrettably, not quite. For, as ever, there is devil in the detail. The implementation process can still make or break reform. 2012 is also the year in which a remaining major piece of the puzzle will be resolved: student funding. An independent review has found student places underfunded.

If micro-regulation and fiscal timidity can be avoided, 2012 will look good Down-Under. With half of Australia's universities ranked in the top one per cent of global universities, and the rest close by, we are proving that size is not an obstacle to success. Increased collaboration and partnership with neighbouring countries will also place Australia in an ideal position for growth as we enter the 'Asian century'.

Professor Loyiso Nongxa, vice-chancellor and principal, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg, South Africa

South African universities will have to confront rapid changes in technology, emerging fields of study and a skills gap in order to have an impact across geographic and intellectual borders

When academics Abrahams and Melody, looked ahead to 2014, they made the following predictions about South African higher education in the knowledge economy:

- High levels of talent mobility across national borders and the generation of new knowledge through real and virtual knowledge clusters or networks irrespective of geographical location.
- Intensification of the pace of innovation in all spheres of human endeavour, for example, the rate of production of new knowledge and the shortening of time between discovery or inventions and innovations for socio-economic development.
- Relative ease of accessibility of knowledge through global research networks and the internet.
- Increased importance of research and development and the creation and promotion of new knowledge in the form of innovations that are commercialised and generate revenue, as well as in the form of social innovations that have positive development impacts.
- Significant value attributed to human knowledge capital compared to valuating an enterprise solely on its fixed capital assets.
- Value of information and communication technologies in promoting the capturing, access and analysis of complex and voluminous data sets, and the value of ICT networks in promoting rapid knowledge exchange – irrespective of time and distance and dependent only on access to people and institutional networks; and

- Emergence of entirely new disciplines and fields of knowledge in advanced manufacturing, nanotechnology, next generation communication networks, and so on.

This confronts universities like Wits with new challenges that include, among others, the need to define niche areas of scholarship for different disciplines to work together while integrating across disciplines. It encourages the integration into international efforts and networks and the ability to train the next generation of researchers to fit into large teams, yet to retain their own individual identity and allow room for individual creativity.

The recruitment of talent (students, staff, researchers and academics) from global markets is imperative as is the development of high level critical skills. There is no doubt that students have to be trained to participate in the international context and that they are assured that they are provided with the best opportunities available to lead from the front and to leave a global footprint in their wake.

Finally, there is a need to explore the new means of knowledge sharing and appropriation across geographic and intellectual borders. We need to provide platforms for the development of multinational, multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral intellectual projects that generate the high level and scarce skills required to address development in our country and on the continent, while we foster intellectual communities and promote sustainable social and economic development in a globally competitive environment.

Sally Goggin, director of education, British Council India

Increasingly sophisticated partnerships will further open up India's HE sector but policy makers must prioritise vocational courses

This is now my fourth year in India. I remember clearly the post-2009 election excitement around the plans to open up the Indian education market to foreign institutions, to develop new centres of innovation and to bring back Indian academics to these new institutions. Two years on, and the legislation for these proposals is not moving as quickly as most Indian and foreign institutions would like.

So will 2012 just be a year of maintaining the status quo for foreign institutions?

I don't think so. India is a key player in higher education international strategies. The trend for building international partnerships will continue. It is hoped this will help to bring about the long-term

change of fully opening up the market to foreign university campuses. These partnerships will get more sophisticated in nature. While we may see one or two more institutions explore having campuses here, we are more likely to see small partnership centres develop first in the hope of opening something bigger when the legislation allows.

Therefore 2012 will lead to record number of new partnerships, new courses being offered here and more research being shared.

Despite this good news, the main focus for India in 2012 must be developing vocational education and training schemes. With 500 million people to train by 2020, this huge task got underway in 2010, started to build momentum 2011 but needs to go full steam ahead in 2012.

In terms of change agents, the use of technology will also bring about the biggest changes this year in India – from the \$35 USD tablet in schools, to teacher training being delivered by open and distance learning – 'digital' will be the buzz word here.

James Pitman, managing director HE, UK and Europe, Study Group, international education provider, with students from 140 countries undertaking pathway programmes and degrees at partner universities.

Education tourists will remain valuable to the UK's HE sector

The past year has been a tumultuous one for the Tier 4 international student visa system in the UK. January saw stakeholders including the UUK, NUS, UKCISA and English UK join forces, and rally for revisions to the new Tier 4 guidelines the government had proposed to cut net migration. The guidelines suggested that international students had to be able to speak English at CEFR B2 to gain a visa - 80% of students that arrive to study in the UK with us have levels of English proficiency under B2 and yet 98% of them advance to successful degree study at British universities. The HE sector was therefore at risk of losing thousands of potential international students. Ministers considered the effects and sensibly dropped the level to B1 in most cases.

Tier 4 was then fine-tuned until a complete set of guidelines was published in September – the new rules come into force in April 2012. The UUK has since released a report reflecting on the importance of HE as an export sector, revealing that it was worth £8.25 billion in 2010 and international students contributed the majority of this in tuition fees and off campus expenditure. To add to that, Oxford think-tank, The Migration Observatory,

recently confirmed that only 6% of international students remain in the UK after five years. This combined with the Home Affairs Committee's July warning to Theresa May about the damage ill judged Tier 4 revisions could do, would suggest the government needs to think carefully about the negative rhetoric attached to the issue, and separate these 'education tourists' from the larger, messier migration debate.

We wait for April's Tier 4 enforcement with trepidation as our main competitors, the US and Australia, revise their international student visa systems in order to capture the UK's lost market share.

Source: January 29, 2012/[Guardian](#)

RESOURCE

Drop in learning level in India since 2006: Study

Ahmedabad-based Educational Initiatives (EI) carried out a research recently and brought out a study titled Quality Education Study (QES). The study sought to assess the current scenario of education in five metros across India with an aim to promote learning among schoolchildren with understanding.

Quality education is often associated with first-quality learning environments and second- holistic development of students (UNESCO, 2002).

The study, which has been conceptualised and managed jointly by Wipro and EI, brings out some very interesting trends seen among school-going children. A significant finding was that there has been a drop in learning level from a previous study done in 2006. Students are exhibiting rote learning and performing comparatively better in questions that are procedural or do not involve deeper understanding or application of concepts.

Their attitude towards gender equality, diversity, sensitivity towards others, civic, citizenship issues, ecological issues, and interpersonal skills was also assessed.

A startling finding was that 43% of students in class IV, VI and VIII felt that education for a girl is not as important as responsibility towards the family. The study's results hint at the deep-rooted bias in Indian society against the girl child. Even students hailing from highly educated elite families had such a bias.

They were asked about differently-abled people (including students). A majority (70-80%) of them were found to have the notion that differently-abled

people are burdensome, unhappy and not able to do well in studies.

Schoolchildren belonging to the 'top' Indian schools performed poorer than the international average in questions on maths, science and reading literacy. Boys were seen to perform better than girls in maths and science at class VIII level.

A considerable difference was observed in the education level of students studying in schools affiliated to different boards and cities. Schools from Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) performed better. Bangalore performed lower than the other metros.

The study states that students' skills in map reading, writing, measurement and general awareness are not well developed. It found that healthier classroom atmosphere was correlated with students' values and interpersonal skills.

Schools on an average spend 9% and 10% each of time respectively on physical education/sports, and co-scholastic activities (music/art/dance/elocution/dramatics).

A comparison of beliefs in student discipline showed that the more the principals and teachers believe that strict discipline is important, the lower was their student performance. A total of 23,000 students, 790 teachers, 54 principals from 89 schools participated in the study.

Source: January 16, 2012/[Daily Bhaskar](#)

Half of Class 5 kids can't read Class 2 texts

An authoritative annual report on the status of school education in India has confirmed the bad news from the international PISA ratings last month.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2011, prepared by the NGO Pratham, shows that both reading and arithmetic abilities — already disappointing — have further worsened since last year.

The report was released by Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal today. The PISA ratings put Indian children at the bottom of the global heap in the test of scholastic performance.

The all-India figure for the proportion of children in Class 5 able to read a Class 2 text has dropped from 53.7% in 2010 to 48.2% in 2011, shows ASER. The decline is most pronounced in the northern states. Gujarat, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have, however, improved since 2010.

The fall in arithmetic abilities is seen across all states. Nationally, the proportion of Class 3 children able to solve a 2-digit subtraction problem with

borrowing has dropped from 36.3% in 2010 to 29.9% in 2011. Among Class 5 children, the ability to do similar subtraction problems has dropped from 70.9% in 2010 to 61.0% in 2011.

Sibal called for a "proactive" role from states, saying the responsibility of education lay "squarely on their shoulders".

The Pratham report, however, shows improvement in enrolment levels. A total 96.7% of 6-14-year-olds in rural India are now enrolled in school, and the dropout rate has been arrested considerably.

Source: January 17, 2012/[Indian Express](#)

The Indian Education System!



navare.shreyas@gmail.com

Source: January 17, 2012/[Hindustan Times Blog](#)

Very few Indian professors respond to email: Study

Indian academics lag behind their western counterparts when it comes to responding to e-mails from students seeking research internships, says a study in the latest issue of Current Science.

The study, 'Responsiveness of academicians to e-mails: India Versus West', says only 16.38 % of

the 177 Indian professors replied to e-mails sent by students compared to 36.48% of the 233 professors in universities in the West.

Over a year, three undergraduate students of Manipal College of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Amity School of Engineering and Technology sent the 410 e-mail applications to professors at 21 institutions abroad, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, the University of Pennsylvania and the George Washington University, besides 16 institutions in India, including IIT-B and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.

"Non-responsiveness by Indian professors to e-mails is probably a cultural trait," said HC Pradhan, former director, Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education. "Senior professors are not net savvy; so their emails are handled by their secretaries who may take a call on whether or not a specific mail should be brought to the professor's notice." Last year, Abhishek Sharma, one of the researchers, did a two-month internship at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Boston, after failing to get a response from ten pharmacy institutes in India.

Professor Ranjan Banerjee, dean, research and development, IIT-B, said "The more specific a request, the more likely a professor will respond. Professors are unlikely to respond to mass mails where students send the same application to all faculty."

"No matter how busy they are, most professors abroad respond to mails," says Ankush Madan, who is pursuing his PhD at McGill University, Canada. "Many Indian professors are either not tech-savvy or think they are not obliged to respond to mails from students because they are in a position of power." In 2007, when Madan, 25, first applied for an internship to about 300 Indian professors while pursuing his second year of pharmacy at the Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, he received only 25 responses.

Having done his internship at the IIT-Madras, Madan then applied for a research internship the following year to around 500 professors in India, Germany and North America. While one in 20 Indian professors responded, the ratio was 10:20 for professors from foreign universities.

Some of the Indian institutes that responded to the e-mails sent by the study's researches include the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research at Pune and Bhopal with 42.86% professors responding from each. About 30% of the IIT-B professors responded while only 11.76% of the TIFR professors responded. None of the professors from

the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, replied to the emails.

However, the response was phenomenal to emails where students wrote in asking if they could participate in national and international conferences organised by the institutes. About 67% of the Indian professors and 100% of the professors in foreign universities responded to such emails.

"Professors, heads of departments and deans are critical decision makers, and their approach and responsiveness towards students' e-mails can harm the careers of students who find e-mails the most convenient, reliable and affordable," says the study.

Source: January 18, 2012/[Hindustan Times](#)

Female Politicians Inspire Women In India To Pursue More Education, MIT Study Finds

Increased presence and visibility of female politicians in local government raises the academic performance and career aspirations of young women in India, [according to a new study based on a survey of roughly 8,000 girls and their parents](#).

The study, co-authored by MIT Economist Esther Duflo, focused on young women in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, where for over 20 years one-third of village council positions have been randomly reserved for women as part of an ongoing effort to increase the presence of females in local government, [according to an MIT press release](#).

During 2007, Duflo and her colleagues traveled to 495 villages around India and surveyed families with children age 11 to 15 in an effort to determine whether there was a gap in expectations for male and female children.

In villages that never had female political leaders, researchers found parents were 45 percent less likely to expect their daughters to continue beyond secondary school. The girls themselves were 32 percent less likely to have those aspirations.

In contrast, parents in villages where female leaders serve in local government, like those in West Bengal, had the same educational expectations of their daughters as for their sons. The study also found that these girls were 25 percent more likely to expect to achieve the same level of educational as their male peers.

"We think this is due to a role-model effect: Seeing women in charge persuaded parents and teens that women can run things, and increased their ambitions," Duflo, a co-founder of MIT's Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), said in the news

release. "Changing perceptions and giving hope can have an impact on reality."

The study notes, however, that while attitudes have changed as more female political leaders take office, employment opportunities for young women did not.

Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg [discussed the issue of workplace inequality for women with the New Yorker last year](#), arguing the problem doesn't stem from sexism or society, but with women themselves.

When Sandberg spoke at the TEDWomen conference last year, she cited statistics showing that while more women are graduating from college and graduate school than men, they represent a tiny percentage of seats in national parliaments, in company boardrooms and in other sectors, [Ken Auletta wrote in the New Yorker](#).

A number of women in positions of power have made statements similar to Sandberg's.

"We need to convince women that the only way to really make a change is to stop complaining and just be the owner of power," [Senator Cecilia Lopez Montaño, the speaker of the opposition Liberal Party in Colombia, told The New York Times for a story about the rising number of women serving in parliament](#). "It is a huge fight because men have been controlling power for centuries."

Source: January 18, 2012/[Huffington Post](#)

50% quit school by the time they reach Class VIII

India's performance in [primary school enrollment](#) is regarded as one of its great achievements, and its near 100% net enrollment is one of the Millennium Development Goal targets it has reached ahead of time. But this milestone hides some shocking facts - just half the kids who enroll in Class I actually make it to Class VIII.

In 2009-10 (the latest year for which official data are available), 133.4 million children enrolled in Classes I-V, yet only 54.5 million made it to Classes VI-VIII. Most of these children dropping out of school are winding up with very little education at all; over 50% of all dropouts quit school before Class III. In rural areas, the most dropouts leave school in Class V, most likely because upper primary schools may be located some distance away.

In urban areas on the other hand, a third of dropouts leave school in Class II alone.

The flagship [Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan](#) aims to achieve universal primary education. While it has made significant strides towards achieving 100% primary enrollment, it is failing to keep kids in

school. In National Sample Surveys, boys report the need to earn an income as the biggest reason for dropping out, while for girls it is domestic chores as well as a lower emphasis on education from their families. Nor does it help matters that only half of all primary schools have a girls' toilet.

Moreover, parents are increasingly finding that even if they make the sacrifices necessary to send their kids to school, their children are not learning enough. The Annual State of Education Report, a publication brought out by the education non-profit Pratham measuring levels of learning in rural schools, shows that close to half of all children in Class V cannot read texts meant for students in Class II. Two thirds cannot solve a division sum.

In 2009, the centre set up the [Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan](#) to achieve a General Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 75% in secondary education (Class IX to XII) by 2020. The last year, the UPA government passed the landmark Right To Education (RTE) Act, enshrining a child's right to free and compulsory education in the Constitution.

However unless the government urgently addresses the dropout rate and makes sure that the impressive statistics of children who enroll in school are actually retained, this will become a right to enrollment, rather than a right to a real and full education.

Source: January 19, 2012/[Times of India](#)

Indian students prefer to live in India while being enrolled in UK institutions

Reflecting the changing dynamics of international education, more Indian students are choosing to continue living in India while being enrolled for courses and degree qualifications at higher education institutions in the UK, latest figures show.

Every year, thousands of self-financing Indian students arrive in UK to study at various universities and institutions, but increasingly, more students are preferring to stay and enrol on courses delivered in India, thereby reducing the cost of gaining UK qualifications considerably.

A spokesman of the [Higher Education Statistics Agency](#) (HESA) told PTI that during the academic year 2010-11, there were 8,340 students studying in India who were enrolled at UK institutions for higher education qualifications.

These include students enrolled on distance learning courses as well as on UK courses delivered in India by local partner organisations.

The figure of 8,340 students in India is said to be higher than in previous years.

The latest figure of Indian students coming to the UK to study is reported to be over 45,000, according to the British Council, but the increasing number of Indians choosing to continue living in India may reflect the increasing cost of studying here as well as the desire to avoid the tighter student visa regime.

Apart from the cost savings by living in India, the number of Indian students choosing not to come here but enrol for UK qualifications delivered in India is also likely to increase due to the [David Cameron](#) government scrapping the Post-Study Work (PSW) visa from April this year.

The PSW visa has been popular among self-financing Indian students who seek to recover some of the cost of their course by working here for two years after completing their course.

Source: January 22, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

Higher spending on education is not improving dismal outcomes

India came 72nd of 73 nations in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) competition, despite fielding students from its best states, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The dismal quality of Indian education is confirmed by the latest Annual Status of Education Report (ASER).

Throwing money ([Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan](#)) and legislation ([Right to Education Act](#)) at education has produced no quality gains at all. Abhiyan spending is up from Rs 7,166 crore in 2005-06 to Rs 21,000 crore last year, yet parents are shifting wholesale from free government schools to private options (schools and tuition).

In the last five years, private school enrolment has gone from 18.7% to 25.6% of the total, with Kerala already at 54%. The shift has not, however, improved dismal learning outcomes. Half the Class V children cannot read Class II texts, and 40% of Class V children cannot solve a two-digit subtraction. This represents a fall in outcomes, especially in government schools in the Hindi belt.

Higher spending by the government and parents has not yielded better outcomes. Many studies suggest that private schools have better outcomes, but the shift to private education has not achieved that at a macro-level. In 13,000 schools visited by surveyors, student absenteeism was 50% and teacher absenteeism 45%: neither seem motivated.

RTE mandates much higher spending on playgrounds, infrastructure, teacher recruitment and training. Yet, this does not improve outcomes. At best, RTE attempts only access to schooling, not to education. Worse, RTE expects all private schools

to attain impossible norms (playgrounds in areas with sky-high land prices, salaries on par with government teachers) by 2013. Will the government dare close down defaulting schools? Not a chance: defaulting schools serve half the country.

Instead, we will once again have a stupid law that is then violated widely, with netas and babus collecting kickbacks for overlooking violations. There is no accountability to students by state governments that fail to provide facilities or of teachers who fail to teach. Such a country will not overtake China any time soon.

Source: January 23, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

Indian culture reflected poorly in school syllabi, finds survey

Last year, while correcting the answersheets of a post-graduate dance exam, Kanak Rele, a Mohiniattam exponent, was left aghast when one of the students listed Michael Jackson and Hrithik Roshan as India's contribution to world dance. This incident made Rele, founder director of Nalanda Dance Research Centre, worry about the representation of Indian culture in the education system.

Last year, her Centre conducted a survey of more than 600 textbooks used by students studying in schools affiliated to the Maharashtra state board, CBSE and ICSE board and found that not more than 28% of the information in their curriculum relates to Indian culture.

"Our syllabi reflect our cultural heritage very poorly," said Rele.

The survey, 'Discovering India - A Survey of School Textbooks and Curriculum in Maharashtra,' was conducted over 13 months by eight researchers and was commissioned by the Union ministry of culture.

The survey found that texts such as Ramayana, Mahabharata and tales from Panchatantra, Jataka and Hitopadesha were omitted from textbooks but Aesop's Fables had been included.

"It is shocking that the south and north-eastern parts of India are almost neglected in the textbooks which are overwhelmingly tilted toward central and north India," said the survey report, which rated books on different parameters such as tradition and culture, history, heritage, Indian thought and spirituality.

The researchers analysed every lesson in 638 textbooks of three languages (Hindi, Marathi and English), maths, science, social studies and Sanskrit and compared references of any of the above parameters to other information.

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) textbooks fared the worst with only 22% of the information relating to Indian culture, followed by Central Board of Secondary Education had 26% and the Indian Certificate for Secondary Education (ICSE) 27%.

"I believe Indian culture is very well represented in history and geography. It depends on how progressive each school is to inculcate culture education through different books," said Perin Bagli regional secretary, Association of ICSE Schools in Maharashtra.

The institute submitted the survey findings to the ministry in October 2011 and has also applied for conducting a similar survey in other states of India.

Source: January 24, 2012/[Hindustan Times](#)

10% of kids in India have learning disability: Experts

At least 10% of children in the country have a learning disability, say experts at Learn 2012, an international conference on inclusive education and vocational options, here on Thursday.

Speaking at a pre-conference press meet, organizers said one in 200 people in India have autism, while an estimated 30 million children are known to be dyslexic. The only way to handle the situation is early detection and intervention by which the symptoms of unacceptable language and behaviour can be minimized, they said. The two-day international conference will begin on Friday.

"We have attained success in mainstreaming children with autism spectrum disorders and learning disabilities. We are now thinking of vocational options for them to train in so that they will become self-reliant and eventually independent," said Lakshmi Krishnakumar, learning disability director of Sankalp, an institution providing remedial instruction to children with learning disabilities and autism.

Four experts from the UK, with experience in designing and implementing vocational training and inclusive education modules to children in the UK, are participating in the conference. Special education consultant Christine Morris, who has spent the last 20 years working with teachers in Indian schools, said, "I am going to talk about how to engage all the children in the class. Children who are often called naughty, troublesome or lazy actually have needs to be addressed."

Source: January 27, 2012/[Times of India](#)

India's Quality Challenge

With Indians poised to compose close to one-third of the global working age population within the next couple of decades, the country's burgeoning higher

education sector is under scrutiny. To make the most of its economic potential, India requires a skilled and educated workforce. But currently, despite the dramatic expansion of Indian higher education institutions over the past decade, questions as to the quality of education in the country remain.

A KPMG report, [Indian Higher Education—The Defining Years](#), cites the following as problems afflicting the Indian HE sector:

Lack of qualified faculty

Ineffective accreditation system

Low employability of graduates

According to Times Higher Education, India has not one university in the global top 50 despite having the third-largest HE system in the world. Meanwhile, the OECD's Secretariat's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) recently ranked India 72 out of 73 countries (based on 500,000 15-year-old students taking the test). Suffice it to say that India has a long way to go before it can offer not only capacity, but also sufficient quality, to its university-aged students. This suggests that:

Demand for study abroad among Indian students will remain strong as they search for HE institutions that can give them the accreditation and education they require

There are opportunities for institutions and organisations wishing to partner with Indian HE institutions in terms of joint programmes or capacity/quality-building initiatives

It bears noting that while the global assessments and rankings of Indian universities and student ability paint Indian education in a grim light, the reality is not so simple. Usree Bhattacharya, an Indian-born PhD candidate in an American university argues in [The Times of India](#) that "the Indian context is so complex, so multi-dimensional, that trying to understand its depth merely through a numbered tale is not just silly, but detrimental to our ability to work on fixing what's wrong."

There are of course excellent Indian institutions offering quality education right now; the challenge for the country's, and the world's, educators is to bring still more of the education system to a higher standard for this pivotal world market.

Source: January 27, 2012/[icef](#)

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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

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