



**Announcements**

**Design Innovation 2012**

Apeejay Stya University and **Massachusetts Institute of Technology-Media Lab (MIT Media Lab)** are hosting the Design Innovation workshop in New Delhi on 26-30 March 2012, 2011 to engage and inspire students across all disciplines in inventing the future and motivating design driven innovation in our Education system. Please [click here](#) for more

**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**

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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Carrying forth its legacy and mission to usher a new wave of social change through research and innovation, Apeejay Stya University has joined hands with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology-Media Lab (MIT Media Lab) to host the **"Design Innovation Workshop"** from 26 – 30 March, 2012, in New Delhi. "Design Innovation India Workshop" aims to engage and inspire students across all disciplines right from pre-primary to tertiary level in inventing the future and motivating design driven innovation in our Education system. The workshop will further strengthen India's presence on the Design world map through this International Conference-cum-Workshop.

Design education is one of the key thrust areas at the Apeejay institutions for almost 45 years now. ASU, India's first Liberal Arts & Meta University, is focused on research and technology and stands out as an amalgam of best international academic practices and Indian value system. Taking its vision to a larger audience, the "Design Innovation India Workshop" is an attempt by ASU to engage students and industry partners in exhaustive ideation, design, and implementation of prototypes together with Media Lab and local mentors. The workshop will provide a training platform to students on principals of design and techniques for innovation and empower them to build their ideas in a short time frame. It offers participants and attendees a flavor of how the Media Lab "promotes innovation and invents the future."

The five-day long workshop will comprise brain storming sessions, conference, talks, tutorials and exhibition that will be open to visitors from academia, industry leaders and the media. To be anchored by leading MIT researchers, the five Tracks (Themes) of the Workshop include:

*Technologies for creativity and learning:* Explore the design of innovative educational technologies and creative learning environments by drawing on specific case studies. Engage with new educational technologies, share learnings and discuss strategies to design new-age academic models.

*Mobility, Energy and Housing Innovations:* Meet the challenge to think about mobility, energy and housing innovations like lightweight electric vehicles, smart

grid technologies, transformable housing, persuasive interfaces for energy conversation and incentives to encourage the use of more energy efficient mobility systems.

*Imaging on Steroids:* Exploit the potential of the billion cameras placed on our cell-phones, cars, houses perhaps our bodies, to best capture and display visual information. Explore technology, single shot 3D capture, post-capture refocusing of photographs, glasses-free 3D displays, collaborative imaging and much more!

*Living Mobile:* Gear up to design and build prototypes of new applications for living mobile. Play around with large-scale and small scale mobility around the house or office for using cell phones to augment social situations of all kind.

*Design for Sustainability:* Revisit the concept of sustainability with focused action plans to advance sustainable product and services design in diverse fields ranging from governance to education. Learn through relevant examples and case studies to design practical solutions to tackle this challenge. **For more details** on the Tracks/Schedule/People Profiles/FAQs & Application visit : [apeejay.edu/asumit/](http://apeejay.edu/asumit/)

#### About Apeejay Stya University

Established by Apeejay Stya Education Foundation in the state of Haryana, ASU aims to be a seat of global learning that brings about transformation of society through value-based education, man-making and nation-building, by blending together the dual identities of a technology and research based university with a Liberal Arts institution. ASU intends to provide students not only 'education for living and livelihood' but also 'education for life'.

#### About MIT Media Lab

The MIT Media Lab is a place where the future is lived, not imagined. Our domain is applying unorthodox research approaches for envisioning the impact of emerging technologies on everyday life. Unconstrained by traditional disciplines, Lab designers, engineers, artists, and scientists work atelier-style, conducting more than 350 projects that range from neuro-engineering, to how children learn, to a stackable, electric car for tomorrow's city.

## ASPECT

### Why a Liberal Arts Education Matters

Well, what is it going to be: engineering, medicine or commerce?

Most 12th-grade students in India are faced with this question, as they struggle to fit themselves into one of a few narrowly defined boxes. Heaven forbid someone might enjoy reading both Newton's laws and Plato's dialogues! Plato is clearly a waste of time with no practical, remunerative value. Or is it?

I grew up in Kolkata, India, and came to the United States as a freshman to study physics at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, Calif. Harvey Mudd is a unique liberal arts college which specializes in science and engineering, while also honing its graduates to be well read in the humanities and social sciences. While taking intensive physics and mathematics classes, I also studied history, economics, linguistics, philosophy and creative writing. I am now pursuing a Ph.D. in theoretical physics at Princeton University.

Based on my experiences, I wanted to advocate for the value and necessity of a broad, liberal education rich in both technical subjects and the humanities.

The pragmatic attitude taken by most Indian students and parents is certainly understandable in a country where millions of students regularly compete for scarce college placements and job opportunities. The entrance requirements at Indian universities have steadily risen, with certain premier colleges in New Delhi posting the mind-boggling admission cutoff of 99 percent last year.

In this high-stress setting, students want to study whatever will land them a job, creating a college experience much more akin to "technical training" rather than intellectual exploration. However, I believe it is precisely today's environment with a rapidly expanding, educated working class in India that makes an interdisciplinary liberal arts education all the more necessary.

In a global world dominated by so-called knowledge workers, the ability to communicate effectively and work well on a team is imperative. But besides raw technical ability, how do you develop the myriad other skills needed to distinguish yourself and excel in your job? How can you learn to inspire people so they want to work towards the sales goals you've set?

As a start, try an oratory class and read speeches given by paradigm-changing leaders. To learn the

brevity, precision and charisma needed to write a funding proposal for your dream project, try a creative writing class. To incorporate vastly different perspectives from your team members, try classes in psychology and philosophy. These may help you understand where they might be coming from.

And nothing could be more practical than the humanities.

As the story goes, when three blind men felt an elephant, one concluded it was flat like a wall, another thought it sharp like a spear and the last was sure an elephant was thin like a snake. All were correct in their own way, just incomplete.

The ability to synthesize different perspectives into the big picture is far more powerful than narrow expertise in any single field. The social sciences offer perspectives from vantage points separated by time, place and society. Drawing and painting offer perspectives on what perspective even means. Critical thinking is the logical result of being able to simultaneously synthesize multiple ideas in one's mind.

Real-world problems rarely ever have textbook solutions. More than anything, the purpose of a college education is to learn how to think critically and what questions to ask. Liberal arts colleges aim to mold their students into well-rounded, well-informed global citizens with a wide skill set — whether it is through elective or voluntary courses that push specialized students to be broader, or general requirements that force every graduate to know at least something about certain subjects.

In the throes of our current economic crisis, all conventional strategies for success are moot. All the more reason for a liberal arts education that creates resilient people who can invent creative solutions and always have new ways by which to try things differently.

As Albert Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited; imagination encircles the world."

**Source:** February 01, 2012/[New York Times](#)

## NEWS

### New evaluation system designed to upgrade school education

Come June and the state's primary education will take a quantum leap with an innovative evaluation system that will do much more than track students' academic progress. Right from emotional quotient to analytical skills and social interactivity will be

mapped according to this system called Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE).

CCE will become the norm from June for standards VI, VII and VIII in all government and private schools. From 2013, the Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training (GCERT) will implement CCE from standard I. This will be along with recommendations of the Right To Education Act. According to GCERT officials RTE is also going to be mandatory from 2013 for all government and private schools.

The CCE will map a variety of subjects including physical, mental, emotional and intellectual development of the students every year. GCERT director M N Bhad said: "The reason for this move is to ensure all-round development of students. The evaluation will highlight strengths and weaknesses of each student. Teaching styles will then be changed and adapted to suit individual students. This will be much more effective than the generalized approach that most schools follow these days. We shall begin by June 2012, all necessary rules and regulations have been prepared."

The evaluation, said GCERT officials, will be put in the report card that shall be prepared for each student after every academic year. The card shall also contain medical details including height, weight and ailments if any. The GCERT has consulted no less than 300 experts on the rules and modules for CCE.

"This is more like tracing the child's progress through the years. Attendance, preference for activities will be other subjects covered under CCE. For instance if a child is a loner or likes to be in groups, then the teachers' approach towards him will be adapted suitably. His academic leanings will also be mapped as will his interaction skills with other students along with writing skills or any other special abilities," said a senior GCERT official.

The card at the end of the year will be comprehensive. "Any teacher reading the card in the next class will know what the weaknesses are and which areas need more attention for students in any classroom. This will ensure a holistic development for each student," said GCERT officials.

**Source:** February 01, 2012/[Times of India](#)

### **Azim Premji laments government failure on education front**

Billionaire Azim Premji, who is setting up schools and a university for higher education named after his IT company Wipro, laments that the

government has really messed up the country's education systems.

"I am finding that the government is so weak in execution. See what a mess they made of our public distribution system, of public and primary education. Thirty per cent of boys and girls in Standard V can't read and write," Premji told Business Today magazine in an exclusive interview.

"It is really frightening. There are six million teachers; one million never attend school," he remarked.

Premji said the Wipro University has taken off well. "We have got first rate professors. We are so pleased. We have got 40 professors on board. We have hired from all over, including the IIMs," he disclosed.

He said there were five expatriates among the faculty now who are willing to come to India for three years at Indian salaries with housing. The university is running two courses now and has 94 students on its rolls.

"We started with two masters in teaching and community development. Next year, our target is to take in 400. We are taking them from smaller towns, we are taking them with field experience in teaching or development," he explained.

The Wipro chairman who is running the university through the \$ 2 billion Premji Foundation said about 35 per cent of the students are women and 80 per cent plus students are on scholarship.

"Our fees account for 10 per cent of our operating expenses. It is all funded by the income of the endowment," he informed.

The Wipro founder derives great satisfaction out of having set up the philanthropic Premji Foundation and said it was the right thing to do. "How much can a human being consume? Tell me that," he asked in a philosophical vein.

"I am not a person who believes in the legacy of leaving all the wealth to the next generation," he said.

He is of the view that there is no better way to husband the wealth in terms of fiduciary responsibility than through a charitable foundation which is irrevocable. Premji who has revamped the Wipro management to rev up the firm after the economic slowdown says the leadership pipeline in the IT major is strong.

He said some of the exits have given chance to younger people to assume positions of higher leadership.

He said Wipro was selectively recruiting from outside - areas where they bring in special skills, experience or track record - "because we need

speed now. And we can't learn it by trial and error," he added.

**Source:** February 01, 2012/[India Today](#)

### **Vocational education in state to be strengthened**

Vocational training will be developed on a large scale to improve the quality of carpenters, drivers and other workers, said adviser to Prime Minister and chief mentor of Kerala's Development Planning Sam Pitroda to a question on how poverty and unemployment can be alleviated in our country. Strengthening vocational education through information technology is one of the 10 projects suggested for boosting the state's growth.

Pitroda was interacting with Amrita University students of Kochi, Kollam, Coimbatore, Bangalore and Mysore, from Delhi using A-view students platform as part of their technofest.

To a query on how to make communication technology accessible to layman, he said that the government was spending a lot of resources for creating the platform for delivering public services. Rs 15,000 crore is being spent on sharing information and creating new jobs and Rs 10,000 crore will be spent on building local area networks and `30 to `40 crore is being spent on laying optical fibre for various purposes, including education and teaching through cell phones, he said. "The process has started. It will take time," he said.

"We have to focus on the future of 55,050 million youngsters. If each builds oneself with confidence, the nation will build by itself", he said.

When asked why failure was considered a sin, he motivated the students by telling them to accept failure as a part of growing as it would lead to success. "There are plenty of opportunities and one must approach them with discipline, criticism, creativity and respect. Think big and start small. There are problems appearing everywhere in the fields of infrastructure, power, energy and other sectors. These problems should give rise to ideas on how they can be resolved, he said.

Speaking on innovation he said that it should be made in all spheres.

**Source:** February 02, 2012/[IBN Live](#)

### **HRD ministry mulling Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education**

Acknowledging that research on various aspects of higher education is limited in India, the HRD ministry has proposed the setting up of a Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE).

CPRHE would be an independent autonomous research organization to be registered under the Societies' Act, but fully and liberally funded by the Central government or the University Grants Commission (UGC). It would be headed by an eminent scholar, and will consist of inter-disciplinary-oriented faculty of about 10 members, drawn from areas such as economics, sociology, philosophy, history, political science and public administration.

The proposal comes in the wake of a large-scale transformation that is expected in the higher education sector in the coming years. "Building a strong, vibrant and sustainable higher education edifice that makes a significant contribution to the national development, requires deep knowledge of the system, how it evolved over the years," the concept note says, adding that present research in higher education has been lacklustre and lopsided.

CPRHE's mission is to become a "knowledge warehouse and a cutting-edge centre of research on higher education policy". Its main objective would be to promote excellence in higher education, ensuring improved access, equity and quality. The Centre would be an inter-disciplinary research unit, but would limit itself to policy, planning and development aspects of higher education.

CPHRE would cover higher education policy analysis, improvement of governance of higher education, dissemination of comprehensive information base and bring out quality publications. It would focus on all kinds of higher education - arts, science, technical and professional. The Centre would also extend support to and promote policy research in higher education by instituting short/medium term visiting fellowship programme and also by giving financial support. It would have tie-ups with national and international organizations.

The Centre is expected to be valuable for the academic community, the policymakers and the society at large in providing deeper understanding on the complexities and challenges that the higher education system faces, and on the reforms required to tide over the inadequacies.

**Source:** February 02, 2012/[The Times of India](#)

### **Higher education space in India up for overhaul**

*Declining occupancy levels in technical and business schools may force many colleges closing down or change hands, a study says*

Declining occupancy levels in engineering and business schools in India may force a number of

colleges closing down or change hands over the next few years, a study says.

According to Crisil Research— India's largest independent and integrated research house— a shakeout in the higher education space in India on account of declining occupancy levels is anticipated.

The average occupancy rate declined in 2011-12 to around 67 per cent for engineering colleges and to about 65 per cent for business schools (B-schools), the Crisil survey said.

Occupancy levels are under pressure as the number of seats on offer has increased significantly and several colleges have not been able to equip students to meet the requirements of corporate India.

It has also impacted the ability of several lower-rung colleges to sustain operations.

Despite low penetration of higher education in India and healthy demand for skilled manpower, colleges are struggling to fill seats.

The survey indicates a wide variation in occupancy rates across various states and grades. For example, engineering colleges in Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP) had an average occupancy of around 60 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, which is much lower than the pan-India average.

Tier-4 B-schools, estimated to account for around 36 per cent of the total seats, had an average occupancy of only around 50 per cent.

Occupancy levels are under pressure due to the significant increase in the number of seats across colleges, shortage of skilled faculty, absence of industry link-ups and increasing awareness amongst students about the quality of education imparted by colleges.

The number of seats offered by AICTE-approved B-schools has increased almost fourfold to 3.52 lakhs in 2011-12 from 0.94 lakhs in 2006-07, while that for engineering colleges has zoomed to 14.85 lakhs from 5.50 lakhs during the same period.

Moreover, there is also a significant concentration of supply, with AP, UP, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh together accounting for close to 65 per cent of the engineering seats on offer.

Quality of education is another major concern, as an overwhelming percentage of students passing out from lower-rung engineering colleges and B-schools lack skill sets needed to start working, after graduating, without extensive training.

**Source:** February 02, 2012/[iGovernment](#)

## Higher education opportunities for Indian students in USA increasing

The first option that comes to the mind of any Indian student when he/she chooses higher education is the USA. This has been the trend over the past three decades. Though the global markets are going through ups and downs and other countries like UK, Australia, Europe etc have opened up their doors for international students, the conventional mindset for all the students is to opt for USA as the first or the final destination.

A total of six universities rank among the top ten best universities of the world. They are Yale University, MIT, Harvard, University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia. A range of courses are offered across these institutions and the experts suggest the key lies in picking the right kind of course and then also bear in the mind the cost to be incurred for that. However, things change for medical education.

Due to the difference in the curriculum and the high cost of study, very few international students opt for it. Same is the case with the law stream. LSAT is mandatory for getting into law school and there are no undergraduate law courses. Cities like Boston, Cambridge are the educational hubs owing to the large presence of educational institutions. The concentration of Indian students is more towards cities like New York, Chicago, Austin, Los Angeles etc.

On the bright side, the presence of reputable universities is high in USA, they are well resourced and the process of admission is quite streamlined. The support for international students is quite high. All are English based. On the flip side, the tuitions fees is high, international students are not accepted easily and the visa measures are quite tough. Also, the employment situation has become rather difficult post study. The crime rate, competitions are also factors which must be watched out.

**Source:** February 02, 2012/[Bharat Student](#)

## Indian Students Choosing Public Universities in the US for their Higher Education

With the rupee disparege against the dollar and the economy goes downward swing, most of the Students in India are choosing Public Varsities in the US for their higher studies than the private ones because they are too expensive.

Every year around 100,000 Indian students register their names in US [Universities](#), but large number of students are preferring Varsities with lower fees. This report was given by a career counseling website.

The report by [www>YourNextLeap.com](http://www>YourNextLeap.com) based on a random survey of over 1,000 students shows that they prefer to study in the Universities with lesser fees than the ones with higher fee .

The survey also shows that 43 percent of the candidates selected public Universities in 2011-2012, It will significantly increased upto 62 percent from the coming academic session.

Mohit Gundecha, CEO and co-founder of the website said that, "Students shows more interest to apply for the universities like San Jose State University and University of Florida while the popularity of private universities like North Eastern University.

Out of the survey taken to the 1,000-plus students, a majority of 40 percent aspirants applied for universities with fee between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

While 27 percent said they had opted for universities with a fee above \$25,000, some 16 percent said they have applied for universities with a fee between \$20,000 and \$25,000. Another 17 percent chose universities with a fee below \$15,000.

He also said "Indian students are stuck in the difficulty between affordability and give preference to top universities," .

The Open Doors Report published annually by the Institute of International Education (IIE) in partnership with the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs reveals that after Chinese Students Indian students make the second largest group of foreign students in the US.

"There is a visible increase in applications to public universities which are easier on the pocket for students and their parents. The survey also shows that there is a visible interest in applying for scholarships and interest-free loans to offset the increased monetary pressure," Gundecha said.

The Universities Include North Carolina State University, San Jose State University, State University of New York and University of Texas charged only low fees for students, reveals the report.

"The number of students seeking for [scholarship](#) has increased upto 63% in 2012 over 2011", he added.

The website offers an online scholarship finder with which students can search for over 50 scholarships worth Rs.10 crore (Rs.100 million) and get various funding options like interest-free loans, travel grants and fellowships which cover tuition fee, etc.

**Source:** February 02, 2012/[I education News](#)

## Centre readies plan to check 'offending' schools

School education in India has undergone a tremendous transformation. But the one aspect where change is felt the most has been in the fact that paying for school now occupies a thick slice in the family budget pie, something that earlier went blissfully unnoticed.

The soaring fees, the rise of private schools, the manner in which school admission processes are designed, the overt demand made for donations, the campus advertisements that lure parents, and the overarching truth that education has been reduced to a business for many, has forced the government to design an act to check and punish unfair practices in the trade called school education.

So a school will invite action for discriminating against children on the basis of religion, caste, creed or gender, or forcing children to speak in English and neglecting the mother tongue or resorting to corporal punishment, or pressurising kids with heavy curriculum load of a higher class.

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), which met in the national capital last week, has finalised its decision to draft The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Elementary, Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools Bill, which will keep a vigil on the manner in which schools function.

### *BLACK MARKS GALORE*

Demanding donations for a seat

Overcharging for school prospectus and other admission-related material

School teachers taking private tuition

Not refunding fees

Not sticking to the syllabi

Engaging untrained teachers

schools may be fined up to 50 lakh

The CABE has decided to prepare legislation to keep a check on schools. The legislation would provide for criminal prosecution and civil penalties and state education tribunals will be set up to monitor the adherence of the provisions of this act.

Schooling was mostly gratis, a service largely provided by the government; but today it wont be wrong to say that the private sector has shown an increasing interest in this space. Close to 40% of Indian schools are private institutes; some aided, most unaided. The idea is not to police schools, said a CABE member. The inherent rationale of the legislation would be to promote transparency through mandatory disclosure in the prospectus and the website, and provide adequate and accessible recourse for remedial action arising out of non-

adherence of self-disclosed details and norms, said the CABE note.

The proposal provides for imposition of monetary penalties of up to Rs 50 lakh for violation of provisions of various clauses that are declared. Offences are proposed to be tried by a court not below that of a metropolitan magistrate or a judicial magistrate first class. All offences, except those concerning the demand of capitation fee, are proposed to be made non-cognisable offences, read the CABE note.

### *Common Offences*

Non-disclosure of seats available

Allowing the sale of gutka, tobacco and junk food inside or around the school campus

Admission through non-transparent means

Level of education services not matching with what is promised or disclosed in the brochure

Placing misleading advertisements in the media

Misleading advertisements that exaggerate the performance of students in examinations

Underpaying staff

Withholding the certificates or documents of students who wish to join another school

**Source:** February 03, 2012/[Times of India](#)

### **Meta-university may start from next academic session: Sibal**

HRD minister [Kapil Sibal](#) announced here on Friday that a network of universities, forming a meta-university, will allow students to pick courses from across disciplines from different institutions from the coming academic session (2012-13).

He explained that this would reinterpret the concept of a university as not just a traditional, physical space of learning, but as a repository of knowledge and information that can be delivered in multiple ways and can be accessed from anywhere and anytime.

Addressing a conference on 'One Globe 2012: Uniting Knowledge Communities' organized by US-India [Business Council](#), Sibal said: "The 21st century meta-university would be a network and an ecosystem rather than a single brick and mortar space. Though the internet and technology are fundamental to this conception of the meta-university, at the crux is not a new technology but a 'new pedagogy' that is more in tune with the requirements of the knowledge society of the 21st century." Ten foreign universities that the [Institute of International Education](#) is bringing from the US are participating in the two-day conference.

Referring to the announcement made by the PM two months ago on the formation of a meta-university with the broadband backbone linking institutions of excellence in specific fields of knowledge, Sibal added: "To give this idea a shape we have mounted a National Mission on Education through ICT to link in 25,000 colleges and 2,000 polytechnics for enabling e-learning and content sharing."

The minister said that there is a need to open the doors to reputed foreign education institutions to usher in global competition in the [higher education](#) sector as well as to expand its base. He said that the government is seeking to open up establishment of foreign educational institutions in India through enactment of a Foreign Education Providers Act, which will allow for 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in higher education.

Stressing on the need for the participation of the private sector to give a boost to the gross enrolment ratio, Sibal urged to increase it from existing 15% to 30% by next eight years. Hence, the aim is to raise the present 16 million enrolment in higher education to 42 million by 2020. "A second wave of creating institution of excellence has been initiated by starting eight Indian Institute of Technologies, five Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, 16 central universities, two schools of Planning and Architecture, three Indian Institutes of Management, and 10 National Institutes of Technologies. The 14 innovation universities are also on anvil for setting up benchmarks in education and research. We are also aiming to establish at least 50 research parks for quality research programs. But, we are depending heavily on the private sector to come forward and participate in this endeavour," Sibal added.

**Source:** February 04, 2012 [Times of India](#)

### **Focus on tech in higher education**

The fourth edition of Universities of India, an annual knowledge conclave, was inaugurated in Mamallapuram on Friday. The conclave, a joint effort by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Bangalore-based Mindlogicx Infratec, will focus on 'Technology in higher education'. The two-day conference will see heads of institutions from across India and industry chiefs mull over the need of the hour in the field of education. Speaking at the inaugural session, Suresh Elangovan, founder, CEO and MD, Mindlogicx Infratec, said, "This is a platform where vice-chancellors of various universities and industry captains can discuss and come to a consensus on what the academia require vis-a-vis the industry."

Dr SS Mantha, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education, spoke about the need to

improve the Gross Enrolment Ratio in India. He shared with the audience the new format of vocational learning that would soon be launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

He said, "There are seven certificate levels, starting from class 9 going on till the Bachelor's level. At the first certificate level, ie. Class 9, of the 1,000-odd hours of learning, we are proposing a 800:200 ratio of general and skill based learning. This ratio will gradually change such that skills get more weightage as compared with general learning." The course material for 10 subject areas was ready. Colleges in Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh had already shown interest in adopting this pattern of study and Tripura and Assam were next in line, he said.

Elangovan, who is also a member of CII's National Committee on Higher Education said, "CII will make a memo based on the discussions and brainstorming sessions during these two days and pass it on to the government. We hope that the Union HRD minister will consider our suggestions."

Others present were, Nandini Rangaswamy, Chairperson-Education Forum, CII South Region, Chandrasekharan N, convener, TN Education panel, Meenakshi Kumar, Chairperson, CII Puducherry State Council, and Shalini Sharma, Head-Higher Education CII.

**Source:** February 05, 2012/[ibn Live](#)

### 'UK scholarships not utilised fully by Indian students'

Scholarships offered by educational institutions in UK are not being fully utilised by Indian students.

Participants of the 'Education UK exhibition' held in the city on Saturday said that there were many scholarships for which Indian students were eligible but not grabbing the opportunity.

The exhibition had participants from 38 UK universities who interacted with city students and education enthusiasts. These universities encouraged students to contact them or their officials directly as against going through agents. Universities such as Kings College London, University of Bradford, University of Bedfordshire, University of Hull, University of Sunderland, Leeds Metropolitan University and many others participated at the exhibition. The education fair will now be held in Chennai, Bangalore and Pune.

**Source:** February 05, 2012/[Times of India](#)

### Universities to Skyrocket in India?

India's education minister, Kapil Sibal, has promised to double the size of the higher education system by 2020. Chiranib Sen, a professor in

Bangalore, doesn't believe India is prepared for such a leap. "If you can't manage what you have," Sen asked, "how are you going to manage even more?" The question is not unfounded. Many faculty think the only way this goal will be reached is for the government to subsidize India's higher education system. Without this, the quality of education at these universities will be impossible to maintain.

As it stands, 40% of faculty positions are vacant. Salaries at Indian universities are not competitive with those in business or industry. This encourages students to get Master's degrees and go directly into their field, instead of pursuing PhDs and entering academia, worsening the faculty shortage.

And there is little about academia to attract them – even simple amenities like space to grade papers is in short supply. And while the number of private colleges is rising to meet the demand for higher education, the cost of attending such schools is prohibitive for most students. Many professors believe the problem with this goes beyond inequality. They think that the best, creative new ideas come when people from many walks of life are made to interact and collaborate. While India may not meet its goal of 30% of eligible students enrolled in higher education by 2020, it is making progress. The government has officially acknowledged the faculty shortages, and higher education is on people's minds. This, in and of itself, is a huge improvement.

**Source:** February 05, 2012/[open equal](#)

### Five-Point Agenda for Rejuvenating Social Science Research Announced Shri Kapil Sibal inaugurates International Conference on Indian Social Sciences in the Changing World: Roles, Responsibilities and Reforms

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development announced a five-point agenda for rejuvenating social science research in the country. He was speaking at the inaugural of the 'International Conference on Indian Social Sciences in the Changing World: Roles, Responsibilities and Reforms'. He said, "Firstly, we need to attract bright minds to social science research in the country. To that end, ICSSR shall proceed to develop a Fellowship scheme for embedding young scholars in the universities interested in pursuit of social science research. Simultaneously, we also need to enhance both the quantum and number of fellowships awarded every year."

"Secondly, ICSSR can create a network of eminent academics to collaborate on creation of academic content including publications of texts, digests and

manuscripts in specific areas in social sciences. These manuscripts would provide an inexpensive aid to teachers and students in social sciences and would be available in different languages. The manuscripts could be delivered electronically leveraging on the gains of the National Knowledge Network which aims to interlink all institutions of higher learning with an information super-highway."

"Thirdly, ICSSR could take the lead to develop a Social Sciences Knowledge and Research Network as an open source, virtual assembly of research papers of quality. This Network could host peer reviewed research papers and Ph.D theses in social sciences, both priced and free, depending on the choice of the author. The SSKRN could also provide authorised translations of hosted research papers in various languages for the community of researchers in the country."

"Fourth, in order to develop capacity in new and frontier areas of trans-disciplinary research, ICSSR could establish a National Social Science Research Innovation Centre. The Centre could identify innovative research methodologies in frontier areas of knowledge and assist in building a network for carrying forward the research interests of institutions, scholars and teachers."

"Fifth, while the field of sciences recognises advances through research through the Bhatnagar Awards, there is no comparative recognition to high quality research in social sciences. We propose to institute ten annual awards to recognise advancement of knowledge in social sciences. I hope that due recognition to social scientists and their contributions would spur thousands of aspiring scholars in the future." These awards will be known as the Amartya Sen Awards.

Shri Sibal also stated that the functioning of the ICSSR has been reviewed by an eminent group of social scientists. He said that the Committee has given valuable suggestions which are intended to be taken forward in the Twelfth Plan. He also underlined the need for greater research in areas such as agriculture and defence, where inadequate research is done at present. He also pointed out that the government would continue funding these research institutes, as at present there is no other source of funding for them.

Speaking on the occasion Shri Abhijit Sen, Member Planning Commission underlined the need for ICSSR Institutes to focus on research that helps achieve an inclusive society for the country. He pointed out that the advantage of the network of Institutes that ICSSR has could help towards this end. He also stated that the institutes must have a

link to universities and on the need for mid level research.

The key note address for the Conference was given by Professor Pranab K. Bardhan, University of California, Berkeley who underlined the need for greater social science research in India, especially mid level research. He also pointed out areas where research in social sciences needs to be undertaken.

This two-day conference will have four plenary sessions on Global Challenges and Social Science, Indian Social Science: Trends and Gaps, Institutional and Financial Strategies, International Experience: Approaches and Institutional Mechanisms and six Technical sessions on Emerging Global Scenario and the Place of Social Sciences, Indian Social Sciences in the World Today: Emerging Issues and Gaps, Approaches to Social Science Research in India, Social Science Research and Policy: Emerging Priorities, National and Regional Challenges for Strengthening Teaching and Research and Financial and Institutional Strategies: Comparative Experiences.

**Source:** February 06, 2012/[PIB](#)

### **India's Ambitious 'Innovation Universities' Plan Will Be Scaled Back**

India's ambitious plan to start 14 so-called [innovation universities](#), which are meant to be model institutions, some built with assistance from foreign partners, has been scaled down by the education ministry, [reports](#) the Indian Express. The effort had attracted the interest of [American universities](#), including Yale.

The ministry sent a note to the Indian Cabinet saying the number of proposed institutions will be reduced without specifying by exactly how many. A ministry source told the newspaper that only a couple will be started because it isn't feasible to start so many new universities. The legislation authorizing the new universities, the Universities of Innovation bill, is expected to be presented to the Cabinet soon, after which it has to be passed by Parliament.

**Source:** February 06, 2012/[Chronicle](#)

### **Shri Kapil Sibal Launches NVEQF**

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has launched the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) to be implemented in polytechnics, Engineering Colleges and other colleges in the University systems from 2012-13. The programmes are sector specific and the sectors like IT, Media, Entertainment, Telecommunications, Mobile Communications,

Automobile, Construction, Retail, Food Processing, Tourism, Hotels, Jewellery Design and Fashion Design and many other have been identified for implementation. The launch was done by Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, here today.

The Scheme envisages Seven certificate levels with each certificate level with approximately 1000 hours each certificate, with each 1000 hours being made of certain number of hours for vocational competency based skill modules and the rest for general learning simultaneously integrated and providing a Diploma for vocational education after the certificate level five or leading to a Degree for vocational education after level seven in the university system, subject to their statutory approval, is highlight of the scheme.

A student can choose to avail of competency based skill learning along with general education in this scheme without losing the possibility of changing course and moving at any certificate level into a formal system of education and vice versa. This would ultimately provide a full multi-entry exist system between vocational education, general education and the job market.

AICTE would seek to provide the requisite statutory approvals to any institutions wishing to conduct these programmes from the Academic Year 2012 throughout the country. The institutions can choose a maximum of 500 students per institute in any five sectors, 100 students per sector.

This is expected to cater to at least 5 million students for vocational degree and diploma every year, which can provide self-employment or being meaningfully employed if even 1/3 of the institutions are approved to conduct these programmes.

NVEQF is a great initiative by MHRD that needs to be propagated and followed throughout the country that has a potential to increase the GER from 15 to double this value by the end of 2020, simultaneously providing meaningful employment.

**Source:** February 07, 2012/[PIB](#)

### India to set up testing authority on ETS lines

*It will begin by managing tests such as the AIEEE and the joint entrance exam of the IIT-JEE, both key graduation entrance tests for engineering and science fields*

India has decided to establish a statutory institution along the lines of the US-based Educational Testing Service (ETS) that operates the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) and the SAT exams.

The body will take over the preparation and administration of entrance exams, besides the delivery of national-level exams through a dedicated group of professionals, researchers and independent experts having knowledge of the assessment and testing field, without involving teachers.

It will begin by managing tests such as the All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) and the joint entrance exam of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT-JEE), both key graduation entrance tests for engineering and science fields.

“We have decided to put in place a national testing authority as a statutory body,” said Kapil Sibal, minister for human resource development (HRD).

To start with, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will be home to the institution, which will graduate into a full-fledged authority catering to national requirements. “It will conduct all kinds of national entrance exams,” Sibal said.

CBSE chairman Vineet Joshi said, “It will be an Indian ETS. It will do research for preparing question papers, administer and conduct exams.” The authority may not conduct the centralized engineering exam being formulated by merging AIEEE and IIT-JEE in the coming academic session as little time is left, but will provide research help. It will run such exams at the national level subsequently.

As the planned centralized exam will give weight to school board marks, the national authority will help the state boards improve their standards as well, said another HRD ministry official, who did not want to be named. “Providing assistance to the state school boards will be key as school-leaving marks now hold good weight while selecting students for IITs or other top central engineering and science courses,” the official said. Indian higher education has suffered from poor standards, said Amit Bhatia, chief executive of Delhi-based Aspire Human Capital, an assessment and human resource company.

“If they are trying to improve it then it will have good results, but in the short term,” he said. “In the long run, the efforts should be on innovation and creativity. Over-standardization will lead to the licence raj again.” Since the government does not have enough resources to undertake this on its own, it should be a public-private exercise, he said. “Policymakers need to ask that whether we need an open-minded approach or strict regulation.” Relieving teaching staff from administrative work will benefit students and the education system, Bhatia said.

**Source:** February 07, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

### Technical varsity to keep politics out of campus

The state technical university on the anvil would keep political interference at bay from the academia. There won't be a senate or syndicate for the proposed university which would bring the engineering colleges in the state under one roof. This, in turn, would mean that the academia would remain free from political interference.

The draft bill for the university, which is under preparation in the education department, would bring the engineering colleges under it in three sections- constituent colleges, affiliated autonomous colleges and affiliated colleges. "There would be a board of academic experts, which will be the supervising body, consisting of eminent academicians and government representatives," sources in the education department told TOI

While the role of the university will be limited, more autonomy will be granted to the colleges affiliated to it. "The university will decide the standards of the colleges based on the AICTE norms, which can be revised periodically.

If any of the college fails to meet the prescribed standards, the university can de-affiliate the college and the degree will not be awarded," sources said.

Meanwhile, the colleges will have a greater responsibility of preparing the syllabus and exam calendar, conducting the exams and declaring the results.

The concept of technological university is adhered to the Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) of the Centre, which is a project funded by the [World Bank](#) to improve the quality of technical education in the country. TEQIP is a Rs 1,550 crore programme, which comes with many riders, foremost being the autonomy of institutions.

"Only the College of Engineering, Trivandrum, was included from the government sector in the TEQIP phase-I (2003-2008). In the second phase, excluding the Wayanad and Idukki engineering colleges, all other government engineering colleges will be covered. Academic autonomy is mandatory for all the colleges to be included in this project," state director of Technical Education J Letha told TOI.

According to a Government of India-World Bank study titled 'Scientific and Technical Manpower Development in India,' multiple control mechanisms and controlling regulations had stifled innovative initiatives in recruitment of faculty, admission of students, curriculum revision and

upgrading and financial management in most institutions.

**Source:** February 09, 2012/[Times of India](#)

### Indian School of Business: The journey so far

Collaboration, innovation, ambition, independence are the best words to describe ISB's success since it was founded 10 years ago though the road was not that easy, says its founding dean in a nostalgic revisit of the institution's journey.

In "An Idea Whose Time Has Come: The Story of the Indian School of Business", Pramath Raj Sinha traces the ISB's eventful history and also examines the reasons that account for its success.

"The road has not always been easy. In some respects, ISB has succeeded beyond the expectations of its founders. In other areas, though, the school has failed to reach some of its early stated goals. Despite building up a core group of talented junior faculty, ISB has not yet succeeded in recruiting a core group of experienced senior faculty.

"Early hopes of attracting a truly international student body were not fulfilled at once; progress has been made, but the student body is still overwhelmingly Indian. Much remains to be done; some things that we set out to do remain unfinished and now, there are new goals to reach," says Sinha.

The book, published by Penguin, is intended in part as a celebration of achievements of students, faculty and staff over the past 10 years and more.

"But it has another purpose, too. After 10 years, it is right that we should stop and reflect on the story so far. We need to consider both our successes and our failures, and to learn lessons from both. Those lessons should assist in ISB's future growth and development, and we hope that others, too, will find them useful," he says.

"When ISB was founded, [higher education](#) in India was a mess. It helped to set a new standard for higher education in business, partly by demonstrating what could be done quickly and effectively in a short space of time, and partly by helping to change preconceptions about the nature of higher education in business," Sinha, also the founder and MD of special-interest media company 9.9 Mediaworx, writes.

According to the [IIT Kanpur](#) alumni, ISB does not always look like a traditional academic institution.

"Another innovation is that we do not have departments; we have completely done away with them. There is no strategy, no finance, no operations, no HR organisation or department at

ISB. At the beginning, we decided that rather than creating departments we would create centres.

These centres are multi-disciplinary. They are also fairly organic: people can come and go, be part of multiple centres, or part of no centres at all."

Ten years ago, the founders of the [Indian School of Business, Hyderabad](#) articulated a vision that was as daunting to execute as it was simple to state: to build a world-class business school in India. Within a decade, the ISB grew from a start-up venture to globally top-ranked business school, named among the top 20 business schools in the world three years in a row, with the distinction of being the youngest business school ever to enter the world top 20 rankings.

Writes ISB Chairmen [Adi Godrej](#) in the preface, "The success of ISB is not the work of any one individual. It is the work of many, working willingly and selflessly to make a dream turn into reality."

**Source:** February 09, 2012/[Education Times](#)

### **New College Nottingham to set up campus in India**

It will be the first vocational training academy of its kind in India and is being established in response to the country's skills shortage at almost every level of its economy.

The college has signed an agreement to oversee the running of the campus in a suburb of New Delhi.

It is hoped the New College Nottingham International Lifestyles Academy will be up and running by September.

The college is working with business firm the Batra Group to run the academy, which will have room for up to 1,000 students.

The academy will initially teach courses in hospitality, retail and logistics, media and fashion, and will also offer teacher training and advanced English language provision.

Adrian Pratt, director of lifestyles at the college, said: "This agreement has been 18 months in the making but it is a very exciting time for us.

"It will target providing more skills for people in India, while New College Nottingham will benefit a lot from it."

The college is following in the footsteps of the University of Nottingham in setting up an overseas campus.

The university currently has successful bases in China and Malaysia.

The college has identified two existing buildings in New Delhi and eventually they will decide on which

one they will use. Rent costs will be covered by Batra Group.

Staff and students from the college will have the opportunity to go on exchange trips.

The deal was finalised on Tuesday.

It is believed enhancing the technical skills of 500 million people over the next ten years remains one of the biggest challenges to support India's Economic Growth Strategy.

Nick Whitehouse, New College Nottingham dean of higher education and international development, said: "We are proud to be working in partnership with colleagues from the long-established and highly respected Batra Group on this innovative project which is a milestone in our strategy to develop international vocational education.

"Our academy model has the potential to be replicated across India."

Dhruv Batra, director of the Batra Group, said: "The Batra Group has been a front runner in providing education to deserving learners in India over the last few decades.

"The International Lifestyles Academy will attempt to create a platform that will infuse international academic standards and best practices to link together Indian industry and education."

**Source:** February 09, 2012/[This is Nottingham](#)

### **D. Purandeshwari: Foreign Education Providers (Regulation) Bill soon**

According to D. Purandeshwari, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Central govt. would soon introduce the much-awaited Foreign Education Providers (Regulation) Bill in parliament aimed at enabling students have access to education provided by overseas universities.

"It is on the anvil. It has gone to the Law Ministry for vetting, after which it will be introduced", she told reporters on the second day of the Editors' Conference.

Through this bill, institutions adhering to AICTE norms would be allowed to have tie-ups with foreign institutions to avoid "fly by night" operators, she said.

Urging state governments to increase their education spend, Ms Purandeswari said the Government's target was to utilise up to six per cent of the GDP in the education sector.

"Currently, 3.78 per cent of the country's GDP is utilised for expenses in the education sector. Education is a cooperative responsibility of both the Government of India and states. We need to work together," she said.

She said as many as 14 bills aimed at ushering in reforms in the education sector were pending as the Opposition had stalled proceedings in Parliament (over Lok Pal Bill).

The Minister said the Right to Education Act would be enforced from 2013. She said the HRD Ministry planned to come out with a "National Accreditation Bill" making it mandatory for all institutions to have quality infrastructure.

She said the time was ripe for India to have a relook at the education policy and to further strengthen programmes in the sector in the wake of globalisation.

**Source:** February 11, 2012/[Education Insight](#)

### **Credit guarantee fund for educational loans on the cards**

The government is likely to announce the establishment of a Credit Guarantee Fund (CGF) for educational loans in the upcoming Union Budget.

The fund, in which 1 per cent of every educational borrowing would be contributed, is designed to address the cases of educational loan defaults, which add to the burgeoning non-performing assets (NPAs) of the banks. The finance ministry had asked the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) to work on a CGF model and prepare a report. According to sources, the IBA has recently submitted its draft proposals to the ministry.

"In case of a default on the education loan, the respective bank would be able to dip into this pool," a senior finance ministry official said, confirming the development. The initial pool would be created by contributions from the bank and government. With time, the contributions from the borrowers would increase the pool.

Several senior bank officials have been continuously raising concerns over the increasing number of NPAs on educational loans.

"We have been interacting with finance ministry for the last three years for creation of a CGF. We are expecting some announcement in this Budget", said an IBA official. The defaults, according to industry insiders, is mainly in the educational loan category of below Rs 4 lakh which are free of any collateral.

It has also been suggested that the repayment period be increased to 10-15 years from the current 5-7 years to make it more flexible for the borrower.

"If we can show that these loans are 80-100 per cent guaranteed by the government and any shortfall would be met by them then the capital

requirement would fall by 75-80 per cent, thus freeing up a reasonable amount of money," State Bank of India chairman Pratip Chaudhuri had earlier told The Indian Express.

**Source:** February 13, 2012/[Indian Express](#)

### **AICTE facing heat over faulty approval process**

Fifty four engineering colleges, that had received clearance from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), are now facing the threat of demolition as they have been found to be operating without the necessary compliances. And it is the council that the state government is looking towards for an explanation as to how clearances were issued to colleges which did not fulfil the essential criteria.

A flawless land use certificate is one of the preconditions for the AICTE to give approval to colleges. But the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) insists that none of these colleges have the required land use certificate. To add to it, their application for regularisation under the Building Penalisation Scheme (BPS), too, has been rejected.

All 54 colleges, which are to be demolished by the end of this month, are located in Ranga Reddy district. While their applications were rejected under the BPS scheme last year in May, they were served demolition notices on February 9.

The council, which was, till recently, reeling from allegations of high-level corruption, had gone for a 'surprise inspection' drive in the academic years 2010-11 and 2011-12. It had inspected 105 colleges in the state during these surprise visits and given clean chits to 99 of them, including the ones now facing demolition.

HMDA now, has widened the scope of the crackdown and served fresh showcause notices on over 50 other colleges. . Over 300 colleges in both Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy are now under scrutiny, it was learnt. The demolition notices have come at a time when the state government itself is questioning AICTE for giving permissions to colleges without considering the demand for seats.

This year, 40 colleges have applied for approval to take students. "The government has been requesting the AICTE top brass to be stringent in their approval process. But with the authorities turning a blind eye to such violations, the quality of technical education in the state is sure to remain poor," said an official from the [higher education](#) department.

Technical education experts said that the fate of students studying in the colleges, which stand to be demolished, is now AICTE's responsibility. Before

the demolition starts, the students will have to be accommodated in other colleges.

When asked about the major flaw, AICTE officials in AP responded that "colleges could have submitted fake documents to get approval".

"Only the state government can verify land use documents. AICTE officials do check the documents but they cannot always verify whether they are in order. We have already filed several cases against colleges for producing fake documents. If proven guilty of forging documents, they too will be penalized," said Dr RK Gangal, director and regional officer, AICTE.

Defending the council, he said that, for the last two years, the approval process has been more than sufficiently strict.

HMDA insists none of these colleges have the required land use certificate. Their applications for regularisation under BPS Scheme, too, have been rejected earlier.

**Source:** February 13, 2012/[Times of Indian](#)

### MIT Unveils Free Online Class, is This the Future of Higher Education?

Renowned as a premiere institute of higher learning for the sundry sciences, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced a new program that will bring a free version of one of its classes online. The program is called MITx, and the first of its fully automated courses kicks off this fall with [6.002x Circuits and Electronics](#). In addition to no costs, there are no prerequisites, anyone anywhere can sign up, and will receive a certificate upon completion. Seems like everyone is giving away university courses these days, huh?

As readers will recall, Stanford [kicked off the trend for free online learning](#) from major institutions last year with its free A.I. course taught by Sebastian Thrun. The course was, by all accounts, an overwhelming success. So much so that Thrun announced he was leaving Stanford and founding his own free online learning initiative called [Udacity](#), which has quadrupled the number of classes since we last wrote about them.

The MITx program seems to differ from the Stanford course in some important ways. For instance, while the Stanford course was a basic, fundamental course, the MITx class is the most basic of the basic. According to the course's *professor Anant Agarwal*, 6.002x is the foundation for many MIT students and transitions them from physics to electronic engineering. It also features chainsaws. No, really:

Secondly, the MITx course seems to shirk Stanford's embracing of existing community sites

like Reddit and seems to be rolling its own open source software. This is a particularly interesting move, since it could someday become the foundation for a larger scale online learning initiative. Agarwal is quoted in an [MIT press release from MITx's announcement](#) as saying:

*"Creating an open learning infrastructure will enable other communities of developers to contribute to it, thereby making it self-sustaining," [...] "An open infrastructure will facilitate research on learning technologies and also enable learning content to be easily portable to other educational platforms that will develop. In this way the infrastructure will improve continuously as it is used and adapted."*

While there is certainly a component of altruism in these efforts — lots of talk of bringing education to the world — there are other forces at work. For instance, for-profit universities have owned online learning for some time. Big names like Stanford and MIT entering the same sphere undercuts these (sometimes shifty and low-quality) institutions and could serve as a foothold for later paid online learning by major universities.

There's also a growing complaint that higher education in America is becoming less and less about producing quality academics than it is simply giving students the basic skills to stand a chance in an increasingly competitive job market. Colleges risk becoming like the for-profit degree farms that they abhor, simply churning students through to stay afloat. However, if basic classes like 6.002x can be provided for free, this could take the onus off universities to provide basic education so they can focus more on high academia and research.

Those are just speculative points, however. No doubt the largest driving force behind the Stanford, MITx, and Udacity projects is a genuine desire on the part of a few passionate professors to harness new tools for new ways of learning. But that doesn't mean we're not witnessing a real sea change in how education is handled. Hold on to your hats, folks.

**Source:** February 13, 2012/[GEEK O SYSTEM](#)

### Setting global standards in Indian institutions

The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) will soon introduce an improved and transparent accreditation process for engineering colleges.

The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) has in place a new accreditation system with in-built mechanisms to make sure the quality is not compromised in the light of rapid expansion in higher education.

Even as NBA aims at becoming a permanent member of Washington Accord after introducing an

improved accreditation framework, the first World Summit on Accreditation (WOSA-2012) is scheduled to take place in New Delhi from March 25 to 28.

Elaborating on the objectives of the summit, NBA member secretary D.K. Paliwal said the new accreditation system would be outcome-based with a comprehensive look at the engineering education, including the relevance of undergraduate courses offered at present in engineering colleges. "Whether the graduates churning out of classrooms are capable and competent to handle real-life engineering problems will be a focus area from now on," Dr. Paliwal said.

Spearheading a quality regime, the NBA would work with other accreditation agencies and sign foreign accords for mutual acceptance of academic or professional qualifications awarded in India so that there would be global acceptance for Indian students, he said.

About 1,000 delegates are expected to register for the summit in New Delhi, and WOSA-2012 would create an environment for introducing global quality standards in Indian campuses.

The theme of the summit will be 'Achieving excellence through accreditation' and representatives from accreditation agencies of various countries will participate.

According to Dr. Paliwal, the summit would result in setting a benchmark and evolve common teaching-learning processes.

"India must become a permanent signatory to the Washington Accord. Since we are recognised as a rising economic power, we cannot afford to be outside that Accord which brings quality standards to our campuses," he stressed.

The process of giving accreditation to colleges and courses would be changed to bring transparency and credibility to the whole process. Applications for accreditation can be through online by institutions from March.

Evaluators to be engaged for accreditation would be given a thorough orientation by NBA. Those faculty members and experts who are keen to be in accreditation teams of the agency can express their willingness through online.

"Since there is a proliferation of technical institutions, we need to have quality checks. Quantity, no doubt, is important. But it should go along with quality," he said.

To create awareness among technical institutions on how to elevate themselves in terms of quality under the new accreditation system, the NBA

would conduct workshops across the country and a schedule for that would be announced soon.

More details about the New Delhi summit are available on website [www.nba-wosa.in](http://www.nba-wosa.in)

**Source:** February 13, 2012/[The Hindu](http://TheHindu)

### GRE sees a 43 % rise

Educationists and academicians feel that lack of research infrastructure and unique courses in Indian higher education institutions made 43 per cent more students take up Graduate Record Examination (GRE) last year from the country.

Prof C. Thangaraj, vice-chancellor, Anna University of Technology, Chennai said, we need to look whether these students are not satisfied with the education system in the country.

"Last three years the number of students taking GRE, TOFEL and IELTS trickled because of good job prospects in India and other avenues were also equally good but when you say the numbers increased in GRE then we need to see what's wrong", he said.

Pointing out that Indian higher education institutions lack research, Prof. Thangaraj said that most of the Indian universities affiliate several hundreds of colleges and it would not be possible for them to do research when they were mandated to regulate those colleges.

"We do not provide any incentive for faculty who do research and we are not able to commercialise research. In the US research is a profitable venture...they've got enough facilities for that and the money they spend is productive also. Even for a sample test we need to send samples to US and wait for the analysis, which takes a month.

So our researchers have lot of problems doing research in the country", he said Mr G. V. Sampath, vice-president (administration), VIT University said that United States of America provides good ambience for research, besides flexibility in courses. "Even one or two years after joining a course students are given the option to switch courses.

They also have a lot of courses in new and emerging fields. These enthuse students to go to US for taking up multi-disciplinary courses", he said.

Mr Sampath also pointed out that Indian government should provide grants for those who do good research.

"Government should not discriminate between government and private universities when they provide grants. Deemed universities like VIT also do excellent research so why does not government want to give funds only to government universities only", he asked.

It may be noted that eight lakh students took up GRE from various parts of the world in 2011, which shows an increase of 13 per cent over last year.

**Source:** February 14, 2012/[Deccan Chronicle](#)

### European Union hopeful of higher FDI in India

The European Union, India's leading partner in terms of trade and investment, is hopeful of higher foreign direct investment in India in the coming years.

"Europe is India's largest source of foreign direct investment with a stock of 34.4 billion euros and India's investments in Europe is also fast reaching 7 billion euros. There is scope to grow much more.

"European FDI in India for instance is half the amount of that in China, or a quarter of that in Russia, or a fifth of that in Brazil," European Commission President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso said at a conference 'EU-India: A strategic relationship in an evolving world' organised by FICCI.

Europe is India's largest source of foreign direct investment with a stock of 34.4 billion euros.

EU investment in India is bigger than that of the US and Japan combined, Barroso said.

The European Union is India's first partner in terms of trade and investment - in 2010 the European Union imported over 40 billion Euros worth of goods and services from India.

Overall bilateral trade amounted to 87.3 bn Euros. The first ten months of 2011 showed continued growth in EU trade with India. Exports and imports both grew by 20 per cent between the first ten months of 2010 and the same period of 2011, with exports amounting to 33.4 bn and imports to 33.3 bn.

Europe is also one of India's major partners in the field of economic and development cooperation, particularly in the areas of education and social actions, Barroso said.

"The recent evolution of the trade figures between us is impressive, but there is potential to have much larger flow of goods and investment. In times of global uncertainty, creating such economic anchors is of paramount importance," he said.

"We need to remain committed to unlocking all the potential of the relationship. This would also be entirely consistent with the Indian government's agenda of reform and opening up the economy. We need to move ahead with our trade negotiations in order to achieve a balanced and ambitious trade agreement, encompassing tariffs, services and procurement," Barroso said.

Barroso pointed out that both EU and India should work together to achieve goals of energy efficiency and renewable energies.

India has one of the highest potentials for the effective use of renewable energy and it is already the fifth largest producer of wind power; Europe has a large know-how in the green economy and we are developing a low-carbon economic strategy, he said.

We made good progress with negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement, and the perimeter of a final agreement is emerging, he added.

Barroso is confident that EU and India can finalise the negotiations in the months to come. The prospect of concluding the single biggest free trade agreement in the world, between a total of 1.7 billion people, is a once in a lifetime opportunity that we have to seize with both hands, he said.

Europe has been doing a lot to address its sovereign debt problems, Barroso said, adding that while we continue with fiscal consolidation we need to focus all our attention on rapid and concrete actions to get our economy growing again.

**Source:** February 14, 2012/[IBNLive](#)

### Haryana Education Department has formulated a Draft Master Plan

While continuing its efforts to further improve the system of education, Haryana Education Department has formulated a Draft Master Plan so as to develop a community having knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The purpose of the Master Plan is to enable the members of the community to deploy, utilize and benefit from ICT and contribute to nation building.

While stating this here today, Education Minister, Mrs. Geeta Bhukkal said that the Master Plan has been uploaded on the website ([eduhry.suggestions@gmail.com](mailto:eduhry.suggestions@gmail.com)) of the Department and the stakeholders have been urged to share their opinions on the draft document, known as "ICT in Education Master Plan (2011-2025)."

Bhukkal said that such a Master Plan has been necessitated to help the Directorate of Education in understanding the complexity of policy stages and processes while at the same time give them the tools to successfully own and drive the process.

The implementation of this Master Plan will be via a partnership approach involving the community, private and public organizations, and development partners.

She said that the Master Plan aimed at strengthening Haryana's effort to create and establish ICT in education models for acceleration of educational reforms; Harmonization of efforts

between the centralized and decentralized levels of the education; system and defining synergy between different implementers of ICT in education; Unleashing the strengths of teachers and students through the effective use of ICT; Leveraging Public Private Partnerships to improve the development and delivery of education; Building the capacity of partners for the development of innovative learning solutions in partnership with industries, and creating economic value.

She said that under the Master Plan, all students and teachers would have access to information and communication technology in their classrooms, schools, communities and homes. All teachers will use technology effectively to help students achieve high academic standards. All students will have technology and information literacy skills. Research and evaluation will improve the next generation technology applications and skills for teaching and learning. Digital content, curriculum, assessment practices, networked applications, all in support of policy framework and multiple stakeholder support will transform teaching and learning.

While referring to the guiding principles of the Master Plan, she said that ICT in education would be characterized by the imparting of good values and attitudes in the state including those that promote equality and equity as well as those from outside which are relevant to national development. Another such guiding principle would be laying emphasis on development of skills such as life skills, practical and entrepreneurial skills. c) Quality and relevance of content matter shall be given maximum attention, even as access to education increases. Improvement of efficiency and cost-effectiveness of all activities in the education sector by improving management and administration capacities shall be a matter of priority. Sustainability and scalability are also important principles to guide this sector. The Directorate of education will ensure that the new Master Plan on ICT in Education incorporates these principles in its strategies for implementation and to help in achieving efficiency and effectiveness.

It is expected that under the policy pillar, the ICT in education will set a clear road map for the integration of ICT in education and would increase access to basic education for all, both formal and non formal, using ICT as one of the major tools for learning, teaching, and information sharing. It will improve quality of basic education and promote independent learning in secondary education, contribute to the availability of workforce with the ICT skills needed for employment and use in a knowledge based economy. It will guide the

drafting of ICT competencies, aligned with international competencies, with regard to knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be achieved at the end of the secondary education, through the use of ICTs in and beyond the classroom. It would also ensure that Haryana has in place, an ICT driven process that supports an evidence-based decision making with respect to resource allocation, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation of the educational policy implementations.

Among some of the most pertinent reasons for using ICT in the classroom is the ability to better to better prepare the current generation of students for a workplace where ICT tools such as computers, internet and other related technologies. It is therefore seen, that technological literacy and the ability to use ICT, effectively and efficiently, have become prerequisites for having a competitive edge in an increasingly globalizing job market. The State Government, therefore, recognizes the importance of using ICT, ubiquitously in all venues of formal education, including Technical and Vocational institutions and across all educational disciplines. Therefore, the Plan will be focusing on ensuring that all primary, secondary and vocational education teachers are instrumental in using ICT hardware and software in their teaching and learning practices.

It will help in raising students', teachers' and parents' awareness of the value of ICT. It also aims at providing the required ICT to all formal education levels; facilitating access to a wider range of knowledge for students and teachers to support the teaching and learning process, enabling all students to use ICT in their learning as a tool and as a methodology, using ICT as a tool to improve quality of education in all subjects at all levels and enabling all teachers and administrators to use ICT as a management tool to support the educational process. It will help in using ICT to support the emergence of teaching and pedagogical student centered approaches and encouraging research and collaborative learning.

It would help in promoting the use of open and distance learning techniques at all levels of education as needed; Promoting the use of community learning centers, community information centers, community libraries, and open and distance learning centers to improve literacy and provide learning opportunities and expand activities to include the use of video, radio and TV for learning; Leveraging ICT infrastructure in schools to encourage and support after school programs to target in school students, out of school leavers, and local community to develop life and ICT skills, and provide other lifelong learning opportunities;

Encouraging schools to prepare their own Technology Plan which will help schools aim at getting maximum benefits out of ICT investments done by state as well as schools.

The Master Plan will be focusing on providing computer science curriculum for primary and secondary school students; integrating modern approaches and methods in line with the matrix of competencies of knowledge and skills according to regional, national and international standards; Creating and developing Haryana's specific e-learning content, in all subjects, including vocational education streams, on the long term to be used as supplementary material, and revising the curriculum accordingly; Exploring the options of obtaining the copy rights of existing electronic material on the short and medium term. It will help in creating centralized digital library, repository (State Educational Portal) of digital learning material to be accessed by all schools; Developing content/curriculum and training manuals for pre-service teachers on using ICT in teaching and learning. While referring to teachers' competencies, she said that it would apply curriculum freely and organize edu experiences in school environment to achieve desired aims; develop and integrate various teaching strategies; facilitate the acquisition and knowledge from

various resources; motivate learners to learn and create; evaluate learners' achievement to improve their performance.

The Master Plan would help in using ICT to build the competitiveness of the State Examination Board or Council, and deliver services more effectively and efficiently. It will also help in using ICT as a tool to design tests and collaborate with national bodies to build standardized tests and item banks.

It will provide professional development opportunities for school inspectors on the integration of ICT in the teaching and learning process. Help the supporting head teachers to establish the ICT vision in their schools, and leveraging available technological infrastructure to better manage the school and foster modern teaching and learning paradigms.

For Vocational Education, it aims and initiatives to develop professional skills of students (in grades 8,9,10) and prepare them to enter the labour market and keep pace with the requirements of the knowledge economy. It would link education to the needs of the work force and encourage students to engage in productive work and lifelong learning. One of the important areas this Plan takes into consideration is developing mechanisms, systems

and procedures that continue to research and identify gaps and possible areas of improvement and innovations, and reflect back on the education sector at large, thus making it a dynamic evolving system for the benefit of the Haryana learners. Also universities are encouraged to conduct their own research and collaborate with industry/ business and schools to support such developments. It would also help in engaging local, regional, national, and global partners in efforts to improve or integrate ICT in education and to avail research and innovations to improve the education system.

**Source:** February 15, 2012/ [Punjab Newsline Network](#)

### **Students protest against Leeds-Metropolitan University**

Student organizations protested against the Leeds-Metropolitan University, the first higher-education campus established by a foreign university in India, on Wednesday here.

The protests, led by the All India Revolutionary Students Organization (AIRSO), the Revolutionary Students Federation of India (RYFI) and the Shiksha Adhikaar Manch, saw hundreds of students from several colleges marched to the gates of the Leeds-Met campus in Bhopal.

The protests were also supported by the All India Students Federation (AISF) and the Students Federation of India (SFI).

The Leeds-Met India campus is a joint venture between the Leeds Metropolitan University, U.K. and Jagaran Social Welfare Society (a non-profit organization owned by the Dainik Jagarn media group).

Shouting slogans of "Leeds-Met, Quit India", the students burnt an effigy of the "capitalist education model" and demanded free education from "KG to PG" (Kindergarten to Post Graduation).

The protesters said the university was the ground-level manifestation of the pending Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010 and called it the representative of a "capitalist system of education" in India.

"Degrees given out by the Leeds-Metropolitan University are completely illegal in India as this university has not been authorised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to do so," noted educationist Anil Sadgopal told The Hindu.

"Neither the centre nor the state government is taking any action against them. This is just the beginning, once the Foreign universities bill is passed, Indian higher education scenario would be flooded by such expensive international university

campuses who's bottomline is profit and not education for all," said Mr. Sadgopal.

The protests against the university marked the penultimate day of the 12-day long protest against the "neo-liberalization" and "marketization" of higher education in India, including a massive signature campaign against the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010, which was approved by the union cabinet last year but is pending in the parliament.

The proposed legislation allows for a quick eight-month time-bound approval to foreign universities looking to set up campuses in India. The campuses set up by foreign universities will reportedly not be subject to quota/reservation obligations for the weaker sections.

**Source:** February 15, 2012/ [Punjab Newline Network](#)

### **ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE**

#### **Why do Chinese students outperform Indians?**

A handful of weeks back, in the ACER PISA test — the OECD's annual global assessment of students' skills (for South and South East Asia) — India came second from the bottom defeating Kyrgyzstan while China topped the list. This acts as the final nail in the coffin of India's dented education system.

In spite of arrays of pan-Indian educational programs, India still has not been able to make education inclusive for all. On the contrary, China since the last four decades has been rolling out ambitious plans to revamp their education system.

The current Chinese education system extends from the guidelines that Premier Zhou Enlai gave in 1974; guidelines that are popularly known as *sì gè xiàn dài huà* or the 'four modernisations'. And what are these? The education system in China revolves around agriculture, industry, technology and defense — that, as per the Chinese, are pivotal for the country's development.

China today has installed key schools meant for highly academically inclined students. China has adopted a policy of providing nine-year compulsory education to all with a special emphasis on vocational training and higher education.

Contrast this with India, where a high-school student is unable to solve a basic mathematical problem or frame a sentence on his own.

Moreover, Indian rural schools are mired with problems of infrastructure and above all suffer largely from the curse of teachers' absenteeism. On an average, more than 30 per cent of teachers are found absent in rural schools.

China's focus on vocational education is also unique. In 2007, China allocated 14 billion yuan to be spent on vocational schools over the span of four years.

Vocational education in China, unlike India, is not just confined to manufacturing but encompasses sectors like information technology, tourism and medicine.

The government has also introduced projects like the State Project 211, State Project 895 and State Project 111, where special importance is given to top top 100 higher education institutes to enhance the quality of their graduates.

Back in 2003, China invited foreign universities to set up campuses; India passed a similar bill seven years later. Foreign universities have elevated the level of education to fantastic levels. Consequently, China is doing exceedingly well in global rankings of late!

Even in 2009, when the Paris based OECD, representing 34 countries, released its programme for International Student Assessment, the Shanghai region outperformed everyone else to be the top performer in all academic categories! According to OECD, China's success is more because of its special emphasis on elite schools (key schools) where one is expected to shine par excellence.

In 2003, the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) ranking showed that there were 23 Chinese universities amongst 35 featured in total. The top three Chinese universities that entered the top 200 worldwide university ranking included National Taiwan University, Chinese University of Hong Kong and Tsinghua University.

There are more on the list of the top 500, including institutes likes Beihang University (formerly known as Beijing University of Aeronautics & Astronautics) and Beijing Normal University, which entered the ranking for the first time.

In comparison, India produced a big blank sheet! Not only does India not figure anywhere in ARWU, but it is also invisible in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and QS World University Rankings. India is way behind China in terms of even the number of universities.

There are 545 universities in India compared to 2,236 in China. Even in medical colleges, there are about 630 colleges in China compared to 251 in India.

The total enrollment in Indian universities is only 4.7 million compared to 11 million in China. The situation was similar some years back too when, in 2004-05, India churned out 464,743 engineering graduates while China produced 600,000 for the same year.

According to National Alliance for the Fundamental Right to Education (NAFRE), in about 600,000 Indian villages, the education imparted is only basic, literacy instruction by semi educated (often not even that) teachers! Aping China, India did set up numerous vocational schools.

Yet, even now, India has only 5,100 ITIs and 1,745 polytechnics (mostly dysfunctional) compared to China's 500,000 VETs (Vocational Education and Training institutions).

Clearly, not only is India far behind in the number of quality institutions, but India is decades behind in framing the right kind of policies.

China is turning its population into this huge advantage, while we are ruining this massive possibility. Given the burgeoning population that we have, it is an imperative to educate everyone — or else the dividends would soon turn into a liability, if they've not already turned into one!

**Source:** February 03, 2012/[Deccan Chronicle](#)

### **Tech-Driven, Multi-Career-Centric Curriculum Needed To Develop 21st Century Knowledge Economy, Say Experts at One Globe 2012**

Leaders from business, government, think tanks, private equity, industry associations, policy makers, entrepreneurs, and academia from around the world came together at the two-day conference, One Globe 2012: Uniting Knowledge Communities, that kick-started in the capital today.

Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for HRD & Communications and Information Technology, Government of India delivered the keynote address at the conference. Sam Pitroda, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Public Information Infrastructure & Innovations along with Vikram Gandhi, Founder and CEO, VSG Capital Advisors spoke on the importance of innovation to ensure inclusive growth in a session moderated by Vikas Bajaj from The New York Times. Lt. Gen. A.S. Lamba, Vice Chief of the Army Staff (Retd), The Indian Army shared his views on role and importance of security in building knowledge communities. SEBI's former chairman, M. Damodaran, spoke on role of healthcare in economic development.

One-of-its-kind in South Asia, the One Globe 2012 knowledge conference covers the holistic gamut of primary and higher education, vocational training, skills development, economic development, gender and education, infrastructure, urbanization, design, technology and innovation. The conference also deliberates on need for private equity/venture capital investments in higher education, and entrepreneurship, employment and economic growth. The second day of the conference

exclusively focuses on students interested in studying abroad, featuring sessions on how Indian schools can prepare students for global universities, international educational partnerships, designing successful MoUs, admission in foreign colleges, cracking standardized tests, resume building, managing visa formalities, and community colleges as a route to education at top US schools. It also outlines popular and emerging destinations for studying abroad.

Says Harjiv Singh, Founder and CEO, Salwan Media, who conceptualized this event, "India has a rich demographic dividend in the form of over half its population under the age of 25, but what we do with it depends on how, and how soon, we align our educational systems to realities of a networked world. Today, technology drives everything around us, from e-governance programs such as the UIDAI, to quality distance education delivered through Cloud-based universities, to even working remotely from home! Our curriculum needs to innovate and adapt real fast to this technology-driven environment to churn out students that don't just have degrees but skills to get jobs in global companies. We also see an increasing trend of switching multiple careers in today's generation, so our educators need a radical mind-shift to empower students with all-round development that helps them learn, unlearn and relearn quickly."

Says Ron Somers, President of US-India Business Council, "In a vast country like India, reforms require deploying massive infrastructure on an economical and scalable model. With the world's cheapest tablet, India has proven to the world that it is serious about deploying low-cost technology solutions to fast-forward its educational system reforms."

A joint report by the USIBC and YES BANK titled, "A Global Perspective to Higher Education in India", was also unveiled at the One Globe 2012 conference, which outlined a 10-point roadmap to ensure improvement in higher education in India. The report noted that while the share of Centre's expenditure on education as a percent of GDP has seen an increase, the State's share has actually declined over the years.

Noting that a large number of schemes require commitment of the State governments to be able to utilize plan assistance from the Centre, it highlighted the urgent need for the States to increase their education expenditure. The report also called for improvement in access, inclusion and quality of education, correction of sub-optimal level of fees in government institutions to mobilize internal resources, better collaboration between research and academic bodies, greater collaboration

with industry, need for making accreditation mandatory, 360° teacher assessment by students and peers coupled with performance-based reward system, examination reforms in sync with job market dynamics, and strengthening and universalizing ICT measures.

Jerry M Hultin, President, Poly-NYU, Jacques Steinberg, Editor of The Choice, the college admissions blog of The New York Times, and Prof. C Raj Kumar, Vice Chancellor, Jindal Global University will share perspectives on a Global University and what Indian schools can do to prepare the students. T

he session is being moderated by Ajit Motwani, CEO, Education Business, BrainGain Mag Advisory Board.

The conference has representation from eleven foreign institutions including Rutgers University, University of Kentucky, The University of Montana, University of Oregon, George Mason University, Fort Hays State University, Northern Illinois University, Suffolk, Rollins College, Queens College CUNY, and Thomas College, brought for US-India Higher Education partnership by the world's leading international exchange, The Institute of International Education.

The conference also draws learnings from experts such as Dr. Torsten Fischer, Director, India Office of German Research Foundation (DFG), Riku Makela, India Director of FinNode, a global network of Finnish innovation organizations; Simon Cridland, Counsellor and Head of Advocacy Program, High Commission of Canada in India; and Loftus Harris AM, Special Trade Representative to the Middle East and India, The Queensland Government.

Heads of Vasant Valley School, The Sagar School, Delhi Public School RK Puram, The Heritage Schools and Guru Harikishen Public School presented views on emerging trends in K-12.

Industry representation at the Conference includes Accenture, IL&FS, Dalmia Bharat Group Foundation, Centum WorkSkills, Sage Publications, Ranbaxy, Steria, Duranta Holdings, vir.mueller architects, Aspire, Saviance Technologies, Educomp Solutions, Gaja Capital Partners, Kaizen Private Equity, Datawind, Microsoft, Tata Interactive Systems, The Parthenon Group, Ozone Networks, VSG Capital Advisors, and FutureWorks. Lord Raj Loomba, Founder & Chairman of The Loomba Foundation; Mr. Amandeep Singh, Advisor, Kalgidhar Trust; and, Mohini Daljeet Singh, Chief Executive, Max India Foundation contributed to the session on philanthropy and education, moderated by Heather Timmons of The New York Times.

**Source:** February 03, 2012/[India Education Diary](#)

### **Experts skeptical about new education body**

With tremendous changes expected in the country's higher education scenario, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has proposed the setting up of an autonomous Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE), which is supposed to frame policies for planning and development of higher education. While the proposed CPRHE has been given paramount responsibility, senior academicians have expressed concerns over such 'isolated' efforts in policy research.

Former Bangalore University Vice-Chancellor N R Shetty told Express, "I have reservations about this move. It is okay to have policy research. However, it has to be supplemented by actual work. Everyone is talking about Gross Enrolment Ratio, equity and quality in education. What can mere policies and statistics do without the government working on these immediate requirements?"

The CPRHE would be headed by an eminent scholar, and will consist of inter-disciplinary faculty of about 10 members, drawn from areas such as economics, sociology, philosophy, history, political science and public administration.

It would cover higher education policy analysis, improvement of governance of higher education, dissemination of comprehensive information base and bring out quality publications.

"How many institutions like this will the government float? In my opinion, the Centre should give more teeth to existing institutions to conduct policy research, and fill the loopholes in entities such as the UGC and AICTE," opined B R Ananthan, Vice-Chancellor of Rani Chenamma University, Belgaum.

Dr M K Sridhar, member secretary of Karnataka Knowledge Commission, articulated his skepticism in personal capacity. He said, "No policy research in isolation could help us in any way. The real challenge is to convert this into some ground-level action, with evidence-based research." Not everyone is doubtful of the CPRHE and its objective of providing a deeper understanding of the complexities in education. "While the universities are autonomous, they lack direction. The CPRHE will give the universities this very direction required to realize Vision 2020," said Erasi K, chairperson of Foreign Languages and Postgraduate admissions at Bangalore University.

**Source:** February 04, 2012/[ibn Live](#)

### **New accreditation system will ensure quality education: NBA**

Engineering colleges and technical institutions in the country would be forced to maintain quality with the

National Board of Accreditation (NBA) spearheading a new accreditation system, a top official of the agency said. Various crucial aspects of technical education would be scrutinised and colleges that fulfil the set criteria would get accreditation, NBA Member-Secretary D K Paliwal said.

NBA had just prepared a new accreditation manual for the professional colleges to understand and go about in quality enhancement, he said inaugurating a two-day national seminar on salient aspects of the new accreditation system (Washington Accord) at Kariappatti near here last evening. NBA is a provisional Member of Washington Accord, an international agreement aimed at bringing about global quality standards in technical education among member countries. Paliwal cautioned the colleges that the new accreditation system was purely an outcome-based system and they had to necessarily focus on competence, quality, relevance and students' employability as India geared up to become a permanent signatory of the Washington Accord.

A new accreditation system became essential due to increasing migration of professionals and mobility of students. So, internationally accepted accreditation procedures had to be put in place so that countries will be assured of uniformity in quality," he said. The NBA was stepping up its quality checks as India, which has been recognised as a rising economic power, cannot afford to be outside that quality league, he stressed. The NBA will soon start receiving accreditation applications online. Technical institution has to register with NBA via online and a separate folder would be created for that particular institution. Data cannot be tampered when it is done. By the end of March 2012, we will go online and evaluation process will be taken after an institution registers, he said.

**Source:** February 04, 2012/[ibn Live](#)

### **Don't tie down the India of ideas**

We need to free our universities from the stifling rules and quantitative targets which govern academic hiring and promotion.

India must rank among the world's oldest centres of ideas. Going by the texts and the inventions that have emerged from India, there must have been a time when it had an effective system of learning and instruction. However, somewhere along the way from a hoary past to a stagnant present, an institutional arrangement has emerged that is completely out of synch with the requirements of India's economy and the aspirations of its people. Perhaps the most significant shock that led to India's educational system veering off course was

the introduction by the East India Company of the system of higher education in mid-nineteenth century. The significance of this is usually understood to be that the medium of instruction now became the English language. However, arguably, the medium of instruction per se mattered less than what came to be considered knowledge.

### *Concentrated in ports*

The colonial initiative in the field of education led to a system of higher education concentrated in the ports, eluding the vast hinterland, and heavily skewed towards a European idea of the humanities, cutting away the graduates produced from their fellow natives. It cannot be asserted, however, that it was entirely worthless, at least not in the context of colonialism. The system did produce, in modest numbers, doctors, engineers and administrators. But, unsurprisingly, they largely went on to perpetuate colonial rule in India.

There were, of course, exceptions. Thus, there was C.V Raman who won the Nobel Prize working out of his lab in Kolkata. Then there were the scientists Bose and Saha, and in the arts Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, one of the first of the global academics from India who attained prominence as an interpreter of Indian texts to the West. But, by and large, what the university system produced was geared mainly to advancing the colonial project in India. It had little to offer on the specific problems of the country, was coy on the topic of democracy, and was wont to privilege English literature over others.

Political independence presented us with a unique opportunity to develop a higher education system devoted to creative thinking on India. But close to seven decades later, we have not made much of this opportunity, though the political class might claim that it has increased access.

Education, however, is also about the generation of ideas. In the world of ideas, political boundaries do not just count for nothing, but are mostly viewed with scorn. The adage "No man is a prophet in his own land" is not so much a lament for the prophetic academic as a message to the political establishment that they had better be hospitable to their thinkers. Long before the advent of the WTO, the world of ideas, as opposed to goods, was resolutely global. The one difference is that in the 21st century, information technology lays bare the cupboard, exposing those who only borrow ideas while celebrating those who produce them. We are by now left with the inescapable impression that in today's world, India is a mere consumer of ideas, generating much less in turn. From economics to political theory, not to mention the management

mantrams, India's higher education archipelago is content to be at the receiving end. The unimaginative way in which higher education is structured is entirely responsible for this.

The central element in any system of institutionalised learning is the teacher, collectively referred to as the faculty. Following the substantial hike in salaries, as recommended by the Sixth Pay Commission, the universities have had to accept a set of rules governing all aspects of the functioning of their faculty. While the principle that earnings must be performance-linked is entirely correct, the question is whether the rules on recruitment and performance appraisal are designed to allow Indians to compete on the global marketplace for ideas, a forum not substantially different from the world of commerce where only the fittest survive.

#### *Experience vs. excellence*

The point about the current rules is that when it comes to performance appraisal, it quantifies activity without sufficient correction for quality. In a similarly misguided vein, recruitment rules are hooked on experience as opposed to proven excellence in research. While quantitative indicators have their place, their use must be confined to those areas where they have an applicability, such as lecture hours, and resolutely kept out of everything else, as they distort the picture. The claim that they provide a 'transparent' index collapses when we recognise that even criteria stated upfront can be transparently poor when they are ill-suited to the task.

Quantitative output targets that ignore the quality of outcomes in the university can be disastrous for a society. Service rules in many Indian universities also restrict professional travel at a time when travelling to conduct and disseminate one's research has become the mark of the successful academic. It cannot have escaped anyone's attention that many overseas Indians are here almost as often as they are in the countries where they hold professorships. Why should India's academics be tied down by mindless rules, very likely devised by unaccountable bureaucrats who have no idea of how to create knowledge?

Quantitative targets, mindlessly implemented, are no answer to the very serious challenge the Indian university faces today, which is to compete in the global forum for ideas. The rules that govern them tie them down even before the race has started. An argument often made is that these rules are needed to discipline the vast army of college professors who have historically violated all norms even as they draw a salary. Absentee teachers, and underperforming ones, even when they do appear

in the workplace, are a very real problem especially in the vast hinterland. There is also the problem of private college managements that have no interest in education except as a profit-making enterprise. While all of this needs seriously to be tackled, the field of education poses a very specific problem. Regulation — interpreted as tethering the faculty or evaluating them loosely — is surely less of an objective than the furtherance of education. We need to recognise that our objective is less to tie the lecturer down than to advance learning, which ultimately revolves around how much the young have learned. This requires something more than merely devising conduct rules for the faculty.

India needs to learn from the experience of the West, whose model currently towers over others in higher education globally. Certainly there are no nationwide rules in the United States, and far greater autonomy is given there to heads of institution when it comes to raising academic standards. In India, heads of institutions, especially in the university system, have become insignificant, in that they have no autonomy nor are they held responsible. Inevitably, the morass of rules and regulations precipitate self-selection: the brightest academics give a wide berth to administration as it is a professional deathtrap. Even as the rules for faculty appraisal quite shamefully privilege 'foreign' journal publications over 'Indian,' and 'international' conferences over the merely desi, they remain entirely out of sync with the best global arrangements in higher education.

#### *Killing creativity*

Furthermore, among the recognised publications, there is no place for books, considered an important part of an academic's accomplishment globally, and the expected teaching load is outrageous. Summary quantitative indicators, adopted in the name of objectivity, kill creativity and encourage the mediocre. Actually, they are only the thin-edge of the wedge in the progression, and bode ominously for the future of India. Imagine an India without an Amartya Sen, a Romila Thapar or a 'Venky' Ramakrishnan. The current system of governing the production of knowledge in our higher education system has come close to delivering precisely this outcome. It may be claimed that too few among India's academics have protested. But this is proof that the deathly arrangement devised to govern our institutions of higher learning has actually succeeded. The rules on recruitment and appraisal of faculty need to be publicly reviewed by an independent panel of citizens before it can do further harm.

**Source:** February 04, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

**Institutes based on IIT model will be a boon for students: Scientist**

The Govts of India and Oman should initiate steps to set up academic institutes offering technology education on the model of the prestigious Indian Institutes of technology (IITs) for the benefit of the students in the Sultanate, said top Indian space scientist G Madhavan Nair.

“A higher education institute based on the model of IITs in cooperation with the Indian government will be a boon for students in the Sultanate. In India, IITs are now offering four-year degree courses on both pure and applied sciences and technology. If we succeed in setting up an institution like the IITs in the Sultanate it will be a great help for the entire student community here,” Nair, who had been the chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) from 2003 to 2009, told Times of Oman in an exclusive interview.

The IITs are a group of autonomous engineering and technology-oriented institutes of higher education. The IITs in India are “institutions of national importance” and created to train scientists and engineers, with the aim of developing a skilled workforce to support the economic and social development of India. “An IIT-model institution can be set up with around RO50 million, which is not a big sum of money for a country like Oman,” Nair added.

The leading rocket technology scientist, who has led 27 successful space missions for India, was in Salalah to interact with the students of Indian School Salalah on Thursday and yesterday. Nair is a leading technologist in the field of rocket systems and has made significant contributions to the development of multi-stage satellite launch vehicles, achieving self-reliance in independent access to space using indigenous technologies in India.

Nair, who has been on top positions of various space and rocket research organisations since 1967, said that the most challenging and satisfying moments in his four-decade-long career was the successful development of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), which has since become the workhorse for launching Indian remote sensing satellites, and ‘Project Chandrayan’, India’s first unmanned lunar probe vehicle.

In an interview with Times of Oman recently, Kadhim bin Abdullah bin Ali bin Mohammed Al Ajmi, member of the Majlis Al Shura from Sohar, had said that there are plans to invite premier institutions like IITs and IIMs (Indian Institutes of Management) to set up colleges in the Sultanate as a large chunk of students prefer to study in Indian

institutions because they get quality education at affordable expenses.

Excellent job

Regarding the quality of education provided by the Indian Schools in the Sultanate and on the academic skills of the students, he said, “The schools are doing an excellent job in providing quality education to the students. The students are also studious. The questions they asked me during my interactive session with them proved that they are sincere in their studies and have up-to-date knowledge about happenings worldwide.”

He said the prime focus of students should be on studies. “If our basics are good then we will not stumble while we go to higher levels. Learning never ends. We should be hard working and have the urge to learn new things. Our success is based on it,” he said as an advice to the student community.

When asked about why the new-generation students in the Gulf countries are often not opting for pure science and space research in higher education, he said, “Schools should give more importance to generate interests among students in pure science. Orientation for this should be given from the beginning itself. We should try to generate interest among students in lab experiments. More labs should be set up in schools. Scientists and technologists should be brought in Gulf countries frequently for interaction with students.”

**Source:** February 04, 2012/[Times of Oman](http://TimesofOman.com)

**Needed urgently: An education revolution**

No country has transited from being poor and backward to being rich and developed without an education revolution. We in India are busy boasting about our economic growth rates and geopolitical rise but have lost sight of the deep weakness of our society. The results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009+ test, which Indian students from Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu took, are an indication of the abysmal state of our education system.

Here are the results from these two states. In reading competence, of the 74 regions worldwide participating in PISA 2009+, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu beat out only Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia. In mathematics, the two states again beat only Kyrgyzstan. In science, the results were even worse; Himachal Pradesh came in last, behind Kyrgyzstan, while Tamil Nadu finished 72nd.

Of course, when we in India get bad news in terms of global comparisons, we have the usual reactions. The first reaction is to shoot the messenger: the person or organisation giving us the bad news must



be anti-Indian or have a hidden agenda. The second reaction is to become methodological purists: question the nature of the test, the sample taken, the statistics used, and so on. The third and worst reaction is nativism and exceptionalism: India has its own way, its own genius and its own time horizons.

So i have heard responses to the PISA result that go something like this. Indian education is unique and is not geared to foreign tests. Indians are "essentially" clever and the tests don't pick up the "jugaad" culture of India. There is a deep wisdom in the humblest Indian, and literacy, numeracy, comprehension and problem solving are not true education. Finally, it is too soon to pass judgment on Indian education. We in India do things gradually.

Perhaps this is all correct. Or perhaps we just don't want to face reality. I have been in school and university education in India since 1989. And i can say, in all earnestness, that the PISA results do not surprise me at all even if they are not completely accurate (would it really make a difference if Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu had ranked 60th out of 74?). Incidentally, there are Indian studies carried out by respected groups such as Pratham that bear out the basic conclusions reached by the PISA test.

Let's face it. Our school system, vocational education (such as it is), colleges and universities are in a shambles. At Independence, India would have ranked much higher in Asia. Today, its education system has fallen massively behind. Our universities certainly were at the top of the pile in Asia in 1950. Today, not a single Indian university ranks in the top hundred institutions of the world while there are over a dozen Asian universities on that list. Even amongst Asian IT and engineering universities, India has only half a dozen out of the top 50 institutions - when India is the second most populous country in Asia and, on a purchasing power parity basis, the third biggest economy after China and Japan.

Why such a mess? The central government, committed to spending 6% of GDP on education, spends 4%. Then there is the quality of teachers. Finland, which tops the PISA rankings, recruits its teachers from the top 10% of its graduates (yet does not pay them exorbitantly); i [shudder to think](#) where we get our teachers from. Thirdly, there is the accountability problem. The government recruits teachers, pays their salaries, and cannot get them to perform. And this when government teachers are paid twice the salary of private school teachers. Why the lack of accountability? The

teachers' unions are too strong, legal protections for teachers seem unassailable and the government just does not care enough to challenge either.

**Source:** February 04, 2012/[Times of India](#)

### **Teach the teachers first: Inadequate syllabi, short-term courses to blame for quality dip**

The Right to Education may promise free and compulsory education to all but what will kids do without good mentors? With brilliant minds racing to get jobs in industry, the teaching profession has been hard hit. Of those still in the profession, some fail to notice conditions like dyslexia and [autism](#) and are illequipped to deal with differently-abled children. The huge vacuum has left educationists concerned about the endangered tribe called 'good teachers.'

Experts say lacunae in teacher training programmes are also to blame for poor teaching standards. "BED and most other teacher education courses (like DEd) continue to be rooted in the British lesson plan model of 1890s. These courses are outdated and oblivious of the context of the child. In Indian society, which is hierarchically divided along the fault lines of class, caste, religion and gender, no teacher can teach without being aware of the implications of this social reality," says Anil Sadgopal of All India Forum for Right to Education and former dean, faculty of education, Delhi University.

"This is why most teachers are ill-prepared to deal with Dalit, tribal, OBC and Muslim children, who represent a large portion of India's population," he added.

Even in pre-school teaching courses, the content is crunched into a one-year diploma or even two-month courses. Experts feel that these shortterm courses miss out on the skill of understanding the child's psyche.

"With the emergence of nuclear families, play schools have mushroomed in every city. This has created a demand for qualified teachers, increasing the need for training courses. If a one-year full-time course can barely cover the basics of child development, methodology and curriculum planning, imagine how inadequate a two-month course is," says pre-school educationist, Purnima Contractor.

Lesley Young, a teacher for 39 years, had taken a two-year training course which only covered subjects like hand writing and pronunciation. She recollects having a child in her class who fell asleep almost daily. Instead of scolding him, she interacted with him and found out his areas of interest.

Pointing out more serious cases, Lesley says she has come across children dealing with divorced parents, sibling rivalry or violence at home. One needs to understand kids' psychology in order to help them, she says.

However, there are a few courses which incorporate the needful. Bachelor of Elementary Education, a four-year degree programme offered at [Delhi University](#) prepares teachers to understand the problems of students from various socio-economic backgrounds.

"The training offered today is in the form of short-term courses with inadequate syllabi. Educators need to understand why after all these years we are asking for Right to Education," says dean, faculty of education, Anita Rampal.

**Source:** February 04, 2012/[Times of India](#)

### Knowledge network expands learning

Sarat Jain, nodal officer of the National Knowledge Network at Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya in Jabalpur, central India, sits comfortably in the university staffroom, browsing through an online journal. It might seem a fairly mundane activity in universities and colleges around the world, but for Jain it is a novelty.

Before his university was connected to the National Knowledge Network, or NKN, academics could not access journals online. Even internet browsing, with its low speed, was time-consuming.

The network, which aims to promote research by connecting top universities, research institutes and labs, and central institutions like the Indian institutes of technology (IITs) via fibre-optic link, has enabled the university's staff to access more than 2,000 online journals.

The university is also able to video-conference with its constituent colleges in the small towns of Rewa, Tikamgarh and Ganjbasoda in Madhya Pradesh.

This, according to Jain, is nothing short of a "technological revolution".

The NKN, with an existing budget of Rs60 billion (US\$1.23 billion), is slowly spreading access to technology across higher education institutions in India. Through virtual classrooms and faculty sharing, the network has helped to address a shortage of faculty in several institutions, although on a small scale.

Recommended by the National Knowledge Commission and first allocated funding in 2008, it will eventually become a multi-gigabit pan-India network, providing a unified, high-speed network backbone for knowledge-related institutes in the country.

"We are still at the beginner's stage as far as the NKN is concerned. In the long term we aim to access networks in the UK and US, collaborate with researchers internationally and hold virtual classrooms," said Jain.

### Nationwide network

Last week, Sam Pitroda, advisor to the Indian prime minister on public information, infrastructure and innovation, and former chair of the National Knowledge Commission, said the budget for the network could increase by around 65%.

"We will probably end up spending some Rs100 billion by the time the project is completed," Pitroda told local media.

So far, 693 of the targeted 1,500 institutions are connected to the network; the rest will be linked to it by the end of the year. NKN will also be linked to Edusat – the education satellite launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation – and foreign research labs.

### Virtual learning, online exchange

The effort is already bearing fruit.

At the recently established IIT in Mandi, the network made up for lack of adequate infrastructure and faculty shortage in several ways. IIT Mandi has been equipped with cameras, large LCD screens, ceiling microphones and one gigabit per second of fibre-optic connection.

"As a result, five to six of our courses are taught through virtual classrooms by experts at IIT Madras. The speed is excellent and students can interact with the teacher without any interruption. This is an ideal example of sharing and multiple uses of resources," said Dr Bharat Singh Rajpurohit, the NKN nodal officer at IIT Mandi.

The institute has also collaborated with the IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark, to teach one course through a virtual classroom.

At IIT Ropar, the network has been used to "bridge the gap between students' requirements and the knowledge providers", according to nodal officer-in-charge Dr Ekta Singla.

"Experienced professors from old IITs are contacted through NKN for expert lectures. The network is used for receiving educational and inspirational talks from eminent personalities, both from Indian and foreign universities. We have planned to broadcast workshops on specialised topics for teachers and people from the industry through the NKN.

"The best part is that you don't have to limit the number of recipients," said Singla.

The NKN, through access to enormous bandwidth and high-speed internet connectivity, has enabled the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai to plan for online education, sharing of content and research projects and collaboration with other like-minded institutions.

But the biggest challenge of the NKN is to ensure that tier two and tier three universities and colleges make use of the network to improve the quality of their courses, faculty and research.

“The NKN should not be a network of 15 elite institutions talking to each other. Exchange of information should be both upstream and downstream,” said Professor T Jayaraman, who is in charge of the computer centre at TISS.

“We have to work on creating an international footprint, making our website and work accessible to others and increasing visibility. At the same time NKN by itself will not be sufficient. Local networks should be strengthened.

“We have to share content with smaller institutions and collaborate with them to raise their quality,” Jayaraman said.

### Content creation

While NKN will provide the infrastructure, the creation and sharing of common educational content will decide how effectively the network is used.

“We in India are concentrating on delivery and not on content. So we may have another 500 million mobile phones and broadband in place, which connects every village and district. But if we do not have the content, then it's of no use. We need open-source material and content to actually empower the students...this poses a great opportunity for the IT industry,” said Education Minister Kapil Sibal.

Notably, content creation under projects such as the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology, and the National Programme on Technology Enabled Learning, have already begun.

“Teachers, academics and IT solution providers must keep in mind that the content created should not be scanned lecture notes,” said Professor Madan Mohan Chaturvedi, director of the Institute of Lifelong Learning, which is working on developing online content for all undergraduate courses at Delhi University.

“Online content has to be innovative and interesting and should include animation, pictures, web links and simulations,” said Chaturvedi. “Online content needs to be free for every learner,

not just in India but across the globe. We should collaborate internationally to ensure diversity and quality in content.”

Talking to Mint newspaper Sam Pitroda, the prime minister's advisor, said primarily there had to be a “change of mindset at the students', teachers' and researchers' level” if the National Knowledge Network was to be successful.

**Source:** February 05, 2012/[University World News](#)

### It will take 100 years to revamp education!

Revamping education system in a country like India will take 50 to 100 years of hard work, believes Professor Howard Gardner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Best known for his theory of multiple intelligences, he was in the city as part of his six-city tour in the country.

The professor of cognitive psychology emphasized that for India, “there are no quick-fix solutions for changing the education system.” Speaking to the media at the Indian School of Business, the educationist spoke of the narrow framework in which educational institutions and learning are judged.

“The observation that if it is not quantified, it is not useful is a fall out of neoliberalist policies of the US and India. Quantifying intelligence does not take into account only school tests. If a child is doing well in school, do not spare a milli-second trying to quantify his abilities. Quantifying the various forms of intelligence helps when a child suffers from learning disabilities,” said the professor whose hypothesis of various forms of intelligences has been adapted across schools in the US to mentor students in a specific skill from a young age.

The professor pointed out that in India, where education is more about competition and less about understanding, the evaluation criteria has its drawbacks.

“There is a funnel problem in India where a large number of students are competing to get into a few elite schools such as the IITs. The admission process in universities in the US is much better as intake is not based on a single test score. It takes into account the candidate's hobbies, interests and other aspects,” explained Gardner who visited IIT Chennai before his stop in the city.

He also underlined the importance of social capital a child brings to the school. “Schools cannot foster creativity if they believe in error-free learning,” opined Gardner introducing his hypothesis which talks about five different minds and seven types of intelligences.

Among the five different minds which cover the psychology of an individual, the 'synthesizing mind' will be respected in the coming years, observed the cognitive psychologist.

"The ability to correlate information and connect relevant information is the function of a synthesizing mind. But there is also the need to develop an ethical mind," he said. Sharing an anecdote, he said if students at Harvard were asked to read only one book in their life, he would recommend to them Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, My Experiments With Truth. "It is not the most elegantly written book but captures best the ethical dilemmas an individual faces," he said.

**Source:** February 05, 2012/[ibn Live](#)

### **Socially Relevant Quality of Higher Education – Do Indian Institutions Care?**

India's higher education is in the rapid stride of innovation. The increase in financial budget for higher education and emphasis on quality education through accreditation to NAAC has been indicating, introduction of performance based assessment, projection of faculty shortage, recruitment drive, thinking about accountability, and attempts to disclose the accounts are highly applauded steps for innovation of higher education. The spectrum of efforts and activities for innovation of higher education are really commendable.

If we look to the efforts for rejuvenating higher education in India and the resultant effects, then a few facts may be detectable, which may generate doubts. With an umbrella like question, we can delve the issues of quality of higher education, and i.e. management of socially relevant quality of higher education-do Indian institutions care it? Perhaps, if we express it no, that will contradict the present role provided by the higher education for social development process. We as a progressive thinker for higher education system management fraternity, let us look to the need for socially responsive higher education as observed by the various corners of globe and also the country India. Higher education must have to discharge its responsibilities by creating socially responsive knowledge; imbibing the socially responsive practices; values etc.. These are not a new realization. Since, these are not new comprehensions; hence, socially responsive higher education is still a universal question. Addressing to it through higher education need to take its own proposal.

We can presume that mandatory way of quality assurance and management of higher education

can never ensure quality, unless the higher education goes for mandatory quality assurance with volunteer spirit. For accreditations for ensuring higher education quality, the Indian higher education institutions are exclusively longing for NAAC accreditation through point based assessment. Before accreditation of institutes and universities goes for rapid boundary based within four wall innovations at cost of high budget which are no way links society. The reason behind is that administrators of universities and institutions in India are not aware how they will adopt continuous rehearsal for social contribution as action leader except routine thinking.

To act as an action leader universities must have go beyond the boundary of mandatory accreditation, must have to go for adoption of various voluntary accreditation. At the same time, if universities think for imbibing, innovative principles, values, practices through its actions and education then universities must have to be more concern about voluntary accreditation mandatorily for its progress. The university has to forget local and limited principles but to cry for worldwide principles to contribute locally. Here, in this article let us get introduce with three sets of global principles which can be adopted for actions for innovation and for discharging intellectual social responsibility through the universities. These are – the guidelines of United Nations Global Compacts (UNGC), guidelines of Global Universities Network for Innovations (GUNI), and United Nations Academic Impacts (UNAI) for discharging academic responsibility.

The synchronized principles of UNGC and UNAI are:

1. UNGC and UNAI both started human rights as the base principle. The UNGC guidelines stated that institution should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses. Under the UNAI intellectual reiterated commitment to human rights, among them freedom of inquiry, opinion, and speech;
2. The guideline number -6 of UNGC emphasis on elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. This principle of UNGC is based falls under labour and employment. In the UNAI guideline-3, reiterates on discharging intellectual responsibility with a commitment to educational opportunity for all people regardless of gender, race, religion or ethnicity.
3. The UNGC guidelines for environmental protection captures businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and encourage the

development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies. Under the UNAI, emphasize a commitment to promoting sustainability through education.

4. The other guidelines of UNGC under the head of anti-corruption are very much essential. Contextualizing social responsibility of higher education UNGC reiterates institutions should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

The other principles of UNAI are extremely relevant to higher education, are follow-

- A commitment to the principles inherent in the United Nations Charter as values that education seeks to promote and help fulfil;
- A commitment to the opportunity for every interested individual to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of higher education;
- A commitment to building capacity in higher education systems across the world;
- A commitment to encouraging global citizenship through education;
- A commitment to advancing peace and conflict resolution through education;
- A commitment to addressing issues of poverty through education;
- A commitment to promoting sustainability through education;
- A commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the "unlearning" of intolerance, through education.

In discharging social and intellectual responsibility by higher education institution in India innovation is a must. The global network Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) is a common platform for showcasing globally the innovation efforts for universities of the world. The GUNI was created in 1999 by UNESCO, the United Nations University (UNU) and the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) after UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) in 1998, to give continuity to and facilitate the implementation of its main decisions. Ten years later in 2009, GUNI played a significant role in the second WCHE, following its mandate to further reflection and action frameworks to facilitate the exchange of value between higher education and society globally. GUNI aims sustainable global society, taking into account environmental limits, re-examining the dynamics of global economic, political, human, social and cultural models, as well as their local manifestations. In fact we are currently experiencing a crisis of civilization, in

which we must facilitate the transition towards a paradigm shift aimed at rebuilding society, with the collective desire and responsibility of attaining a better world for future generations. It encourages higher education institutions to redefine their role, embrace this process of transformation and strengthen their critical stance within society.

A few Indian have adopted these principles voluntarily response to the race for innovation and social accountability. In the updated directory of UNGC, participants, 26 numbers of Indian academic institutions have found adopted UNGC principles. Out of those, the Assam University, Silchar only the central university and the rest are private educational institutions have voluntarily adopted UNGC principles. A total of 52 numbers of educational institutions have adopted the principles of United Nations Academic Impact guidelines and commitment. It is found that only 7 numbers of educational institutes have accredited for innovation under GUNI. Where are the Top Indian universities who draws huge exchequer? Why are they reluctant to take voluntary commitment to the guidelines? Is there any loss for them if they (to Indian Universities) adopt these principles for discharging intellectual and social responsibility? Could they create any image by voluntary spirit for imbibing socially responsive values those listed by global organization such UNO and UNESCO? Considering the voluntary adoption and accreditation, the Jesus Granados and Jonathan Fredi of the Global University Network for Innovation described "the majority of the universities engaged in sustainability are preoccupied with the greening of the campus through efforts such as minimizing waste and energy consumption, developing low carbon buildings, and modeling sustainability to influence the behavior of students and staff. Examples of initiatives influencing core university personnel are rare, and seldom impact students' formal learning opportunities". In the case of Indian institutions, the same can be observed also shows a sign of weak credibility of Indian higher education institutions in understanding the importance of management of socially and globally responsive higher education.

Why do Indian higher education institutions do not attempt to adopt such voluntary commitment for intellectual responsibility for society? The answer can pose to us a noteworthy observation from point of accreditation and the system of management of quality assurance in institutional framework. The accepted criterion of National Assessment and Accreditation Council is limited on to a few items. They are – Curricular Aspects; Teaching-Learning and Evaluation; Research, Consultancy and Extension; Infrastructure and Learning Resources;

Student Support and Progression; Governance and Leadership; Innovative Practices. But in these guidelines the voluntary adoption of international and global guidelines were not given due weight.

Till today Indian government is satisfying itself for accountability of teaching and some form intellectual capital production. In the annual report of higher education institution there are no uniform accounting standard. In the similar way socially responsive aspects are not given due importance by university grant commission and All India Council of Technical Education and other policy making bodies. If these policy making bodies does not understand accept of voluntary spirit for accreditation then it is sure that these organization would be able to generate spirit of innovation. Here, the all the top professionals and administrators must understand the importance of institution adoption of global principle voluntary or otherwise they have to avoid taking the name voluntary legends say Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda in any form. These indicate creation of ill aligned spirit through the Indian Higher Education at the innovative journey. Therefore through this article requested to govt. of India and policy making, accreditation bodies to take necessary steps for recognition of voluntary adoption of global principles those are linked to society and globe as a whole. The government can take steps for mandatory voluntarism and mandatory accreditation for ensuring socially responsive quality of higher education. If the government of India goes for mandatory practice of sustainability reporting with standard accounting norms for fund, accreditation governance and disclosure then automatically this voluntary spirit for innovation will be taken care of automatically. We should keep in mind that the mandatory accreditation along with voluntary accreditation to global principles may create greater impact on the quality drive and responsibility drive for higher education.

**Source:** February 06, 2012/[Education Insight](#)

### **ICT: a revolution in teaching-learning process**

Interactive classrooms allow the group activity of the blackboard to be merged with PC content for a powerful teaching-learning platform.

Education has always been accorded an honoured place in the Indian society. The recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66) marked a significant step in the history of education post-Independence. Since then there has been a considerable expansion in the educational facilities all over the country at all levels.

However, it is in the last few years that education has been the prime focus in India. The essential driver has been the shortage or lack of skilled workers in several sectors of the economy due to a weak higher education system. It is difficult to sustain the growth momentum of the country and maintain competitiveness unless problems with higher education are fixed. To address the issue, the Government of India has taken serious steps in the Eleventh Five Year Plan to increase opportunities in higher education.

India recognised the importance of ICT (interactive classroom technique) in education as early as 1984-85 when the Computer Literacy And Studies in Schools (CLASS) Project was initially introduced as a pilot with the introduction of BBC micro-computers. A total of 12,000 such computers were received and distributed to secondary and senior secondary schools through State governments. The project was subsequently adopted as a centrally-sponsored scheme during the 8th Plan (1993-98). The budget for this programme has been substantially increased in the last 10 years and implemented via the education departments of the State governments and the SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) chapters in States.

The new age teaching through interactive technology is an initiative by the government to incorporate interactive classroom technique in a teaching scenario. In recent years the blackboard has given way to the pairing of short throw projectors with interactive whiteboards, allowing the group interactivity of the blackboard to be merged with the content of the PC to form a powerful learning and teaching platform.

Interactive classrooms offer tremendous potential for improving the learning process. It is a complete technology-enabled classroom solution that revolutionises teaching and learning of subjects like mathematics, science, social sciences and English. It allows the teacher to not only make the teaching process interactive but also engaging by using visual means which enables them to create question papers and analyse students' performance. Furthermore, it gives the teacher the flexibility of bringing a virtual science lab right into the classroom. Lesson plans may be easily captured and shared online enhancing the interaction with students and engaging them with a visual component to the intellectual stimulus. This helps the students of higher classes to firstly get motivated, logically think, collate and learn with interest.

For engineering students, it ushers the desired potential to enrich and deepen skills, and helps them to research and document better. Seen on a

larger canvas it helps to create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, contributes to radical changes in the learning sphere thus strengthening teaching, and provides opportunities for connection between the school and the world.

However, there is another side of the coin wherein access to ICT is still limited to many places in the country because of lack of physical infrastructure, economic constraints such as extreme poverty; lack of educational limitations such as illiteracy and lack of relevant content in the local language. Ensuring strategies to combat these obstacles will allow us to explore the true potential of ICT in near future.

**Source:** February 06, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

### **Key concern of foreign Universities entering India would be to protect their 'brand': Ron Somers, President, USIBC**

*USIBC President Ron Somers said that Key concern of most of the foreign universities entering the country would be to protect their 'brand ethos' as higher education is highly regulated in India.*

*The universities interested to operate in India have high reputation and they would like to protect their 'brand' in terms of value education that they have built over decades: Ron Somers, President, USIBC*

While interest is high among foreign universities on the immense opportunities in education sector in India, USIBC President Ron Somers said that Key concern of most of the foreign universities entering the country would be to protect their 'brand ethos' as higher education is highly regulated in India.

He said that commercial viability is not the major concern for foreign universities as India has got a huge number (of students), and foreign universities would be willing to set up their campuses and run their programmes independently in India.

"I think it is really a matter of freedom. When they (foreign universities) come to India, they would want to be identified with their own curriculum, they would like to choose and select their own faculty, and they would want freedom to be able to pay to their own faculty," said Ron Somers, President, US India Business Council (USIBC). He was speaking on the sidelines of 'One Globe 2012: Uniting Knowledge Communities' conference in New Delhi recently.

He said that the universities interested to operate in India have high reputation and they would like to protect their 'brand' that they have built over decades.

"One of the key concerns among the established universities who want to come to India is whether

they would be able to maintain their reputation and quality of education that they have has build for generations," he added.

"So, those elements are still need to be worked out because in the end it is all about how you offer the highest educational standard to preserve that brand, because that only makes a great university," he added.

On the financial viability of foreign universities in India, he said this would not be a major concern. "I don't think financial viability is a major concern. The number is so overwhelming; I don't have any doubt over the financial viability. In the end that's going to be the easiest part," he said.

He said that there is a huge level of interest between the educational institutions both in India and US, and governments in both the countries are also very enthusiastic on that front.

"Many universities in US are very actively perusing their Indian mission including Duke University, Boston University, Middlebury College, University of Michigan, George Washington University, Georgetown University," he said, adding, "Recently held US-India higher education summit was attended by Union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal and US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton. Every University present in US was there. So, there is huge level of interest. It was very successful has boosted the confidence level."

Though the Foreign University bill is still in Parliament, many Top foreign universities are taking informal routs to enter India.

Italy's top B-School SDA Bocconi is setting up its campus in Mumbai with a group of entrepreneurs in India and expected to start its MBA programme from this academic year.

UK-based Lancaster University entered into partnership with the G D Goenka World Institute of Higher Education (GDGWI) in 2009 to run undergraduate programmes in economics and business economics. It also runs management programmes including BBA, Postgraduate Diploma in Business and Management, and Masters in Management.

The University of Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, UK is setting up the Strathclyde SKIL Business School (SSBS) in collaboration with SKIL Infrastructure Limited at their campus in Greater NOIDA, Delhi NCR. This collaboration between SBS and SKIL will begin its academic programme from September 2011 and will offer a two year post-graduate Masters-in-Management (MiM) degree. The SSBS plans to commence a 3-year BBS programme and a one-year MBA programme for

students with work experience in 2012 and 2013 respectively.

The government, however, is working hard to get the foreign university bill passed from parliament. The Foreign Educational Institutions bill is expected to pave the way for all foreign institutions that will pass the quality test. The bill envisages setting up a mechanism by which foreign educational institutions would be allowed to enter India without going through a process that is too intrusive.

The provision in the bill bars foreign universities from repatriating profits. According to MHRD, since the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialization) Bill was cleared by the Cabinet, several international education institutions, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale University, Virginia Tech, Columbia University, University of Southern California and University of Alabama, had expressed interest to operate out of India.

According to an estimate, around 140 Indian institutions and 160 foreign education providers including Universities and Colleges are engaged in academic collaborations. The highest number of collaborations takes place in the field of management and business administration followed by engineering and technology/computer application/information technology, and hotel management.

According to sources in HRD Ministry, over 50 foreign universities have evinced interest in setting up campuses in India.

**Source:** February 07, 2012/[MBA Universe](#)

### **Create education clusters to promote innovation & raise scholastic standards**

The importance of education is continually emphasised in public discourse. We hear - and mouth - endless repetitions about India as a knowledge power, of how education will empower and will help us to magnify the demographic dividend.

In this context, recent news items are like a slap in the face: hopefully, a wake-up call to all those concerned. First, there was the report of India being ranked 73 out of 74 countries on the basis of a global survey (PISA) of the educational capabilities of students of class V in maths, science and reading. Second, the poor academic standard of our school students was re-emphasised in the findings of the independent yearly study (ASER) done by Pratham.

Then, at the university level, our standing - based on the rankings by standard global surveys -

continues to be dismal, with but a few stray institutions finding their way into the top 100 (or even 500). Finally, in a recent survey of think tanks, so crucial in the formulation of public policies and in conducting [research](#) studies, there is but one Indian organisation in the global top 50.

There are many valid questions regarding the criteria that determine these rankings. Some may even infer bias. Yet, few will deny that there is a great degree of truth regarding the poor quality of our education and research system, at least in relative terms. Other indices related to patents and publications in respected journals point to the same conclusion.

It is time for new thinking and quick action. Much needs to be done in schools; that is not discussed here. On [higher education](#), supporting and improving existing institutions is an obvious necessity. However, more than doubling the present number of students (to reach the target of 30% GER) will require vast expansion of infrastructure. This presents an opportunity to take new initiatives that enable growth while simultaneously meeting other objectives like quality, excellence, research and innovation.

One such initiative, long suggested but yet to happen, is the creation of designated areas where a vibrant educational ecosystem can take root. These learning, education and research nodes (LEARN) would be centres that promote learning, [innovation](#) and application.

The learning institutions will be of varied disciplines as innovation flowers best when there is interaction between, and at the intersection of, different disciplines. Research centres or labs will be next door and there will be a strong industry or user interface. The last will ensure translation of research into concrete applications, the scaling of these and - where appropriate - their 'monetisation' for money or social gain.

Institutions selected to operate in these areas should be given far greater freedom than what is presently constrained by the stifling regulatory framework of [UGC](#), [AICTE](#) and other bodies. Specifically, there is need for autonomy in selecting curriculum and courses; qualifications, recruitment and terms and conditions (including compensation) for faculty and staff; and the method of selection of students.

On the last, there could be stipulations regarding a clearly defined, publicly announced and transparent process, with 20% of the students getting full waiver of all fees and hostel charges.

LEARNs will provide land for selected schools. In these schools, preference in admissions will be given to the children of faculty members and professionals from institutions in the zone.

This is an important factor for attracting and retaining key faculty and top-notch professionals.

R&D institutions - both governmental and corporate - will be incentivised to be in the LEARNs. In some cases, existing R&D facilities will serve as the nucleus; in others, existing institutions may serve as the nucleus. Industries linked to the core discipline of the R&D institution will be encouraged to set up facilities in the zone, facilitating interaction amongst industry, R&D and academia.

Thus, one is looking at a cluster or agglomeration of universities, research labs or national research institutions, incubation facilities, start-up and established companies. Imagine a cluster that has institutions like [Tata Institute of Social Sciences](#), an IIT, an IIM, a large multi-disciplinary [central university](#) with emphasis on the humanities and creative arts, large national research institutes like the CSIR labs, an incubation centre with start-up companies and some established industries.

This will serve to kick-start innovation by creating a conducive ecosystem.

Other ingredients like angel or venture funding, mentoring and networking will also be needed to ensure that ideas and innovation are translated to marketable products or services. In Silicon Valley, for example, such ecosystems have evolved and grown organically.

The challenge is to create this through active intervention. If successful, this will give rise to high-quality educational institutions and stimulate innovations that are market- and need-based.

Such a model provides a broad framework which can be adapted for different contexts. It does not prescribe the discipline, organisational form or focus of educational institutions or R&D facilities; nor does it pick any specific industry sector for incentives. Thus, it respects and benefits from India's diversity.

There would be many questions and sceptics for any such idea, and opposition on many grounds. A practical way around much of this would be to begin this as a pilot project, limited to three or four locations, and expand while learning from this experience. The dire educational and research scenario needs prompt and bold action: LEARNs are one of the possible ways forward; we need many more.

**Source:** February 07, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

### Beyond reading and writing

THE status of literacy learning in India is rather bleak, essentially because of deprivation of the poor and socially backward, and poor pedagogical practices. Literacy in India has been viewed in a very simplistic manner of providing minimum skill of reading and writing without knowing its meaning or usage. In a sense, a literate person may never become an educated person. Though literacy rate in India has shown a steady increase from 18.33 per cent in 1951 to 64.8 per cent in 2001, the number of illiterate has not decreased in absolute terms, if we consider the corresponding increase in population. The problem of education goes far beyond the basic task of learning to read and write and as such all those who are considered literate cannot be considered educated.

One major cause for concern is deprivation due to unequal and graded access to economic and social rights, including the right to education. Discrimination due to any reason is an issue not only of equity but also of economic growth. The government's efforts in this regard don't seem to be making much difference and the curse of deprivation is carrying on unabated. This results in a large number of uneducated youth from disadvantaged sections like Dalits, tribals, physically challenged, etc., without whose participation inclusive growth can remain only a far-fetched idea.

Education is an indispensable means to empower people who can become responsible for development and growth. Appreciating this fact, the Right to Education Act guarantees free and compulsory education to every child between the age of 6 and 14. However, its implementation demands vision, pragmatic strategy and ruthless execution and above all, the necessary political will. Such gigantic projects are always fraught with many pitfalls. The present project is bound to entail problems which "naturally" come up in any project of this magnitude. This demands men of calibre of Nielkeni or Sridharan (of the Delhi Metro fame) or Naryana Murthy, who enjoy spotless reputation and are blessed with clarity of vision and ruthless execution skills, at the helm of affairs. It appears the much-touted Act has had very little impact to improve the situation of the poor and deprived sections of society, as far education of their children is concerned.

The issue of 25 per cent reservation in private schools for the poor from the neighbourhood at the entry level is tricky and complicated. Students of private schools generally go through Nursery, Lower KG and Upper KG. By the time they are six years old, they are ready to take off to Class I, which

nowadays has a detailed syllabus in at least four subjects. Children from poor families, who will join at six years, will be far behind the others in studies and a class within the class will create complexes which may play havoc with the under-privileged slow learners. In its present form, the Act is silent on the quality of free and compulsory education. It is obvious to any one that the amount which the government is willing to spend on each child per year, approximately Rs 2,800 or Rs 234 per month, is too inadequate to even talk about quality.

The quality of teachers generally raises a question. It is only through training and experience that one can learn to become a good teacher. Due to absence of any effective and efficient system for training of teachers, every teacher evolves his/her own method of learning and uses it for teaching. Over a period of time, the teacher gets into a set mould which continues. Therefore, it is not enough to select a teacher based on qualifications alone. One important parameter for developing and sustaining quality education is to provide continuous and rigorous training, orientation and reorientation of the teaching community. Training should not only provide missing knowledge and skills in the context of the current role of the teacher, it should also help convert potential into usable competencies for use in the future and support self-development efforts of individuals.

Since 1991, the expenditure on education has been steadily declining, but it seems Dr Manmohan Singh has the right focus when he says, "It (right to education) is the surest way of ensuring rapid inclusive growth." He has committed to the nation that expenditure on central gross budgeting support will increase from less than 8 per cent to more than 19 per cent in the Eleventh Plan, as he feels India is the only industrial economy with literacy rate less than 70 per cent. This is in consonance with the view expressed in the National Policy of Education, where it is stated that the "investment on education be gradually increased to reach a level of 6 per cent of the national income as early as possible." There is no doubt that the project must not be pushed to fail, the government must tread on the difficult path slowly and carefully.

**Source:** February 07, 2012/[The Tribune](#)

### **Schools in India stress on need for project-based approach for experiential learning**

Besides providing insights into higher education in the new age, the One Globe 2012 knowledge conference, organized by Salwan Media, in partnership with US India Business Council, UK India Business Council, International Institute of

Education, FICCI, TiE, India Knowledge@Wharton, IHT, YES BANK and PricewaterhouseCoopers, also focused on reforming K-12 school education and helping students seeking higher education abroad through international educational partnerships, career and resume building, demystifying visa procedures, and cracking the admission tests at campuses. Harjiv Singh, founder CEO, Salwan Media said, "There are several new career options and courses available today in India as well as abroad. Parents need to step up to their responsibility to help their children explore these and actualize their true potential." Besides delegates, the conference also saw participation of several students and parents.

The session on 'emerging trends in K-12' was moderated by Arun Kapur, Director of Vasant Valley School, and included among panelists Rosemary Sagar, chairman of The Sagar School, Dr. D.R. Saini, Principal of Delhi Public School RK Puram, Kaye Annette Jacob, Associate Director and Head of International Schools Division at The Heritage Schools, and Goldie Malhotra, Director, Guru Harkishen Public School.

Emphasizing on the need for project based approach to education in schools, Kaye Annette Jacob, Associate Director of The Heritage Schools said, "The new generation of parents do not want their children to undergo what they went through. Few schools have already started introducing experiential learning models where students work on real-life projects so that education is less theoretical and more practical." Citing an example where young students of Class VI were asked to dismantle and re-assemble a bicycle to write a manual, she said that promoting such innovative educational models on a large scale requires collective risk-taking by parents, teachers and family members alike.

Panelists at the One Globe conference agreed that school education needs to be broad-based and holistic. Rosemary Sagar, Chairman of The Sagar School noted that while accumulation of knowledge was a key earlier, but in the new world, where knowledge is already abundant, schools now need to shift their focus on teaching students how to access and apply it. Dr. D.R. Saini of Delhi Public School felt that physical growth is as important as mental and intellectual development. Importance must be given to imparting social skills that help students express themselves and learn from others." He said that Indian students are geniuses in mathematics and sciences, but parents must participate and also learn and teach themselves to help students compete in a global world. However, Goldie Malhotra of Guru Harkishen Public School

stressed on the need for teacher training, and added, "While classroom, curriculum, syllabi and methodology have all changed today, my biggest fear now is whether the teachers themselves are being trained accordingly to be able to impart the vast and in-depth knowledge available today." Addressing the students attending the One Globe 2012 conference, she said, "Today's times call for multi-tasking when you as school students should do as much as you can to stay competitive. Don't just keep other activities as hobbies but make them your passion because sometimes passions are more important than profession."

The interactive panel saw an interesting round of questions from the audience including parents and school students. Salil Pande, who studied at IIT Kanpur and University of Chicago, asked if we have the ecosystem that helps students take sufficient amount of early risk to choose preferred career paths, and if the enormity of content and emphasis on research can impede development of problem-solving and critical skills. Rosemary Sagar responded that in order to help students take risks, we need to inculcate in students the spirit of self-confidence and self-esteem in a positive way. Earlier systems were based on the glass half empty paradigm which highlighted where students were lacking. Stressing the can-do attitude is more of an art in education than a science, felt Rosemary Sagar.

Neena Bhasin, a Supreme Court advocate, who was a delegate at the One Globe 2012 knowledge conference noted that for school students, examination still is a synonym for stress, fear and tension. Advocating for the need of having open book examination and research papers at the school level itself, Bhasin said that these should be conducted as knowledge tests and not memory tests. As a parent, she applauded abolishment of Class X board exams and demanded for getting rid of the Class XII Board exams too.

Answering a question from the audience on whether teaching in India is a neglected and under-paid profession, Arun Kapur, Director of Vasant Valley School cited the example of Finland as the "rockstar of education" where teachers are not the highest-paid professionals but are still the brightest.

Goldie Malhotra of Guru Harkishen Public School said that the adoption of CCE as a scheme of continuous and comprehensive evaluation was a big and welcome step. However, she cautioned that any reforms in the educational system need to be planned and implemented carefully as they impact not just the schools in Tier-I cities but even in far-flung villages. She felt that while career counseling

was picking up in larger cities, there still remains an unaddressed need to guide school students in remote areas on the new careers and courses available today. Professor C. Raj Kumar, Vice Chancellor of OP Jindal Global University observed that overlapping regulations pose a challenge to internationalization of education in India.

**Source:** February 07, 2012/ [E School News](#)

### **Educating India's 'Demographic Dividend': The Role of the Private Sector**

The growth prospects of the Indian economy depend to a large extent on how the country tackles certain issues of intellectual capital today. The concern largely centers on the much-debated demographic dividend, or the rising proportion of working-age people in India. The recent One Globe 2012 "knowledge conference" in New Delhi emphasized the role that industry needs to play.

Some 54% of India's 1.2 billion people are under the age of 25. The TeamLease Indian Labor Report 2009 estimates that 300 million will enter the labor force by 2025, and by then, 25% of the world's workers will be Indians. The National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) is already grappling with the challenge of providing training and retraining to 500 million people by 2022. The non-negotiables to meet the challenge include fundamental education reform across primary, secondary and higher education, and significant enhancement of supplementary skills development.

These were the key concern areas addressed at One Globe 2012: Uniting Knowledge Communities, a conference held in India's capital recently. Organized in partnership with the United States India Business Council (USIBC), India Knowledge@Wharton, and The International Herald Tribune, the two-day conference provided a platform for policymakers, entrepreneurs, industry associations and academia from across the world. The discussion was largely in line with the philosophy that knowledge and skills are the critical determinants of a country's economic growth and standard of living. Also, quality, merit-based, equitable and efficient tertiary education and research are essential parts of this transformation.

"The government is not able to keep pace with the kind of solutions emerging in education," said Kapil Sibal, union minister for human resource development and communications and information technology. "In the next 10 years, the nature of education will change. People across the globe are communicating with each other seamlessly, universities are collaborating digitally... There are no territorial boundaries to hold back the mind. We

are working on the concept of a meta-university, which should hopefully be in place in the next academic session."

In his keynote address, Sibal described the meta-university as a "Facebook of institutions – an open platform where students will be able to access courses from other universities, interact with international faculty members and, in the process, generate knowledge." Such an open platform, he said, is the future of education. "To give this idea shape, we have mounted a National Mission on Education through ICT [information and communications technology] to link 25,000 colleges and 2,000 polytechnics for enabling e-learning and content sharing. We have also created the National Knowledge Network (NKN) which will soon link 31,000 colleges... 1,100 open source courses have already been created," he added.

The NKN is a state-of-the-art multi-gigabit pan-India network for providing a unified high-speed network backbone for all knowledge-related institutions in the country. Its intent is to make research and development activities and innovations multidisciplinary and collaborative. Sibal also shared his efforts to get the Foreign Education Providers Act cleared.

### *Roadmap for Higher Education*

A report titled, "A Global Perspective on Higher Education in India," which was produced by the USIBC with YES Bank as the knowledge partner, was also released at the event. Tushar Pandey, president and country head for strategic initiative and government advisory at Yes Bank, elaborated on the 10-point roadmap the report provides for improvement in the higher education space: "The state expenditure needs to improve in order to realize the goal of access, equity and quality in higher education. Emphasis also needs to be laid on the professional development of faculty; increased emphasis on quality research; establishment of innovation universities, and reforms in leveraging information and communications technology in higher education." He added that to prevent the "commoditization and commercialization of education, transparent, precise and unambiguous policy guidelines for the private sector are essential.... A tie-up between educational institutions and industry is equally mandatory to raise educational standards, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. One way could be training [of] faculty by industry experts."

Noting that India's demographic dividend is "impressive," USIBC president Ron Somers said higher education has an important role to play in unlocking its potential. "India is the hope of the

future," he stated. "For us to remain competitive in the 21st century, we have to develop knowledge partnerships with countries such as India. India is no longer the back-office of the world. They are adding value to our ideas 24/7."

Somers also applauded initiatives such as the Jindal Global Law School in the state of Haryana, which was set up to promote global courses, programs, curricula, research, collaboration and interaction through a global faculty. Talking about the concerns of foreign universities entering India, Somers noted: "A university wants to keep its brand pure -- to have control of the curriculum, the faculty and the quality of education. There are accreditation issues as well."

While addressing attendees of a session on India's demographic challenges in skills development, Raj Dravid, chief operating officer at Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services said his firm has been training people in the poorest districts of Orissa and Chhattisgarh. "Post-training, they get jobs in urban centers such as Bangalore, but they find it difficult to adjust to the urban standard of living," he pointed out. "Our study indicates that most are able to save and send back home about US\$40 [a month]. Such piecemeal approaches won't work. A comprehensive network that links industry, the trainees and the trainers needs to be created."

### *Taking Jobs to the People*

Shashi Kanth, chief operating officer of Centum WorkSkills India, an educational initiative of Sunil Mittal's Bharti Group, agreed, suggesting that industry could address these issues by creating jobs in places where the people receiving training reside. "Industry is the victim as well as the culprit," he said. "It needs to guide us to choose the relevant skills. Otherwise no amount of training will help."

Arun Sundararajan, a professor at New York University's Stern School of Business, highlighted the paucity of resources for vocational training. "We have embarked on an ambitious project to train 500 million people and the National Skills Development Corporation has been set up to follow this mandate. It is, of course, essential to maintain the present rate of growth in the Indian economy. But adequate resource generation holds the key."

According to Economic Survey 2007-2008, India's public expenditure on education was 3.6% of GDP and spending on higher education accounted for just 0.4%. According to India -- Higher Education Sector: Opportunities for Private Participation, a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) that was released earlier this year, there is a huge opportunity for private participation. "Government resource allocation is inadequate to meet its own

targets (a 30% gross enrollment ratio by 2020) leaving enough scope for private participation," the report said. "The 11th Five Year Plan (2007-2012) allocation for technical and higher education has been raised almost nine-fold to US\$18.8 billion from US\$2.1 billion in the Tenth Plan. However, this is still a fraction of the estimated requirements for achieving the targets."

### *Creating the Right Environment*

In a spotlight session on "Learning to Learn," Anshul Arora, co-founder and executive director of Edvance Preschools, said the country does not pay enough importance to the right environment for learning. "More emphasis needs to be laid on activity-based experiential learning," he noted. Arora shared the example of Harvard's Innovation Lab set up by Dean Nitin Nohria. The initiative seeks to foster team-based and entrepreneurial activities and deepen interactions among Harvard students, faculty and entrepreneurs.

Another example of this came from Stephan K. Thieringer, president & CEO of AcrossWorld Education. He talked at length about the Khan Academy, which has brought a digital revolution in the way lessons are imparted. Set up with the goal of changing education by providing free, world-class education to anyone anywhere, it has delivered 118,613,876 lessons to date. Also discussed was an innovative tool called WikiBhasha. The example was shared by Lokesh Mehra, director of education advocacy at Microsoft India. WikiBhasha is a multilingual content creation tool for Wikipedia. The tool enables contributors to Wikipedia to find content from Wikipedia articles, translate the content into other languages, and then either compose new articles or enhance existing articles in multilingual Wikipedia.

Speaking about a key factor that can help Indians compete globally, A. Didar Singh, advisor to the union ministry of overseas Indian affairs, said: "The private sector [has to play] a role in developing curriculum for skills, establishing standards, certification processes and also testing facilities."

Saurabh Johri, program advisor to the Observer Research Foundation, a think-tank added that "Education can be the only leveler. It is the means to bridge the huge divide that exists between religious groups, castes and regions. Remote and technology-based education will peak in the next decade or two. Education is steadily becoming a private good. Affirmative action on part of the private sector is imperative."

**Source:** February 09, 2012/[Knowledge Wharton](#)

### **Study engineering? If you don't have money, go to hell!**

As the scramble for the limited number of seats for engineering and medical seats in the self-financing colleges and deemed universities in Tamil Nadu begins ahead of the central and state board school leaving exams, a few hundred crores of rupees will change hands, mostly in black.

In the process, it will also deny tens of thousands of deserving children their right to higher education.

At the end of the admission season, it will be clear one more time that however meritorious you are, unless you get into national institutions such as the IIT, NIT or a handful of government or aided colleges, you have absolutely no chance of getting in without money.

That too loads of it.

A simple back-of-the-envelope calculation can explain the situation. In Tamil Nadu, there are about 500-and-odd engineering colleges out of which nearly 475 plus are self-financing colleges. Out of this about 100 have reasonable market value, some even quite high, in terms of employability. All of them charge from about Rs 1.5-3 lakh a year depending on the premium they command against the government prescribed fee of Rs 65,000.

The self-financing colleges, on paper, are not free to run their institutions and money making enterprises at will. Each such college has to reserve 35 percent seats for students who get in through merit at Rs 35,000 per year and 65 percent, who are less meritorious, at Rs 65,000. But premium colleges charge all of them the same flat rate of Rs 1.5-3 lakh. In minority-run institutions, the prescribed ratio is 50:50.

Some of the deemed universities (institutions with university status) run their own entrance examinations and select students, who also end up paying substantial amounts of money, even if one scores quite high in the exam. The highest fees are charged by about 40 elite colleges, which together have about 10,000-12,000 seats, netting roughly Rs. 300 crore in a year.

Of course, there are engineering colleges which charge what the government prescribes, but most of them are the ones without proper infrastructure, faculty and reputation. Naturally, potential employees keep away from them. According to industry sources, only 75 engineering colleges out of the 500-and-odd in the state are considered good enough.

In the case of medicine, the state has about 1,200 seats in self-financing medical colleges plus deemed universities for which a candidate has to pay an

average of Rs 30 lakh plus the government prescribed annual fees of Rs 2.75 lakh per year. One of the institutions has an interesting Rs 1.5 crore package that takes one through post-graduation. But you have to book it at the time of your plus two.

The summary of the situation is that except in government institutions or a handful of colleges affiliated to it, which adds up to about 25, students with merit have no other option but to pay.

The authorities say that there is no capitation fee or underhand deals, but routine sting operations by TV channels bring out capitation fee negotiations almost every year. This money is not receipted or accounted for and is all in black. This is at least another Rs 300 crore. Unlike the engineering seats without premium, which sometimes do not get filled up, all medical seats are up for grabs. Then there is BDS...

The summary of the situation is that except in government institutions such as the [Anna University](#) or a handful of colleges affiliated to it, which adds up to about 25, students with merit have no other option but to pay. Or in other words, if you don't have money, go to hell.

The only option for students and parents is to seek education loans from banks, who do not relent without adequate collateral. In a large number of cases, the parents cannot find adequate collateral to secure the loans. The loans also might lead to a debt trap if the student fails to find a job immediately after passing out. The economic crisis of 2008 saw many students not finding jobs and struggling to pay back their loans.

This is an example of what happens when governments withdraw from a crucial sector such as education and leave it to private players or public-private partnerships (PPPs). In both the cases, the bottomline is only profit. In the era of planners such as Montek Singh Ahluwalia and arm-chair World Bank advisers, PPP sounds reasonable, but the story is no different from sheer privatisation.

It explains why a number of politicians or their cronies turn educationists, not just in Tamil Nadu, but also in other parts of the country. Or why some of the institutions tie up with big sounding names overseas.

In neighbouring Kerala, which resisted the self-financing phenomenon for decades but gave up a few years ago, it has wreaked havoc with the education system. These days, an unemployed engineering graduate is a common sight in the state. The logic for the government was that such colleges help the state to retain the money that

Kerala students otherwise would pay in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Interestingly, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka pioneered the system of self-financing colleges attracting a large number of students from every part of the country as well as from neighbouring countries.

The argument that the governments offer for privatisation, or PPP, is enhancement of investment in education. But the Tamil Nadu example clearly shows that it doesn't work too well. Instead what it does is deny education to deserving candidates, an irreversible inter-generational impact on poor families and a *mafiasation* so to say of the education sector. The situation is similar to economic liberalisation without adequate governance structures leading to crony capitalism and plundering of national wealth.

In this case, there are absolutely no checks and balances where people with intense profit motives, mostly politicians and their cronies or businessmen, are having a free run.

The scramble for engineering seats in Tamil Nadu is largely because of the growing IT and BPO/KPO industries. Industry sources say that in a year, IT companies recruit about 1.1 lakh students from Indian campuses, most of them in South India. Another 2.5 lakh jobs are offered by the BPO/KPO industry. This is a good number for job-aspirants and hence the parents do not mind even selling their meagre possessions or take high-interest loans to send their children to good colleges. Of course, many do fail and do not make the cut. That is another story.

"This is the result of a complete lack of education governance systems or administration of education systems," says a former vice-chancellor in Tamil Nadu. "It is despicable that it is black money that drives, or circulates in, our institutions." In a country like India, the government should ensure that certain sectors are run by them. "Education and health cannot be privatised in our country. Our people are too poor to access private services."

K Ramachandran, an education specialist, touches upon a central issue — the importance of students and merit. "Higher education can't function without students. Do we care?"

There is no other solution, but to increase government investment in education that will substantially increase the seats for meritorious students. More government institutions and transparent selections processes which require rapid scale-up and substantial investments are inevitable. Otherwise, we will continue to keep a sizable section of the population out of our socio-economic transformation.

The opponents of unhindered neo-liberal policies do have a point: government withdrawal from the priority sector will throw our society out of balance. Education is just one example.

But government intervention without a transparent governance structure oriented towards the delivery of high quality services can be as big a problem as privatised education.

It's a Catch-22 situation.

**Source:** February 10, 2012/[First Post](#)

### UGC's Dubious Manifesto On Higher Education In The 12th Five Year Plan

The University Grants Commission recently published a 129-page document titled *Inclusive and Qualitative Expansion of Higher Education* which spells out the Commission's vision for higher education in the country for the 12 th Five Year Plan (2012-17). The document consists of the deliberations of a working group set up for the purpose and envisages a 'quantum jump' in higher education with the three objectives of access, equity and excellence. Among the major proposals is a mission mode national programme to be called *Rashtriya Uchcha Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)* geared to achieve 25% national level Gross Enrollment Ratio. The document notes that the GER in higher education in India (13.2%) is just about half the world's average (24%) and about two thirds that of the developing countries (18%), and scandalously below that of the developed nations (58%). With enrollment already exceeding two million in the universities and 13 million in colleges, a massive expansion in infrastructure and investment would be required. The initiatives proposed to achieve the desired levels of GER between 23.5 and 27% would need an amount of Rs 1,84,740 crore, the document states.

Balancing the three objectives is obviously going to be the biggest challenge. For example, with the rural GER at 7.8 and the urban at 27.2, far greater effort would be necessary to reduce if not bridge the gulf while also chasing higher standards of excellence. To accomplish its objectives, the document recommends a variety of important measures such as a greater induction of information technology, the upgrading of Academic Staff Colleges to Faculty Development Centres, an 'affiliation reforms package', the establishment of a national data bank on higher education and a national monitoring cell, and the creation of a Diversity in Higher Education Index (DHEI). No less significant is the proposal to introduce a 'de-bureaucratized' higher education management system which would be used-friendly, transparent and quick to respond. Further, the document

correctly emphasizes that the prevailing regional, social and gender imbalances need to be tackled through a pro-active approach. So far, it is all sweet and good.

But the poison pills secretly tucked away in the many folds of the perfumed document begin to pop out soon enough. 'The Central and the State Universities should be statutorily required,' the documents states, 'to adopt revision of fee structure payable by the students by at least 10% for every three year period.' Statutorily required, no less! Why? Clearly, to ensure a regular return to the private investors. Corporate social responsibility ought to be, well, underwritten! And complementary to the proposed business model are the so-called 'newer' models of public-private partnership in higher education, which are all devised to favour the private sector to the blatant disadvantage of the public and the government. According to the first, termed as the Basic Infrastructure Model, the private sector invests in infrastructure and the government runs the operations and management of the institutions in turn, *making annualized payments to the private investor*. In the second, the Outsourcing Model, private sector invests in infrastructure and runs operations and management and the responsibility of the government is *to pay the private investor for the specified services*. The third, Equity/Hybrid Model, is about investment in infrastructure being shared between government and private sector *while operation and management are vested with the private sector*. The third, termed as Reverse Outsourcing Model requires the Government to invest in infrastructure while *the private sector takes the responsibility of operation and management*.

This is virtually a manifesto of the neoliberal profiteering ideology, inviting its wealthy corporate adherents to come and dig their fangs and claws into the body of 'the commons'. UGC's precious gift on the 20 th anniversary of the wedding between the Indian government and the corporate sector! Indeed, the 'newer' models are the core of the entire document. As one reads on, the word 'reform' begins to sound, yet again, as a smart coinage to denote strategies of restructuring higher education as a vast profit reserve for the corporate sector. Significantly, the urge to push through the 'newer' models is touted as a virgin push: there is no accompanying report on the outcome of the entry of the private sector in higher education during the last two decades. A certain urgency, on the contrary, painted in broad strokes is made to cover up the absence of detail on this count. The strategy is not new. You first set unrealistic targets

(Rs 1,84,740 crore), take a clever step from the prophetic to the fatalistic, and then throw the gates open to those who would smell the flesh.

The picture becomes clearer when we read how casually and 'economically' the 'poorer sections' are disposed of. The document invokes the 'economic divide', but then goes on to make meaningless noises. It does not even pay lip service to the economically disadvantaged as such; in fact, it mentions no figures of their GER. Poverty, as if, afflicts people only when religion and caste are branded on their bodies. So this is what the document has to say, obviously to just get rid of the burden of guilt: 'The poorer sections of the society have much lower GER compared to others.... The worst condition is faced by the casual wage labour which is a socio-economic problem which has serious implications.' No data. Not a single concrete measure. Only platitudes and clichés. Why not something as concrete as the ten percent 'revision of fee structure payable by the students'? If someone feels enraged enough to describe the document as socially divisive, can he be blamed? For the differently-abled also, the document merely says that 'they need special care and separate interventions'. It does not specify a thing.

Rather cautiously and shyly, the document proposes 20 exclusive universities for women. Perhaps those who thought up this funny notion had bought some 1960s radical feminist text from the Sunday book bazaar in Daryaganj, read it without checking its year of publication, and were too thrilled to even cross-check with others in their group – for the same document states that the GER, in 2007-08, for men is 19.0 and for women 15.2. Certainly not a scenario so dark as to compel women's confinement to 'exclusive' zones. This is silly and reverse, if not something downright criminal and reactionary, social engineering. And of course, another side of the divisive 'liberal' agenda.

Just as the document does not forget to mention the need for 'engagement with social concerns' without at all demonstrating it convincingly (except to consolidate a vote bank politics of separate identities based on caste, tribe, religion and gender), it remembers the need for 'new pedagogical practices' too. What exactly it means by these, it leaves to the reader to figure out. Are those practices rather obvious? I would think not. Thinking them demands thinking hard and innovatively. A difficult thing, no doubt.

The last thing I want to point out here – though there is much more to say. The document speaks of a balanced higher education in which liberal arts find a place too: 'A fine balance between the

market oriented professional and liberal higher education shall be the hallmark of such initiatives.' But it stops there, never telling how higher education in the liberal arts is going to be updated to meet the challenges and opportunities of the current times. Along with other – some really commendable – initiatives, the UGC should consider establishing multidisciplinary Centres for Contemporary Studies which would focus on understanding the complexity of the present as a connected node between the past and the future. Actually, the UGC's 12 th Plan document itself should be among the objects of study in such centres.-

**Source:** February 11, 2012/[Counter Currents](#)

### Earn While You Learn

I-MBA, a two-year industry integrated full-time programme by Bengal Institute of Business Studies (BIBS), comprises both theoretical and practical knowledge. This course starts with a six months classroom training that appraises students about the fundamentals of management. Based on their progress, students will be absorbed in one of the organisations, taking part in this programme, for 15-18 months. A student needs to be a graduate in order to enroll for the course.

While they are training with the companies, the students get to attend classes once a week on Sundays. These classes are meant for project work. Guest lecturers from various companies, who recruit students directly for their own firm, come in from time to time to examine the progress of the students. BIBSs has an illustrious faculty team along with the support of 100 companies from India and abroad as mentors.

The course costs about 3.18 lakh per annum but the students have an enormous opportunity of regaining half or more of their spent amount. During their apprenticeship they have an opportunity of earning between 1.18 to 2 lakh. This makes it easy to pay off the loans that many students take for their studies. This gives all the students an opportunity to be employed after the course is completed and get a clear picture of the professional world outside.

On completion of their course the students get an UGC and AICTE-approved MBA degree that is certified by Punjab Technical University (PTU), which is recognised for the government jobs or higher education in India as well as abroad. The first batch of I-MBA is scheduled to start from July 2012 whereas the enrollment has already started.

Dev Narayan Sarkar, GM-Sales, Pepsico and lecturer at BIBS, says, Students need to come out of their theoretical base and have more of practical

orientation. The I-MBA programme is priceless for aspirants as they can put into practice what they are taught in the classroom. This cannot be replicated with any other learning. After they work in organisations for 15 months, companies will naturally want to retain the trained workforce and thus guarantee jobs for the pass outs.

**Source:** February 11, 2012/[Times of India](#)

### **Digitisation is making e-learning simple**

*Though the computer literacy in India is low, some companies are effectively spreading education using digital contents riding on the Internet.*

The business of education is all set for a transformation in the country as the government, recently, announced that it will purchase some 100,000 low-cost Aakash tablets from Datawind, the Canadian company that has developed this equipment.

These tablets would then be distributed to schools and colleges in India, where students would get them for free. This move of going the e-way and the limitations the low cost tablet has revealed has seen a lot of criticism all over, however, the e-learning industry in India is going to be one of the biggest game changers in recent times.

E-learning service provider Tata Interactive Systems (TIS) CEO Sanjaya Sharma recalls his experiences when he began his company in 1990. "There was no e-learning then. It was computer-based training along with multimedia training that existed," says Sharma. However, times changed slowly as TIS began getting clients. One of its first clients was the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) with whom it did a project involving VGA monitors. This product was later sold to 32 other organisations.

Now, the company has many Fortune-500 customers to itself and is also conducting business with universities and publishers abroad. Sharma is very optimistic about the present Indian e-learning market, though he believes that it has just begun to take shape. "Adoption happened much earlier abroad, than in India," Sharma added. TIS is coming big on the e-learning in schools with their Tata ClassEdge, a solution for interactive teaching in schools.

Tata ClassEdge is an innovative and comprehensive educational solution from TIS, designed to help teachers deliver quality instruction, with an effective blend of classroom activities and interactive multimedia demonstrations.

For this purpose, the company would be providing its services to partially government-aided schools apart from private schools. Study estimates that

there are around 80,000 government schools; 150,000 partially-funded schools and 105,000 government schools in the country. TIS is also going to reach out to government schools soon with a different pricing model within a couple of years.

Through ClassEdge, teachers will have access to lesson plans that they can use to make their classes engaging and memorable. The plans are customised for students and it provides tips to elicit student participation, including reinforcement activities for struggling learners and challenging assignments for high achievers.

Teachers can use animations to explain difficult topics. They can engage children through stories that teach. They could use interactive games to get students to interact with the medium and have fun while learning.

Sharma strongly believes that the education sector in India is going to take advantages of technology in the coming years and will improve in the process. "I definitely feel that technology should be available to every individual," adds Sharma. Meanwhile, another institute AVAGMAH ([avagmah.com](#)) is making good business with its online learning platform deemed for the higher education space. AVAGMAH offers UGC-recognised degrees for MBA (Global) in sales & marketing, HR management and banking & finance. The education platform is entirely online and the student must attend classes on the Internet.

"The faculty conducts a class and students sit at home, taking lessons. That was my aim and that's what AVAGMAH offers," says AVAGMAH Online School CEO Karthik K S. The platform for this online school was developed in 2007 and it had also won an award for innovation from Nasscom, the same year. However, the content generation took another two years and only in 2009, was AVAGMAH ready to deliver education online and commence its first batch. The institute now has more than 6,000 students to its name and the number keeps growing with each passing day.

The ease of access, they feel, is drawing people towards online education as they can log into their classes after their day's work and have a quick session with the faculty. "Internet can reach places where prevalent education systems cannot. We have students logging in from places like Palanpur in Gujarat and also from places like Guwahati," explained Karthik. He also says that the content can be delivered on low bandwidth Internet connections making it easier for narrowband users to access it. On the cost factor of such courses and how viable it would be for the not-so-rich sections of India, he

pointed out that AVAGMAH offers two-year MBA courses for Rs 40,000 per year.

“Online education is going to drastically change the learning space in India as technology becomes more accessible,” added Karthik.

Karnataka, the state with the most developments happening in the IT space, is no doubt heralding the e-learning spree in India with various initiatives to bring this form of education to all. In the year 2009, NIIT had announced a partnership with the Government of Karnataka (Department of Social Welfare - DSW), the Karnataka Vocational Training & Skill Development Corporation Ltd (KVSTDC) and the Department of Employment and Training (DET) to provide e-learning to young under-graduates residing in DSW hostels.

The vision of this project is to enable the students in the government hostels to use their free time to enhance their skill sets by acquiring some of the soft skills and life skills that are required in most job areas, and in the process, providing the latest learning technologies at the student’s doorstep.

IT major Intel India and the Karnataka Government’s Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, last year, launched ‘Computers on Wheels’, an e-learning pilot programme, in five districts of the state.

The pilot programme includes digital instruction materials from ‘Educomp’, an education solutions provider. The programme enables teachers to utilise a variety of learning strategies and tools to cater to the diverse learning styles and abilities of students, making education more engaging and inclusive for all. Under the ‘Computers on Wheels’ approach, netbooks are housed in a cart and can be moved between classrooms as needed.

Not only has the Internet found a newer way in traditional courses, but it has also made advances in supplementary education. Atano, a Mumbai-based company, has come up with a unique idea of providing e-books for vocational courses on its website. Imagine living cities like Meerut, Shimla, Jaipur, Guwahati, Indore, Cochin or even in the metros, one can download a supplementary e-Book at a click of a button. Supplementary education books can be downloaded on the individual’s Windows PC, Android platform, or even Mac (iPads).

### *Cost-effective option*

Industry experts are of the opinion that this sector has a huge potential and more so, in a country where education finds it tough to reach remote places.

“The country needs e-learning as it is the best way to reach out to millions and moreover this sector is

very promising,” says head of IT & ITeS Practice at KPMG, Pradeep Udhas.

He adds that not only in traditional courses, but also in vocational courses, e-learning will be the trend-setter.

Another initiative by Manipal Global Education Services, EduNxt enables interactive learning environment which includes small group mentoring, virtual classrooms, simulation, self-study content, recorded presentations and shared browsing.

Launched by Sikkim Manipal University-Distance Education in 2009, it helps all the Distance Education students through their online platform.

The university believes that it develops a sense of togetherness among the members and different stakeholders of the huge community within the platform.

The platform has functionality which provides a student to interact with 65 core faculty and 6,500 supporting faculty counselors in order to utilise the varied expertise and vast experience of this community.

“We may have progressed from just computer-based learning to technology-enabled solutions in the classroom, but the objective has remained intact, improving the learning experience by making it more engaging,” said Pearson Education Services COO Srikanth B Iyer.

Iyer adds that in their current avatar, e-learning solutions are not seen as replacements for teachers, but aids which will help teachers deliver lessons better, thereby increasing the quality of the learning experience.

However, Centre for Internet & Society Executive Director Sunil Abraham feels that learning should not be restricted to the Internet and interactive classroom sessions but should be made available on mobile phones through audio files as mobile penetration is much higher compared to Internet reach.

“Audio files can also be productive and a learning experience for people who can’t afford the Internet,” explained Abraham.

**Source:** February 13, 2012/[Deccan Herald](#)

### **A global classroom**

*CBSE plans to introduce an international curriculum in select schools in India from the next academic session.*

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)-International Curriculum, which is being followed by 30 schools in nine countries excluding India, will now be taught in CBSE schools in India as well.

CBSE has decided to introduce the international curriculum (CBSE-i ) in select schools in India from the academic session 2011-2012 (classes I and IX). The board will be offering CBSE-i curriculum on a pilot basis in 50 schools, representing all regions of the country.

According to Vineet Joshi, chairman , CBSE, the board has schools across the world, catering to the needs of Indian students settled in different countries. The students in these schools need a curriculum that is in-sync with global trends and current pedagogical patterns. The board, therefore, wants to provide a globally sensitive curriculum that will help Indian learners either to pursue higher studies in countries abroad or interact meaningfully with global markets for ensuring active participation in the development process. He says, "Initially, in the academic year 2010-2011 , this curriculum was implemented in about 25 schools in Middle-East and [South Asia](#) as a pilot project for classes I and IX. Now, the curriculum will be initiated in India in schools that are willing to adopt this curriculum."

### *Critical Skills*

CBSE-i curriculum, to be introduced in the month of April or July, aims to promote critical and creative thinking skills, effective communication skills, interpersonal and collaborative skills and information and media skills. The curriculum , in its first phase, will be open to all CBSE schools, which express interest in it. Later, in the next phase, around 50 private and government schools from India will be selected by the board to offer this curriculum.

However, before that, selected schools will have to undergo an orientation programme and then apply to the board in order to obtain a grant. "The board will also provide training programmes to teachers covering philosophy , content, methodology and evaluation issues. It will also extend teacher-support materials for guidance and self-learning modules in the form of online [teacher](#) support groups," adds Joshi.

As far as evaluation is concerned , learners, according to Joshi, will be evaluated based on continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE). The focus of assessment would be on testing the skill-base of learners . The existing CBSE curriculum is based on [the National Curriculum Framework \(NCF\)- 2005](#). The international curriculum will keep all the significant components of NCF as its base, building on it to provide a more learnerfriendly, stress-free and skill-based approach.

### *Student Helpline*

The Delhi [Mental Health Helpline](#) (1860 266 2345), launched by [Sheila Dikshit](#), Delhi [chief minister](#), is offering a 24x7 service, where trained counsellors will help students and parents to cope with exam stress. The counsellors would also call back the students for follow-up assistance. The Helpline is a three-tier system. Clinical psychologists trained in counselling are primary call takers. Calls are escalated to trained psychiatrists depending on their seriousness. In extreme cases, calls are passed on to senior, experienced and empanelled psychiatrists.

**Source:** February 13, 2012/[Times of India](#)

### **Indians can excel as thought leaders**

In a world battered by the excesses of the [financial sector](#) and suspicious of perceived corporate greed, business-as usual will no longer do for company managements, says Debashis Chatterjee, Director, [Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode](#). That is why, he says, business education as-usual will no longer work.

"Management education has to be reinvented to make students sensitive to social problems. And that's the reason we have introduced new courses on social transformation." Chatterjee reckons this would equip students to overcome challenges faced by business entities of modern world.

IIM Kozhikode has also taken the lead to reduce the fee for its management programme and also to address gender imbalances in the admission process. He takes us through a range of issues including challenges faced by managers, future of management education and also the country's ability to provide thought leadership in the management world in future.

"It is probably for the first time that modern-day managers at business corporations and aspiring managers at B school campuses are being exposed to the challenges of a full-blown global economic slowdown. Though companies are visiting campuses as part of relationship-building exercise, they have been conservative in their offers. The slowdown has also tested the resourcefulness of managers in business corporations that are struggling for survival.

But managers should remember there has been no change in resource or production base compared to pre-recession days. The only change is the trust in leadership. Large business corporations have been insensitive to the fact that the financial economy is not disconnected to the real economy. The fact is, consumers have simply lost connect with leadership in business corporations".

Clearly, business-as-usual will not work anymore when there is a trust deficit. "By definition, a business corporation is a social entity. It draws its energy from the larger ecology of society. It cannot function like an island, disconnected from the real economy. In fact, corporations need to take a re-look at their business models to address the question of social contact. The stakeholder-driven model of business has to be reviewed. It does not work any more. It should be replaced with a business model that accommodates social content," he says.

Chatterjee, who took over as director of IIM Kozhikode three years ago, believes that its time to revisit the management programme to include social content. The institute has already included courses on social transformation in India and business ethics to make students more sensitive to social problems.

"An understanding of the larger social context would help a student to better comprehend how tall corporations work. Such an approach would equip Indian managers to provide thought leadership to the rest of the world in understanding the social relevance of business entities.

"The main consideration here is: how many more people would benefit from the organisation." In tune with this philosophy, IIM Kozhikode has reduced its fee at a time when many peers are doing just the opposite. We need to bring more people into the arc of excellence. Indians have the inherent ability to manage change better. This is because India, despite being a land of huge diversities and major contradictions, is held together by a thought system that advocates multiple ways to reach the same goal."

Chatterjee believes that Indians, with their inherent ability to manage contradictions and diversities, have the potential to become better corporate leaders. IIM-Kozhikode has also taken the lead to correct gender imbalance in its admissions.

"Today, there are a large number of girl students in the campus who will bring into the campus a whole new perspective on different issues. Students, in general, would benefit from the move as the two perspectives would complement each other. Admitting more girl students in to the institute is also important from the perspective of nation building. How can we as a nation achieve higher growth if 50% of our students are not participating in higher education?" he asks.

The management institute plans to set up a centre in Kochi shortly. It will offer executive programmes that have become a big draw now. The institute is

also busy sharing its expertise in various areas with the local community. Chatterjee points out that the IIM Kozhikode has tried to amplify the thought process of the local community.

At times, it has also influenced the thought process within the state. The special session for the entire state cabinet was one such instance. The entire state cabinet attended a full day programme specially designed for them. The fact that members of the state cabinet gave priority to the programme and found it useful in their way forward is itself ample proof of the beneficial impact of IIM Kozhikode on the local community, Chatterjee says.

**Source:** February 13, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

### PPP models to expand higher education?

With education sector requiring an investment of over \$150 billion in the next 10 years, the government has proposed new private partnership models for expansion of higher education sector in the country.

The government has proposed setting up of large education hubs in different parts of the country anchored by large public/private sector enterprises funded through their allocations for corporate social responsibility.

According to documents accessed by this newspaper, four new models have been proposed in an effort to facilitate the entry of private players in the higher education set-up. The four proposed models are: basic infrastructure model in which the private sector invests in infrastructure and the government runs the operations and management of the institutions, in turn, making payments to the private investor.

The second proposed model is outsourcing model in which private sector invests in infrastructure and runs operations and management and the responsibility of the government is to pay the private investor for the specified services.

Equity or hybrid model is the third model in which investment in infrastructure is shared between the two sectors while operation and management is vested with the private sector. The final proposal is reverse outsourcing model in which the government invests in infrastructure and the private sector takes the responsibility of operation and management.

The proposals are part of University Grants Commission's submission before the Planning Commission for the forthcoming 12th Plan period.

Sources stated that four models of public-private partnership have been proposed so as to maintain flexibility in the investment pattern.

According to government estimates, the country needs over \$150 billion worth of investment in the education sector in the next 10 years. The government has proposed to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio from its current 12.4 per cent to 30 per cent by 2020. For enhancing the GER to this level, about 1,000 more universities and 45,000 more colleges are needed.

**Source:** February 13, 2012/[Asian Age](#)

### **In China, private colleges, universities multiply to meet higher-education demand**

Hundreds of private colleges and universities have opened in China in the past decade in response to soaring demand for higher education in the world's most populous nation.

The growing private sector fills a niche in a market long dominated by public universities. The private schools offer millions of students a no-frills education and a better shot at a paycheck after graduation as China continues its quest to gain influence in the world economy.

The new schools have flooded China's big cities, spilling over into places such as Oriental University City, a complex here in the Hebei province, an hour south of Beijing. It has 14 private universities, one shared library and a handful of fast-food restaurants to feed tens of thousands of students.

"Everyone wants to have an education, but the ability of the country is limited. Public universities cannot meet the need," said Rao Dujun, director of the international office at the private Xi'an International University in the Shaanxi province of central China. "This is why private universities can emerge."

The number of private universities in China has soared to more than 630, up from 20 in 1997, according to a 2010 analysis from the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College. In all, the private institutions enrolled about a fifth of Chinese college students in 2008.

Private university administrators and critics of the schools have warned that as China's population growth slows, the boom in private universities may subside and only the best ones will survive. Some have amassed enormous debt from purchasing land and building facilities. But these schools have been integral to the expansion of Chinese higher education.

In the late 1990s, fewer than 10 percent of Chinese age 18 to 22 were enrolled in higher education, according to government data. Now the figure is about 27 percent — or 30 million students — and the government hopes to reach 40 percent by 2020. If China is successful, it will have more

than 40 million students in college. That would be roughly double the projected total for the United States. The U.S. population, however, is significantly lower than China's.

In China, a college degree is often crucial for upward mobility. Competition is intense for available spots. By contrast, the United States is focused on persuading students to enroll in college and to stay and complete degrees once they do.

Higher education in China was gutted during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, but has been built up again. In 1999, the authoritarian Communist government decided to remove restrictions on the private sector of higher education in an effort to propel economic growth.

In 2003, the government permitted private schools to partner with public universities. Although still self-funded and self-governed, these new "independent schools" gained some prestige through the associations while also helping public universities deal with overflow.

Unlike their public counterparts, private universities across China emphasize practical skills over theory. The Civil Aviation Management Institute, for instance, teaches security guards-to-be to operate metal detectors. Students in Xi'an International's automobile college learn how to fix cars, whereas at a public university they might learn how to design them.

"That's just not our job," Rao said.

Some of the more established private institutions across the country, such as Xi'an International — a constant presence on the government's top-10 list of private universities — are able to fill seats with little or no recruiting.

Still, private schools are often the second choice of students who score poorly on the national entrance exam. Private institutions typically charge double what public ones do — about \$1,500 a year, compared with \$750 — and are generally viewed as having lower-quality programs.

Official statistics are not available, but private colleges claim employment rates for their graduates that are higher than those of their public counterparts. While public schools have to work with the curriculum set by the government, private universities can create or change majors on a regular basis, in response to the job market.

Hou Yifei, an electrical-engineering major at the 10-year-old private Oxbridge University in Kunming, a city in southern China, called some aspects of public universities "old fashioned."

“I think I can get a better lesson, a better job after graduation” than at some public institutions, Hou said recently.

Here in Langfang, the Oriental Institute of Technology offers 25 majors — including hotel management, historical artifact restoration and dance — up from five when it opened in 2009. Its main office is filled with glossy brochures detailing courses and potential jobs. One brochure, replete with pictures of lush green grass, describes how students can turn a physical-education major into a career in golf-course management.

Whether a degree from a private college is the path to a lucrative career remains unclear.

Yan Fenqiao, a professor at the public Beijing University who has studied private higher education in China, believes that private-university graduates are less picky than their public-school peers. “It’s not a problem to find a job,” he said. “It’s a problem to find a good job in a big city.” For the jobs that private-university graduates are taking, Yan said, a high school diploma would usually suffice.

Government jobs are among the most coveted. But private-university graduates have difficulty competing for them, said Yong Zhao, associate dean for global education at the University of Oregon’s College of Education. Zhao, who gives his surname second following U.S. custom, said private Chinese universities invest less in education and hiring high-quality faculty members because the institutions are seeking to make money. Some private schools, such as Xi’an International, say they are not run for profit; other schools say that they are.

“They may tell you [they’re] not-for-profit, but there’s a profit motive,” Zhao said. “When there’s a profit behind it, of course you would try to cut cost.”

(This story is part of *The Hechinger Report’s* ongoing series on what the U.S. can learn from higher education in other countries.)

**Source:** February 13, 2012/ [The Hechinger Report’s](#)

### A global classroom

The [Central Board of Secondary Education](#) (CBSE)-International Curriculum, which is being followed by 30 schools in nine countries excluding India, will now be taught in [CBSE](#) schools in India as well.

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on a pilot basis in 50 schools, representing all regions of the country.

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The board, therefore, wants to provide a globally sensitive curriculum that will help Indian learners either to pursue higher studies in countries abroad or interact meaningfully with global markets for ensuring active participation in the development process. He says, Initially, in the academic year 2010-2011, this curriculum was implemented in about 25 schools in Middle-East and South Asia as a pilot project for classes I and IX. Now, the curriculum will be initiated in India in schools that are willing to adopt this curriculum.

### Critical skills

CBSE-i curriculum, to be introduced in the month of April or July, aims to promote critical and creative thinking skills, effective communication skills, interpersonal and collaborative skills and information and media skills. The curriculum, in its first phase, will be open to all CBSE schools, which express interest in it. Later, in the next phase, around 50 private and government schools from India will be selected by the board to offer this curriculum.

However, before that, selected schools will have to undergo an orientation programme and then apply to the board in order to obtain a grant. The board will also provide training programmes to teachers covering philosophy, content, methodology and evaluation issues. It will also extend teacher-support materials for guidance and self-learning modules in the form of online teacher support groups, adds Joshi.

As far as evaluation is concerned, learners, according to Joshi, will be evaluated based on continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE). The focus of assessment would be on testing the skill-base of learners. The existing CBSE curriculum is based on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)-2005. The international curriculum will keep all the significant components of NCF as its base, building on it to provide a more learner-friendly, stress-free and skill-based approach.

**Source:** February 13, 2012/ [The Times of India](#)

### Coming soon: PPP model for higher studies in India

A new paradigm of public-private partnership (PPP) in the rapidly growing higher education sector is on

the cards, with a role for corporates in developing the necessary infrastructure. In parallel, the norms for public funding of education as a whole — which is set to be increased from roughly 1% of GDP at present to 1.5% — would be revamped with the inclusion of performance incentives.

Senior officials said that the ministry of human resource development (HRD) and the Central Advisory Board of Education would meet here on June 7 to discuss the PPP model for higher education that would likely comprise concession agreements distinct from those for other areas of physical infrastructure like ports, roads and power. Different models are being looked at: Basic infrastructure, outsourcing, equity or hybrid and reverse outsourcing.

The basic infrastructure model will involve the real estate player providing land and others offering education services. \*(Private sector will invest in infrastructure while government would run the operations and management and make annualised payments to the private player)

\*The outsourcing model suggests that private players should invest in infrastructure and also run the operations and management while government would pay for specific services.

\*The hybrid model suggests that private player and the government should share investment in infrastructure while operation and management should be taken care of by the former.

The reverse outsourcing last suggests that the government should invest in infrastructure and private players should run operations and management. \*Here the foreign educational institutions will set up campuses in India and deliver lectures to students in India remotely. Under the hybrid model, even Indian institutes can offer education services to other countries.

\*The Plan Panels' Infrastructure Division has consensus over first two models (Basic Infrastructure and Outsourcing) but it has reservations about the two others.

\*The panel's Education Division, however, is of the view that all four models are not only feasible but also have their own strengths and are not mutually exclusive.

\*The division opines that these models are possible choices and opportunities of PPP engagements in not only setting up new institutions but also running existing institutions. Therefore, excluding the last two models (Hybrid and Reverse Outsourcing) are not advisable.

\*Batting for the fourth model, the Education Division says that it suggests a possibility of PPP

engagements in existing institutions, which are in dire need of involving private sector to improve their efficiency.

Sources said the HRD ministry, along with CABE which advises the central and state governments, will formulate the agenda for education for this year. Besides defining the funding parameters and devising suitable PPP models for the sector, the twosome will look at internationalisation in the higher education space, determine alternative modes of delivery and frame a new National Policy on Education, the sources added.

The ministry has proposed that the public funding pattern should be norm-based under three broad categories – mandatory norms for minimum substantive grants to all universities; provision of maintenance grants to all universities based on transparent and objective criteria and performance-linked incentive grants based on assessable outcomes. "We are working on education guarantee finance schemes and the legislation is being framed," said a top ministry official.

An HRD ministry paper had earlier said that inclusive policy must primarily focus on state-supported expansion of higher education. The idea is to upgrade facilities in the existing publicly funded institutions and make use of the opportunities of under-utilised spaces in these institutions. Also, facilities in non-aided institutions would be improved through an appropriate PPP model. The ministry is also setting up 14 Innovation Universities in the PPP mode under innovative disciplines with the participation of private parties would be encouraged.

Financing of these ventures would be done jointly by the government and the private firms. The ministry has already identified five universities for this project and they will have the freedom to formulate their own policies on admission to programmes and offer scholarships to the top 20% of the student community at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

The forthcoming government-CABE meeting would also deliberate on innovation inculcators to create the necessary linkages between the university, industry, research labs, civil society. This would also be explored under the PPP mode.

**Source:** February 14, 2012/[Financial Express](#)/ [\\*Business Standard](#)

### Private sector has a role to play

The human resources needed for the development of our country cannot be produced without higher education. India has the third largest higher education system in the world after the United

States and China, and we churn out around 2.5 million graduates every year. India's public spending on education continues to be abysmally low at just 0.6 per cent of the GDP in contrast with 1 per cent in the US and 0.9 per cent of the GDP in the UK. Similarly, spending on research and development (R&D) is also 0.9 per cent of the GDP, which is very low in comparison to developed countries.

In India, it is a daunting task to accelerate the pace of higher education as Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is only 12.4 per cent. In comparison, in developed nations it ranges from 44 to 86 per cent. Among developed countries, Finland has the highest GER of 86 per cent. Some of the major countries like the US (82 per cent) and Russia (75 per cent) have also a higher reach of higher education to the majority of eligible students. This is the major difference between developed countries and developing ones, which makes a huge difference in the ability to create a critical mass of students in higher education to further create national wealth. If we want to accelerate the pace of growth in our country and create a niche with cutting edge technologies, we have to increase the numbers in higher education exponentially.

In India, the public spending per student is as low as \$1162 (approx. Rs 58,000), whereas the corresponding amount is \$10,616 in the US and \$10,060 in the UK. In the 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-12), education has been the main focus and consequently, allocation for education has been stepped up from around 7.7 per cent of budgetary support in the 10th Plan to over 19 per cent. It is going to be a more than five-fold increase in spending on education. But, by these efforts, the government will reach only 15 per cent GER by the end of the 11th Five-Year Plan. India requires more than 27,000 additional institutions of higher learning to meet the ambitious target of GER of 30 per cent by the year 2020. The figure of 27,000 institutions includes 14,000 colleges of general higher education, 12,775 additional technical and professional institutions and 269 additional universities. The Centre and states cannot achieve this alone with their meagre resources at hand. Therefore, there is need for private participation to bring investment in the education sector to create the requisite infrastructure for such a gigantic task.

In government institutions of higher education, 80 per cent of funding comes from the Central and state governments. In these institutions, tuition fee contribution remains very low. In India, percentage of tuition fee in the total expenditure on higher education was 19 per cent in 2007, while in the US

it was 36 per cent. In comparison to developed countries, 75 per cent of these institutions are charging very low fee which is less than Rs 50,000 per student per annum. In case of technical education, however, the tuition fees may range from 1.5 to 4 lakh per student per annum. On the contrary, in the West, student fees contribute very less to the total income of a private institution. In Yale, this contribution is only 19 per cent as against 95 per cent in Indian private higher education institutions, like Manipal University.

About three decades back, states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh showed courage by opening up the higher education sector, particularly technical and medical education, to the private sector. These two states became the largest suppliers of skilled software and hardware engineers. Trained human resources have changed the economy of Hyderabad and Bangalore which are now respected all over the world as centres of the new knowledge economy. Of course, now other states are also following suit. Himachal Pradesh has made strides in this direction by opening 14 universities in the private sector. The emphasis on higher education has resulted in 18 per cent GER in the state which is a matter of pride for this hill state. Research and development is a key area of technology development and here the role of industry is important. Presently, the industry is contributing 25 per cent of expenses in R&D which should also be increased.

Improving the quality of education is the major challenge, particularly when the participation of private sector in education sector is on the rise. The adviser to the Prime Minister has stated that at least 90 per cent of Indian universities are providing below par education. These institutions have been established with the laws enacted in the state legislatures and, therefore, there should be statutory regulatory authorities in the state to continuously monitor the functioning, quality and affordability of the fees of these institutions. As the Central government is allowing foreign universities to open their campuses in India, there is going to be a tough competition and consequently, the quality of education is likely to improve. Private institutions will have to ensure quality to retain the best faculty and to remain in the competition. Thus, our country needs the participation of private entrepreneurs and industry to give a desired push to higher education.

**Source:** February 14, 2012/[The Tribune](#)

### **In China, 'Super 30' Maths wizard sees a lesson for India**

*Beijing has got its arithmetic right, says Anand Kumar*

Even 2,000 miles away from his Ramanujan School of Mathematics in native Bihar, numbers are very much on Anand Kumar's mind.

Not the kind of complex numbers he usually puts up every morning on the rickety blackboard he uses to teach his students, but a simple statistic which he sees as a strong indictment of India's inadequacies in higher education.

"In the last 20 years, 13 students from China have won the International Mathematical Olympiad," Mr. Kumar says. "And India hasn't won the prize even once."

Mr. Kumar knows more than most what it takes to nurture academic talent in maths and sciences. He rose to international prominence through his school's ambitious and path-breaking "Super 30" initiative, which has had remarkable success in preparing underprivileged students for the challenging Indian Institute of Technology Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE).

Mr. Kumar says he has long held a fascination for China — in particular, its success in producing young mathematicians and scientists. So he decided to pay a short visit to this country en route to Canada, where he will give lectures this week at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

"In the coming 15 years, I believe that all Nobel Prize winners and Fields Medal winners will come from China," he told *The Hindu* in an interview in Beijing, referring to the most prized award in international mathematics. "Their present is very bright," he says, "so their future is even brighter."

He cites China's success at the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO), a prestigious annual competition for high school students, as an indicator of the country's success in education. China has ranked first 17 times since its students began participating in the Olympiad in 1985, according to the country rankings published on the IMO website. India has never ranked first.

China's recent success is even more stunning: in the last 12 years, China ranked first on 10 occasions, and ranked second twice. India only managed two top-ten results in this time with a highest position of seven, ranking 23rd and 38th in the last two competitions.

Mr. Kumar acknowledges that Olympiad results may not be an accurate assessment of the qualities of an education system, but he certainly sees a lesson in them.

He says he is interested in understanding how China achieved its success and what Indian higher education can learn from China's more centralised system, which invests more attention and

resources into training young mathematicians up from the district level.

He also sees larger lessons in China's primary and secondary school education system, and is impressed by its reach, and in particular the provision of free and compulsory nine-year education in every village and town.

In many parts of rural China, the government has set up larger primary and secondary boarding schools that cater to several districts, and provide better quality education than that available in small towns and villages. Mr. Kumar thinks following this model might make sense in India. "It is not realistic to expect to have one good teacher in every village," he said.

"Schooling is weak in India because of a lack of teachers," he added. "We need to invest more in training our teachers."

To produce the world's best mathematicians and scientists, India's focus must be on the grass roots and on schools, than an obsession he sees with colleges and universities.

"Providing a good education up to the secondary level is the most important thing," he said. "In our country, 70 per cent of children get educated in rural areas, so the reach has to be improved. The sad fact is that the government education system is no longer working."

**Source:** February 14, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

### **America is Being Left Behind in Education By India, China**

Award winning teach Keith Ballard will host forums Feb. 16 and Feb. 22 to discuss why he thinks America's education system is being blown away by Chinese and Indian students, and what America needs to do to change.

I recently returned from China and India and was exposed to education systems that have overtaken America in performance and are poised to wreak havoc on our local and national job competition.

The U.S. public school system is being blown away and simply won't be able to compete without undergoing major changes. Making the comparison to a football game, the Chinese public school system (K-12) is at NFL level of play; whereas the United States is playing high school ball.

For 25 days in September and October 2011, I visited 10 schools in China and 12 schools in India to interview students, teachers and administrators, over that time capturing more than 50 hours of video.

Prior to going to China and India, I invested approximately 400 hours of research in this

subject. A stark reality was revealed to me that schools in America are by and large not preparing students to compete for high-tech, high-paying jobs.

American teachers are not the problem but are part of the solution. John Simmons, EdD, who interviewed over 60 engineering students while traveling in India in November 2011, collaborated with me on this project.

The main reason I did this project is because I have a seven-year-old son and I have deep concerns that his education in the U.S. public school system will not sufficiently prepare him to compete for the best jobs in the future.

Many countries like Japan, Singapore, South Korea, China, India, Finland, Canada, the Netherlands and Taiwan prove that a country can provide its children with a world class public education across all socio-economic lines.

These countries tie their public school system with the success of their economies. Unfortunately, the U.S. treats public education as a social issue and during times of economic downturn, social programs are the first to go on the chopping block.

The state of California may continue to cut the number of education days for our children which is a very dangerous move if we are trying to grow our economy and compete with many Asian countries that have high growth and robust economies. The U.S. must treat education as a national security issue because we cannot continue to fund a large and powerful military without a robust economy to support that military.

China continues to loan the U.S. money every hour of every day so that we can pay our military bill and for the costly wars that we have been fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. The amount of information in the world is [doubling every 18 months](#). The world is changing rapidly.

According to data cited in Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat*, the typical Chinese student at high school graduation will have received conservatively six additional years of schooling more than an American public school student.

This is due to longer school years in China (approximately 50 more days per year), longer school days (three hours more per day) and an earlier start time for kindergarten (two to three years earlier than in the US).

If you add in homework loads of Chinese students (about two hours per day) and time on task in the classroom due to virtually no discipline problems in Chinese public schools, the number could look more like eight years ahead of American students.

Furthermore, [studies have shown](#) that Chinese parents spend approximately 10 times more time with their children per day than American parents.

We are clearly being out parented and out educated – that is the bottom line.

Our future will increasingly be determined on our capacity and our will as a nation to educate all children well – a challenge we have very little time to meet if the United States is not to experience the modern day equivalent of the fall of Rome.

The U.S. government uses the [international PISA test](#) as the best indicator of how our students are performing in comparison to many other industrialized countries throughout the world.

In 2009, Shanghai, China scored first in reading, first in math and first in science in the world.

The US scored 31st in Math, 23rd in Science and 17th in Reading.

Even worse, this is the best that the U.S. can do after spending the second highest per-pupil amount for education in the world.

The U.S. Department of Education and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated that there are [two million unfilled, high-wage, high-skilled jobs](#) in America. For years, companies have looked beyond our borders for qualified individuals to immigrate to America and fill the positions.

The Chinese and Indians have been and are continuing to prepare for these jobs. To catch-up with the Chinese and Indians, we must adopt the same attitude we had when America met the challenge of the space race.

But first the leaders in the American educational system will have to understand the problem. Band-Aids won't work! There's no magic bullet!

Only by being open to really understanding the problem and seeking solutions will we as a community and country be able to have our children and future generations compete for these high-tech, high-paying jobs. Understanding the problem is foremost! Willingness to discuss the problem with an open mind is central to effecting change.

I recommend the following changes to improve education in the United States.

1. Recognize the importance of early childhood brain stimulation and preparing children to be competitive early on. China does this through excellent parent involvement and by starting kindergarten at age two. The U.S. starts kindergarten at age five or later.

2. Increase the number of days in the school year and hours per day (time on task) to compete with other top-performing countries.

California's students go to school 180 days per year – Chinese students go to school 230 days per year.

3. Increase awareness among educational administrators, teachers and the public of just how high the “educational bar” needs to be raised.

Most people do not understand that this is a real and serious problem; this includes teachers, administrators and many well-educated Americans. Honestly acknowledging the situation and using established data is the best approach when seeking solutions to this issue.

4. Facilitate “school-to-career” vocational programs to help those students who cannot or do not want to go to college. China and Germany have excellent models to follow.

5. Work with politicians, TV, radio and print news to help recognize the need for and facilitate change.

6. AND make real changes!

Conclusion: Secretary Duncan has made it clear that our high school and college graduates can't keep up with the demand for high-tech high-paying jobs in America.

Whether we recognize it or not, we are part of a global job marketplace.

It's not about us versus them. It's about California's children being competitive for good-paying jobs. We must prepare our kids for good jobs. That is what it's all about!

**Source:** February 14, 2012/[Imperial Beach Patch](#)

### Education falls prey to larger forces

*An economy driven by the service sector has contributed to the quality crisis in education.*

It is widely acknowledged, and proven by survey results, that the quality of primary education in India has suffered a general decline. This is captured by the fact that, although primary enrolment ratios have gone up, the dropout figures in advanced classes have fallen.

An earlier article (Business Line, February 8) had identified the collapse of standards in government schools as a major cause of the quality crisis in education. But that is not the only reason.

The adage in politics, “we get the government we deserve”, is roughly applicable to market-driven education as well. In other words, the education system is only delivering what the society wants, so one needs to look at the demand side of the problem.

The society demands “knowledge” that is believed to get children a decent job. But what is the intrinsic quality of this knowledge, is a question that does not seem to trouble policymakers,

opinion-makers and the middle class — such is the uncritical acceptance of a purely functional approach to education.

It should be pretty obvious that such a system cannot produce the “excellence” that Union Human Resources Development Minister, Mr Kapil Sibal, and corporate leaders are looking for. If they are really serious about achieving excellence, they should turn their attention to the social and economic environment (induced by years of policy) which has contributed to this quality crisis.

### ECONOMY AND EDUCATION

That the government thinks in purely functional terms is evident from its policy emphasis on English. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) points out: “In the current scenario, an understanding and command over the English language is a most important determinant of access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities. The NKC therefore recommends that the teaching of English as a language should be introduced...from Class I.” However, it is worth considering if English instruction contributes to drop-outs at the primary stage.

In English-medium private schools, where neither teachers nor students are familiar with the language, instruction can turn into farce. Students will neither learn their English, nor the rest of the subjects, where instruction in their mother tongue would have helped. China, Japan and Continental Europe are highly-skilled societies that have stuck to their mother tongue.

This is not to argue that English is redundant; indeed, we can access the intellectual corpus of the Western realm only through it. But why thrust it down the throats of children in Class I? It can be taught at a later stage, when a basic grounding in the rest of the subjects and languages has been achieved.

But apart from policy, it is an increasingly aspirational society that is driving the demand for English-oriented teaching, manifested in the explosive growth of private ‘English-medium’ schools. It is clear to India's lower middle class in particular, that even basic skills in ‘spoken or written’ English can land you a decent job in a city, in IT, tourism, hotels, and some other corporate front-office operations. There's more money and status in it than, say, in the job of a suicide-happy farmer or an ITI-trained worker. Therefore, India's organised service sector, plugged into the economy of the US, has driven up the market value of English in post-reforms India. In relation to the size of India's labour force, the organised service sector

workforce may seem like a small island. But its influence on the rest of society cannot be underestimated.

The question is if such a service-sector-driven economy rewards the right kind of skills, for producing the "excellence" that Mr Sibal is looking for. A more complete education system can emerge only alongside a transformation of agriculture and industry, particularly the former, encouraging the growth of a diverse range of skills. Innovation and excellence will then seem more possible.

However, Mr Sibal, the NKC and National Skills Development Council don't seem to consider the structural imbalance in the economy as the root cause of the "skills crisis". Addressing a meeting of State Education Secretaries two years ago, the Minister said: "if we want double-digit growth in this country... we need a critical mass of people to move from Class 12 to higher education." Is it only a question of numbers?

This mechanistic approach runs through the NKC's reports. One of them, ironically called Towards a Knowledge Society, says "Our demographic profile, with 550 million people below the age of 25, has the potential to constitute one-fourth of the global workforce by 2020." What kind of workforce will that be? Efforts at capacity building will not work if the economic drivers remain what they are today.

### WHAT'S KNOWLEDGE?

The NKC does not define what it means by knowledge. It seems to regard education as a humungous machine to produce the necessary workforce for the 'global economy'. Its reports are a souped-up version of the colonial education model, where Indians were schooled to serve as clerks for the British bureaucracy.

A narrow view of knowledge — more IT than basic science, more management than economics, more language grammar than literature — does not help the individual realise her true potential, which is a grave social loss as well.

What we are left with are a lot of drop-outs at the secondary and higher stages, those who cannot fit the specific demands of the system. The survivors generally end up with mediocre language or technical skills.

Policymakers and the society need to understand that such an army of the educated is by no stretch of imagination a "knowledge society". It cannot even serve the interests of the organised economy in the long run. Hence, the absence of innovation in Indian industry, and the inability of the IT sector to move up the value chain. If Indian industry has, by and large, been unable to create educational

institutions, it is because it doesn't take a wider, long-term view of knowledge.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005, in contrast, makes a clean break from this utilitarian approach to education, and instead develops an integrated view — "the softening of subject boundaries so that children can get a taste of integrated knowledge and the joy of understanding." But a better education can only emerge from another socio-economic order.

**Source:** February 15, 2012/[Hindu Business Line](#)

### Skill development initiative's progress is slow: PM

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said that the infrastructure of skill-development of young people is in a slow progress. He said that youth employment is a "high-priority agenda" of his government presently. He was speaking at the 44th session of Indian Labour Conference.

"Youth employment is a high-priority agenda item for our government. We need to provide opportunities for gainful employment to the large number of young people who enter the work force every year," Singh said.

"This can happen only if we equip our young people with skills that are required to meet the demands of our rapidly growing economy," he said.

Maintaining that the rapid growth of Indian economy since 2004 has clearly brought out shortcomings of the country's skill development processes, he said, "Today, availability of skills is possibly the single-most important constraint to rapid industrial growth."

Singh also urged the private players to participate in the skill development initiative of the country.

"The private sector would need to engage itself much more vigorously in these efforts if we are to overcome this massive challenge. Poor students must find it financially viable to learn a skill rather than take up a job prematurely. This requires that industry and government should work together to ensure that such students are adequately financed," he said. Reiterating that his government stands committed to creating a regime of economic management which will usher in more job opportunities, Singh said, "But job opportunities can come only if the economy is expanding, and expanding fast enough."

**Source:** February 15, 2012/[India Education Review](#)

### Supersizing: Obama's Higher-Education Agenda, Part 1 of 8

The most conspicuous part of President Obama's agenda for higher education is his plan for gigantic

increases in enrollment. Obama announced this goal very early in his term. In February 2009, in a speech to a joint session of Congress he declared, "by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world." Translated into actual enrollments, that would mean more than doubling the number of domestic students attending the nation's colleges and universities.

Last week in [Obama's Higher-Education Agenda](#) I said I would in a series of posts examine the eight majors components of that agenda, and then try to put them together as a whole. His dream of gargantuan expansion comes first both as first-announced and as the foundation for everything else.

The idea of gargantuan expansion did not pop out of the blue. Rather it popped out of the College Board in a report released just before Obama's inauguration, and it also popped out of a two-page ad that appeared in The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Boston Globe in December 2008. The College Board report, [Coming to Our Senses: Education and the American Future](#), called for granting college degrees to at least 55 percent of "young Americans" by 2025. The "young Americans" qualifier is important. This was a summons not for more more adult and continuing post-secondary education, but for a radical increase in college education for those under age 35. And it wasn't just a call for increased enrollments, but for actual graduates.

*The proposal was—there is no finer word for it—nuts.*

As I pointed out at the time, in [Cold Brine](#) and [The Battle of Bunker Hill](#), if you sat down and did the calculations on the basis of census data and actual enrollments, to grant 55 percent of young Americans college degrees by 2025 would mean awarding 129 million college degrees between 2009 and 2025—57 million more than would have been awarded at 2008 rates. Even if you think that is a good idea, American colleges and universities had then and still do not have anything like the capacity to accomplish it. To get there, colleges would need to more than double their enrollments and sustain them at that higher level. How many colleges and universities could have done that starting in 2009?

And how many today, after the Great Recession and steep cutbacks at many state universities, could contemplate doing it today?

*Aspirational*

I sat down with one of the people who signed the College Board report at one point and asked him if

he accepted the approximate validity of my calculations. He said he did. Then I asked him how he could then justify signing off on a call for such an impractical goal. His answer: "It was aspirational."

*"Aspirational" as in self-deluding or as in publicly deceptive?*

There are, of course, artful ways to finesse the idea. We could consider the award of associate degrees as satisfying the goal of college degrees for 55 percent of young people. And we could shift vast numbers of students into online—mostly and online-only programs. And we could do the educational equivalent of inflating the money supply by lowering academic standards and making the attainment of college degrees much much easier.

*All three of those approaches are now in play, but I don't want to get ahead of myself.*

In addition to the senseless Coming to Our Senses report from the College Board, the holiday season in 2008 brought that big newsprint buy to convey a similar idea. It was presented as "An Open Letter to President-Elect Obama," and it was a none-too-subtle reminder that he better 'dance with the one who brung him.' Higher Education had done a lot to help Obama win the election and Higher Education expected a lot in return. "Higher Education" in this case meant the 52 signatories, including heads of numerous universities and education associations gathered under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation. In [Asking a Lot](#), I critiqued the ad. It called not just for much higher enrollment, but for the president to direct \$40- to \$45-billion of the coming stimulus package to build or improve "higher education facilities."

*I Don't Like Being 16th*

So Obama's February 2009 speech to the joint session of Congress came by way of a reply. Higher Education, in effect, had enunciated what it wanted as payout for the political support it had provided during the campaign, and President Obama was announcing his intention to deliver.

*How's that worked out?*

Not so well really. Impossible promises often turn out to be rather difficult to fulfill.

Moreover, even the President's extravagant goal that "by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world," fell well short of what the great thinkers behind Coming to Our Senses sought. The Lumina Foundation has been particularly vociferous in calling for even more extravagant numbers of college graduates. It trumpets "[The Big Goal](#)" of "60 percent by the year 2025."

I feel a bit sorry for president Obama on this. It is difficult to pander to utopians. You offer them a castle in the air and they demand a still bigger castle, in higher earth orbit.

But let's come back to solid ground. The reason president Obama gives for wanting to supersize college-graduation rates is always the same: We need to do this for the sake of national competitiveness. It didn't stop with his February 2009 speech.

*On March 4, 2011, [speaking at Miami Central High School](#), he repeated:*

With all of these steps, I am confident that by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. That's our goal. That's our goal. (Applause.) That's how we'll out-educate other countries. That's how we'll out-compete with other countries tomorrow. That's how we'll win the future for the United States of America.

*On July 18, 2011, at the [Education roundtable](#), he intoned:*

A world-class education is the single most important factor in determining not just whether our kids can compete for the best jobs but whether America can out-compete countries around the world. America's business leaders understand that when it comes to education, we need to up our game. That's why we're working together to put an outstanding education within reach for every child.

*And in his September 28, 2011 [Back-to-school speech](#), the president declared:*

One of the biggest challenges we have right now is that too many of our young people enroll in college but don't actually end up getting their degree, and as a consequence — our country used to have the world's highest proportion of young people with a college degree; we now rank 16th. I don't like being 16th. I like being number one. That's not good enough. So we've got to use — we've got to make sure your generation gets us back to the top of having the most college graduates relative to the population of any country on Earth.

*Educational Attainment—the International Perspective*

But does having the highest percent of college graduates among the nations have any particular connection to economic competitiveness? That's really the [question](#) we need to answer. Clearly an advanced economy needs a critical mass of engineers, doctors, teachers, scientists, and experts in various fields that involve a high level of education. We even need a certain number of lawyers. But recognizing we need college

graduates does not necessarily mean more is better; or that "[most](#)" is best.

To be the nation with "highest proportion of college graduates in the world" sounds grand, but is actually rather vague. What nation is now in that position? When President Obama said it in February 2009 [the best available data](#) from the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) said it was Russia, which as of 2003 claimed that 54 percent of its population aged 25-64 had college degrees, compared to the U.S. at 38 percent. The Russian Federation wasn't then and isn't now a towering economic power or a dynamo of intellectual and industrial creativity, but lots of its citizens have college degrees.

In 2010, the OECD released a new report, [Education at a Glance 2010](#), based on a substantially different methodology. It changed a lot of the results and the rankings. (See Chart A1. 3a. on page 36.) Russia still topped the rankings at 54 percent for data as of 2008 for the population aged 25-64. No other country came close. Canada was ranked second at 49 percent. The U.S. came in at 41 percent, behind Israel (44 percent) and Japan (43 percent).

The rankings look dramatically different for the age cohort 25-34. Russia ties with Japan (at 55 percent) and falls behind Korea (58 percent), and Canada (56 percent); and the U.S. (42 percent) ties with Australia, Belgium, and Israel, and fades behind Denmark (43 percent), Ireland (45 percent), New Zealand (48 percent), and Norway (46 percent).

The comparisons are revealing, but not necessarily in a way that fits Obama's or Higher Education's preferred narrative.

*The nation's strongest economy, the United States: 41 percent of 25-to-64-year-olds*

*Economic powerhouse Switzerland: only 34 percent Europe's strongest economy, Germany: a woeful 25 percent*

*In the doldrums for two decades, Japan: still beats us at 43 percent*

*And energy-rich but economically weak Russia, still at 54 percent*

The most fascinating aspect of these figures is the story they refuse to tell. Squeeze them as you will, they refuse to divulge any straightforward correlation between the percent of the population holding college degrees and the nation's prosperity or its international competitiveness. Would we want to trade the economic prospects of the U.S. for those of Russia, Korea, Israel, Japan, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, New Zealand, or Australia?

And with that, President Obama's main argument for massive increases in college enrollments, graduation rates, and percentage of Americans holding college degrees simply collapses. So too do the arguments of the Coming to Our Senses folk, the Lumina Foundation, and the vast choruses of academics who have repeated these points for the last four years as though they were manifestly true.

In some cases, these nations have very bright prospects and higher education is clearly a component in the mix of factors that contribute to material prosperity. But the matter is far more complicated than a simple correlation of prosperity with the gross "percentage of population" possessing college diplomas. It matters profoundly what students actually learn and how this capital can be mobilized. A nation can indeed have too many engineers, too many lawyers, too many finance experts, just as it can have too many sociologists and too many community organizers. Creating an all-purpose incentive for increasing the numbers of college graduates without regard for what they learn or how it matches their economic prospects is a serious mistake.

### *Beyond Prosperity*

Let me anticipate those who are itching to reply something to the effect: "Economic competitiveness isn't the real reason we want everyone to go to college. The true goal is human fulfillment. We want people to go to college because education is an intrinsic good."

I am skeptical of this argument too. Human fulfillment is not identical to attaining a college degree. But be that as it may, I am writing here about President Obama's policy objectives in higher education, and President Obama has justified his goal for massive expansion in college enrollments not as soulcraft but as a means to national prosperity. Taken on its own terms, his argument fails.

### *Who Pays?*

The President's dream of making the United States by 2020 the nation with the highest percentage of college graduates is doubtful in many ways. One of them is that is that the cost of American higher education has spiraled beyond the reach of many Americans to pay for it. That brings us to the next part of Obama's higher-education agenda: limiting college tuition. I'll take that up in the next installment of this series.

This entry was posted in [Uncategorized](#) and tagged [College Board](#), [Coming to Our Senses: Education and the American Future](#), [Lumina Foundation](#),

[Obama, OECD Education at a Glance 2010](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

**Source:** February 15, 2012/[Chronicle](#)

### **Transforming India's skills' development**

By 2022, over 700 million Indians of working age will be seeking to earn a livelihood. Of these, only 200 million would be graduates. The rest will be left with a question mark over their education qualifications and skills.

Traditionally, skill development has been government-driven with different approaches adopted by industry and states. Skills training courses were perceived as being intended for those who could not make it in the formal system, and did not carry any aspirational value. The skills space was supply-side intervention, with very little connect to demand and a lack of focus on outcomes. The likelihood of a person who entered a skill institute getting a job or becoming an entrepreneur was not determinable.

Moreover, capacity, at just over four million a year, was insufficient to skill 500 million over the next 10 years. The National Skill Development Corporation was formed as a part of the coordinated approach to skill development to synergise and enhance industry and employer participation in skill development. Given that there were already multiple interventions in the skills space, how could NSDC supplement their efforts rather than supplant them? There was no precedent in the world.

Formally launched in October 2009 as a PPP initiative of the finance ministry and 10 industry bodies, NSDC was given the mandate of skilling 150 million people by 2022 by catalysing private sector involvement in sustainable training ventures in 20 high growth sectors and the unorganised segment, and set up Sector Skills Councils. Till now, 38 training entities have been approved for funding and 24 have started operations.

From big corporates such as Centum ([Bharti Group](#)), Future or NIIT to NGOs such as Pratham as well as educational institutions and social entrepreneurs, there has been a growing interest. A new generation of social entrepreneurs and enterprises is being created. Each of them would skill at least 100,000 over the next ten years. We need a few hundred entrepreneurs more.

The just over Rs 1,000 crore of funding by the NSDC would result in these organisations leveraging more than Rs 80,000 crore over the next ten years. So far, they have trained over 100,000 in over 220 districts across India. NSDC-funded organisations have to ensure the placement of at least 70% of the trainees - currently over 80%. NSDC has partnered

the [Central Bank of India](#) to provide unsecured loans, for amounts even as small as `5,000, to those who wish to seek training. The skills space continues to face several challenges.

Accessibility to skill development programmes continues to be a major hurdle. We need a new set of microfinance organisations. With the bulk of skills-related training conducted by industry happening for meeting inhouse requirements or from a CSR perspective, the gains from these initiatives are restricted to a select set.

Government schemes with multiple certification systems further fragment industry initiatives. We need consolidation and scale to happen here as well. Distorting the market by providing grant-based models could have an adverse impact; scholarships and other funding mechanisms for the student along with loans may be the best sustainable option. All stakeholders need to have skin in the game.

**Source:** February 15, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

### **Making vocational learning job-relevant**

There has been much talk that if we can educate our youth and provide them with skills, we will be able to reap the benefits of our country's positive demographic profile. Tertiary education and vocational skills are hence seen as an end in themselves: if you provide access to these, everything else will fall into place.

Everyone, especially the poor to whom education has been inaccessible in the past, will have job opportunities; companies will have access to skilled resources; the country as a whole will benefit from this demographic dividend. However, reality is different. Most of the numerous training institutes and NGOs impart training with little or no connection to the actual jobs in the market. As a result, the employment quotient of these individuals is very low.

Monitor Inclusive Markets carried out a series of studies covering around 300 organisations engaged with those at the bottom of the pyramid. What we found was that most trainees could not translate their training into a livelihood.

For instance, we came across a number of organisations training women to be tailors. Post that, they bought sewing machines and set up shop. They soon got a few 'orders' from friends and relatives but this dried up soon. More importantly, there was usually a professional tailor in the neighborhood who would be preferred over the novice.

Therefore, the key to training is a direct link to a job. The organisations we found most successful

were not the traditional ones that trained first and then helped find jobs but ones that had flipped the sequence. They had the jobs lined up and then trained individuals for these jobs. In other words - demand-led training. [TeamLease](#) is one such organisation.

Team-Lease hires someone every five minutes, but only 5% of all its applicants are employable. To address this problem, the firm revamped the traditional vocational training curriculum to respond to the market's needs. While demand-led training is a viable business model for training and placement organisations, companies that require skilled people also have the means to address this problem at their end: through their CSR divisions.

Corporates have traditionally shied away from training people in excess of their business requirements because of the fear that once trained, people could change jobs and all the benefits of the training would then accrue to the firm's competitors. As a result, companies have waited for other organisations - training institutes, placement agencies, competitors - to provide them with skilled labour, thereby limiting their access to quality employees.

Companies should change this view point. Most enlightened companies already spend money on CSR activities. However, these tend to be unrelated to their core business and definitely not at scale.

Instead of doing a random planting of trees or building primary schools in the promoter's state or donating sporadically, companies can achieve greater impact if they focused their CSR efforts on training and skill development of individuals at the base of the pyramid. This would not only generate livelihoods for a large segment of India's people but also create a pool of valuable trained resources for the company to hire from.

**Source:** February 15, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

### **Let demand determine education in India**

The Right to Education Act aims to provide free and compulsory education of good quality to all children between 6 and 14 years of age. Between 2004, when the education cess was imposed, and 2010, when the RTE Act came into force, rural Indian school enrolment increased from about 93.4% to 96% but school attendance has remained low at a national average of 75%. Northern states such as Rajasthan, UP, Bihar lag way below this average while Himachal, Punjab, and the southern states have consistently shown an attendance of about 90%.

Going to school is first a family habit. In many states it has become a social habit and in several

states it has not. I suspect that sending a child to school or college is as much because the parents want them to learn as to keep them engaged away from home in care of an institution.

Keeping children compulsorily in school is also a policy strategy to keep them safe from child labour, and years of schooling are also correlated with many developmental parameters. But is schooling well correlated with formal-learning? A child who attends regularly learns more.

**Much to Learn** PART-5 Education & Vocational Skills

**13.8%** IS THE Gross Enrolment Ratio of India, which is far below than the global standard of 26%

**14.6m** IS THE APPROXIMATE number of students enrolled across 31,000 institutions in India, making our higher education system one of the largest in the world

**4.4 years** IS THE AVERAGE schooling that Indian students receive, compared with 7.5 years for Chinese students. In fact, both countries are comfortably outscored by Sri Lanka, whose students receive, on average, 8.2 years of schooling

<b>STUDENT-TEACHER ratio in India</b> is three times higher than of neighbouring China, says The Public Report on Basic Education revisited	<b>INDIA'S adult literacy</b> peer group comprises such low performers as Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea and Yemen
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**90%** OF THE population should have access to a primary school within one kilometre, says the Government mandate. But a majority of Indian primary schools do not have critical infrastructure such as running water and toilets

International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009 provides another nail in the coffin after other surveys, which measure different parameters differently to arrive at the same conclusion of dismal quality of learning everywhere.

News media have highlighted the fact that among the 74 PISA 2009 participants, two Indian states are only above Kyrgyzstan. But after testing children who are still in school at the age of 15-16, the modal level of reading literacy among these Indian children is two sublevels below the lowest level on a scale of one to six. In maths literacy, nearly 60% children are below the lowest possible level on a scale of one to six.

To add insult to injury, PISA footnotes say the sampling conducted by government's own NCERT was not up to PISA standards. It is like failing the dope test after coming last but one. Indian children are not dumb, clearly, and let us not jump to blame the teachers.

What PISA indicates is that we have never set standards of learning that are measurable, textbook-independent and oriented towards skills of reading, problem-solving, thinking, expressing and so on. We need to reorient the system. We should set stage-wise goals and a timeframe to achieve these goals. Governments are not working with any sense of urgency and do not wish to set measurable achievement goals.

In the meantime, people equate good quality education with private schools. Over the last seven years the enrolment in private schools in Standard 1-4 in diverse states such as UP and Tamil Nadu has doubled to nearly 45% and 33% respectively. In Kerala, an educationally advanced state, nearly 65% rural children go to private schools. As parental incomes and education rise, this proportion will go on increasing unless the governments put a ban on private schools.

RTE effectively is poised to do that because schools that do not comply with prescribed norms will have to be shut down. If the norms are followed, the tuition fees of the so-called 'affordable' schools will be anything but 'affordable.'

According to Accountability Initiative, a non-profit that tracks the quality and efficiency of government services, the estimated national annual recurring perchild cost of schooling, without taking into account assets and mid-day meals, is about `6,300. In advanced states and metros, this is easily double. The government knows how to make education expensive. Does it know how to make it effective?

A school that functions every day with teachers engaged in teaching work results in better learning. This is well known, but relative. On an absolute scale, OECD's Programme for



The government has recently started a Teacher Eligibility Test and defined the entry level preparedness of teachers in some ways independent of their school and college education.

Most professional courses have already made school certification and university certification more or less redundant. Similarly, it is time that industry and business stop asking for 10th, 12th, or graduation certificates from applicants for entry level jobs. Instead, the industry can create and support text-book independent Employment Eligibility Tests at different levels regardless of the number of years the applicant has spent in school as long as she/he is above 18.

This can contribute to creation of a pull factor for improved quality by setting standards. There is a need for industry and business to create a pull-factor to drive the quality of education. Education is too important to be left to the government alone.

**Source:** February 15, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

### RESOURCE

#### Less than 12 pc graduates get hired in India

Less than 12 per cent of graduates get employed in the country, lamented the chairman of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), N.K. Ranganath, adding that the government and universities should join hands to improve the situation in the country.

India would put a large pool of youngsters in the market in a couple of years, Ranganath told reporters on the eve of the Universities of India conclave on Thursday.

“We will face a shortage of skilled workers in the future. Tamil Nadu produces about three lakh engineers every year but we don’t know how many are skilled to be employed in industries,” he said.

Ranganath stated that CII would join hands with the state government to enhance quality of education. The conclave would help senior academicians to join together for a positive change in the Indian education system to bring sustainable value to all stakeholders and particularly the student community, said the chief executive officer and managing director of Mindlogicx, Suresh Elangovan.

**Source:** February 03, 2012/[Deccan Chronicle](#)

#### Global Engineering Enrollment Trends

Science and engineering education and research has been at the core of economic development and innovation. Recent [report by National Science Foundation](#) offers comprehensive and comparative information of international science and

engineering education. Here are five interesting data points from the report:

- About 60% of all foreign graduate students in the United States in 2010 were enrolled in S&E fields, compared with 32% at the undergraduate level.

- India and China were the countries of origin for nearly two-thirds of the foreign S&E graduates in the United States in November 2010.

- Foreign students earned 57% of all engineering doctorates, 54% of all computer science degrees, and 51% of physics doctoral degrees. Their overall share of S&E degrees was one-third.

- In 2008, about 5 million first university degrees were awarded in S&E worldwide. Students in China earned about 23%, those in the European Union earned about 19%, and those in the United States earned about 10% of these degrees.

- In the United States, about 4% of all bachelor’s degrees awarded in 2008 were in engineering. This compares with about 19% throughout Asia and 31% in China specifically.

**Source:** February 04, 2012/[Dr Education](#)

#### Kids who shout in class perform better in tests

IMPULSIVE children who cannot resist shouting out in class score higher in tests than their counterparts who appear to be better behaved and quiet, according to researchers. A Durham University study that looked at 12,000 primary school pupils in England found children who “blurt out” responses perform better in maths and English.

“Although it may seem disruptive, blurting out of answers clearly helps these pupils to learn,” the BBC quoted study co-author Christine Merrell as saying.

The study, carried out by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University, compared English and maths test results with monitoring reports of pupils’ behaviour.

The study of children at 556 schools found those pupils who showed “impulsive” behaviour, such as being unable to resist shouting out to teachers in class, were more likely to achieve higher test results. The findings run against the model of quiet, assiduous pupils—and it raises questions about how the enthusiasm of such demanding and noisy behaviour could be managed and controlled in a school.

The study looked at a full range of pupils in state and independent schools, including those who were considered “inattentive” or who had symptoms of ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder). The researchers found that among this group, those who called out performed better in tests than similar children who remained quiet in class.

Children who were considered well behaved and able to pay attention were more likely to be higher achievers than those who were inattentive.

But within this attentive group there was also the same pattern, with those who were not self-conscious about shouting out responses in class being more likely to have higher attainment.

Peter Tymms, head of Durham University's school of education and lead author of the research, said that among children with ADHD symptoms, those who got excited and shouted out seemed to be more "cognitively engaged and as a result learn more".

"Perhaps those children also benefit from receiving additional feedback and attention from their teacher,"

**Source:** February 07, 2012/ ANI /[The Tribune](#)

### Less Than Half of India's Kids Can Read at Grade 2 Level

Two years after the Indian government passed the Right To Education Act, only 48 percent of all Indian school children can read at second grade levels, concluded the Annual Status of Education Report, released Jan. 16 by the non-profit organization Pratham.

Reading scores have declined across the country by five percent from the previous year. And alarmingly, only 30 percent of children in third grade and two-thirds of fifth graders can solve a simple two digit problem, a decline of six percent from the previous year.

Pratham, India's largest non-profit education organization, has conducted the annual ASER survey since 2005. For the 2011 report, the organization tested reading and math skills for 630,000 children in 16,000 villages across India.

In an e-mail interview with India-West, Pratham program director Rukmini Banerji, who heads up the ASER survey, said, "The Right to Education Act does not explicitly say that learning outcomes must improve. It focuses on completion of eight years of schooling and improving the functioning of schools and training of teachers."

"But if RTE is about guaranteeing education, then without guaranteeing learning, the act has no meaning," said Banerji.

About 97 percent of children aged six to 14 were enrolled in schools, but by the time they reached 15, only a little more than half are still attending school.

Addressing the high drop-out rate of Indian school students, Banerji said a big factor was that children were unable to keep up with academics.

"Our entire education system is anchored by age-grade structure with an assumed linear progression through the system," said the economist and educator.

"Once you fall behind or don't take off in the early grades, catching up is really difficult," stated Banerji, adding that textbooks and teaching methods are not geared to helping those who are not making steady progress.

Punjab has consistently bucked the trend of declining test scores by organizing classrooms based on skill level, rather than age.

Human Resources Development Minister Kapil Sibal introduced the ASER report last week, but was immediately defensive about its findings, saying it was too early to assess the impact of the RTE Act.

"In five to seven years, it will show the impact and we will see improvement," he said, adding that state governments have been reluctant to implement new education initiatives.

Sibal - who is credited with developing RTE - announced that he would write to state chief ministers to promote quality teacher training, including regular attendance and curriculum reform.

The government has allocated Rs. 2.31 trillion for the implementation of RTE over a five-year period that began in April of 2010.

The central government gets two-thirds of that allocation, while states get one-third.

Other findings of the 2011 ASER report included a trend of rural children increasingly enrolling in private schools, with as much as a 10 percent increase in certain states.

"Unless government schools improve their infrastructure and teaching, this trend will continue to grow," said Pratham founder Madhav Chavan.

The ASER report also found that more toilets were being provided for girls at schools, and also found an increase in the number of school libraries and in students using them.

About 17 percent of schools had no facility for drinking water, the report said.

**Source:** February 07, 2012/[India West](#)

### High school students perform better with seven-hour sleep

WASHINGTON: Sixteen-eighteen-year olds perform better academically when they shave about two hours off from nine hours of sleep recommended for them by federal guidelines, a new study has claimed. The new study by Eric Eide and Mark Showalter from Brigham Young University is the

first in a series of studies where they examine sleep and its impact on our health and education.

“We’re not talking about sleep deprivation,” Eide, the study author said.

“The data simply says that seven hours is optimal at that age,” he said.

Surprisingly, the current federal guidelines are based on studies where teens were simply told to keep sleeping until they felt satisfied.

“If you used that same approach for a guideline on how much people should eat, you would put them in a well-stocked pantry and just watch how much they ate until they felt satisfied,” Mark Showalter said.

“Somehow that doesn’t seem right,” he said.

In the new study, the BYU researchers tried to connect sleep to a measure of performance or productivity. Analysing data from a representative sample of 1,724 primary and secondary school students across the country, they found a strong relationship between the amount of sleep youths got and how they fared on standardized tests.

“We don’t look at it just from a ‘your kid might be sleeping too much’ perspective,” Eide said.

“From the other end, if a kid is only getting 5.5 hours of sleep a night because he’s overscheduled, he would perform better if he got 90 minutes more each night,” he said.

The size of the effect on test scores depends on a number of factors, but an 80-minute shift toward the optimum is comparable to the child’s parents completing about one more year of schooling.

“Most of our students at BYU, especially those that took early-morning seminary classes in high school, are going to realise that nine hours of sleep isn’t what the top students do,” Showalter added.

**Source:** The study has been published in the Eastern Economics Journal. — ANI/[The Tribune](#)

## Contribute

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

Please email your contributions to [aserf@apeejay.edu](mailto:aserf@apeejay.edu)

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