Announcements

ASERF has instituted **Dr Stya Paul Young** Educationist Award' for honouring Young Educationists who have demonstrated their potential by making an impact on Indian education. Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2012. Click here to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Stya University announces admission for the session 2012

Apeejay Stya University is offering diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the Fall Admission 2012-13. Applicants for admission accepted on the basis of comprehensive merit, judged by their academic excellence, their extracurricular achievements, and their utilization of the resources they have had available. As part of the application, the University recognize a number of examination scores to establish academic excellence, including AIEEE, GMAT, SAT, SAT-II. **For more,** *click here*

Apeejay Stya University announces Founder's Scholarship

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

Please visit our website for more: click here

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Partnership

Dear Partners,

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

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

Editor

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh

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ASPECT

Indian Higher Education - Envisioning the Future

Envisioning the future for our Higher Education system goes beyond the traditional human capital initiative that links education, skills and employment. Looking at the increased efforts put in by various segments of the society for increasing the enrollment in higher education through out the Indian states, we need to be happy that we could, to a great extent achieve equity and equality in this system.

Equity as it is better understood is the provision of equal opportunity and concerns with fairness in resource mobilization and allocation. Equity issues in particular relates to how different approachesare adopted to people with different characteristics so that the basic minimum threshold level of education can be reached by all encompassing; urban-rural disparities, interstate variations, and gender differences against the backdrop of the national policy of providing quotas or reserving admission seats for the marginalized castes etc. In this context, we need to look at the impact on the mainstream demand and supply factors that have shaped higher education in India by analyzing the present trends and happenings on multiple dimensions such as; privatization and regulatory mechanisms, financing and management as well as employment market links and their relation to the rest of the world.

Despite being a big player in global higher education enrollments, there still appears to be no clarity on how Indian higher education system should be addressed by our educational administrators. It is time for us to learn the developmental strategies by looking at the progress made by China's higher education system, with extensive network of higher education training and research institutions. We need to identify the gaps in our higher education system and its relation with the globalized world.

With the number of Indian students studying abroad increasing every year due to the extensive efforts put in by Countries like United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland and the approaches made by non-English speaking countries like; Germany, France and Holland to attract Indian students, we need to know the economics of the Indian higher education and its global implications in order to understand the reciprocities and the complexities of the Indian higher education system vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

India is one of the four fast growing developing countries commonly known as the BRIC economies. It is said to have the highest annual numbers of graduating engineers and doctors, yet it concurrently hosts the world's largest population of adult illiterates. This dichotomy is causing concern and putting us on continuous search for exploring alternatives in strengthening the role of our higher education in the development of the domestic and international workforce. We have to address problems like; skill shortages,rising unemployment and underemployment linking to the exponential rise in the private higher education sector that promises a "job guarantee" to attract students and with a consideration of the increasing spread of foreign education providers in India and their modes of delivery which ranges from having branch campuses, franchised programs,validated programs, distance or open learning etc.

With the number of private higher education institutions mushrooming in India, we need to look at the quality of higher education and the regulation of the sector by incorporating new accountability systems using advancements in information and technology, for with the rise of the private institutions, "simply leaving the demand and supply factors to the market will not necessarily deliver outcomes for higher education that represent the best use of resources or that are just and socially optimal". Our endeavor should be to set right the regulatory framework making it to function as a facilitating institution and not as the controlling body adopting the pragmatic approach instead of the present adhoc approach.

It is evident that the recent economic crises also adversely impacted the global higher education industry. It is reported that enrolment of first-time graduate students from India registered a massive 16-per cent decline in 2008-09 because of the financial meltdown. Therefore, given the current scenario, we need to examine the funding pattern of our higher education system with consideration of financial returns limiting the investments by Government and enhancing the provision of student loans by the Banks. Student aid in the form of Scholarships is another self-funding opportunity that is granted based either on merit or is targeted towards the marginalized sections of the society needs to be increased plugging the disbursement leakages.

Scholars, practitioners and policy makers will have to put efforts to get a comprehensive understanding of the current issues and trends in with an aim to rectify the defects and to strengthen the developmental programmes. First, by attempting to answer the question: is the Indian higher education

reaching out to the marginal population?. Second, making the optimum utilization of public spending on higher education linking the resources with the needs for maximizing the performance. Lastly, making the Indian higher education to function as a leading player in the globalized context.

We would gain a great deal more by comparing and understanding similar issues in other countries in the context of "vertical" and "horizontal" linkages both domestically and across the globe. In other words, we get a sense of the demand and supply factors that have shaped our higher education from multiple perspectives such as; the socio-economic standpoint, the political aspects, demographic advantages, historical trends as well as the governing policy formulations and implementation strategies. The analysis could also be extended to evolve strategies and methods that would strengthen not only the mainstream courses like; engineering and technology, architecture, pharmacy, business administration etc., but also incorporating recently established courses on Gandhian Studies, Human Rights and Peace Education. We need to broaden our vision highlighting the need to learn about the reciprocal relationships between educational structures around the world using a comparative lens putting an end to the criticism that the Indian higher education is "a sick child" or a "quiet crisis" with an awareness and gigantic presence with determination and power to influence education systems elsewhere.

Source: March 17, 2012/Pratibhaplus

NEWS

Budget 2012: FM surprises education sector

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee presented the annual budget for the fiscal year 2012-2013 on March 16 with several surprises for the education sector.

Mukherjee has proposed to allocate Rs 52,057 crore for education which is an increase of 24 percent over the budgetary allocation in FY 2011-2012.

There were, however, some surprises for the education sector particularly for the higher education sector in the Union Budget 2012-13.

Mukherjee has proposed to set up a National Knowledge Network (NKN) that will link 1500 institutes of Higher Learning and Research through an optical fibre network.

According to the FM, 190 institutes will be connected to the NKN during the current fiscal

year. He also stated that the connectivity to all the 1500 institutions will be done by March 2012.

He stressed on the need to universalizing access to secondary education, increasing the percentage of research scholars in higher education and providing skill training to students for employment.

He also proposed to create a central credit guarantee fund for students to help them get education loans easily.

He proposed to allocate:

- Rs 50 crore each to upcoming centres of Aligarh Muslim University at Murshidabad in West Bengal and Malappuram in Kerala
- Rs 100 crore as one-time grant to the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University at Pookode, Kerala
- Rs 10 crore each for setting up Kolkata and Allahabad Centres of Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha
- Rs 200 crore as one time grant to IIT, Kharagpur
- Rs 20 crore for Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu
- Rs 20 crore for IIM, Kolkata, to set up its Financial Research and Trading Laboratory
- Rs 200 crore for Maulana Azad Education Foundation
- Rs 54 crore for Chaudhary Charan Singh Agricultural University, Haryana

Source: March 16, 2012/Indian College.com

Hard lessons for education

The budgetary allocation for education sector is minimal and it lacks the importance that should have been given to the sector. However, there is something for the schools to cheer about.

The government has exempted service tax which will bring down the fees in three specific segments - pre-school education to higher education, education for obtaining qualification recognised by national law, and education as part of approved vocational education.

For example, for a student who pays a fee of Rs 10,000, service tax to the tune of Rs 2,000 will be exempted.

The noon meal scheme implemented in the government sector has been extended to some schools in the private sector as well. The other aspects mentioned are Right to Free and Compulsory Education and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

(RTE-SSA), model schools and public-private-partnership (PPP) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan.

The budget states that Rs 25,555 crore has been provided for RTE-SSA which is an increase of 21.7 per cent over the 2011-12 budget but analysts say that the amount is much less than the required amount prescribed by various reports.

It has also been proposed to set up 6,000 schools at the block level as model schools to benchmark excellence, of which 2,500 will be under PPP. Analysts say that though the concept is good, the Human Resource Ministry should have focused on improving the present infrastructure of the millions of schools and make them work.

The `3,124 crore allocated to Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) launched in March 2009 to enhance access to quality secondary education is also less considering the Eleventh Plan outlay of Rs 20,120 crore.

Source: March 16, 2012/Ibn Live.com

Education not a priority in the Budget 2012-13

Despite 2012-13 being the first year of the 12th Five Year Plan, there seems to be hardly any focus on prioritising public provisioning for education by the Union Government. There has been an absence of critical scrutiny with regard to the implementation of the RTE Act as is clear from the scant increases made in the programme operationalizing the Act, i.e. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The budget largely disappoints with its policy prescription.

The present total government spending (Centre and States combined) on education accounts for about 3.7 % of GDP (as of 2009-10), which is way below the benchmark of 6 % of GDP that had been recommended more than 40 years ago. In this regard, the Union Government has not taken adequate measures towards increasing the country's total budgetary spending on education significantly. For education, the outlays in Union Budget 2012-13 have gone up very marginally from 4.65 % as a proportion of the total Union Budget (in 2011-12 RE) to 4.97 % in 2012-13 BE. As a share of the GDP, the allocations have registered a slight hike from 0.69 % of the total budget (in 2011-12 RE) to 0.73 % in 2012-13 BE.

At the elementary level, it is crucial to ensure that financial provisions for implementing the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 is adequate. The Union Government outlays for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for universalising quality elementary education have been insignificant. From Rs 21000 crore in 2011-12 RE, the outlays have been stepped up to Rs 25555 crore in 2012-13 BE.

A worthwhile point relates to the slight decline in the reliance on education cess to finance elementary education sector. From 43 % in 2011-12 RE, the cess share in financing elementary education has gone to 41.6 %.

Other critical sub-sectors, such as secondary education, higher and technical education have not been adequately stepped up in this year's Budget. For Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), the outlays have gone from Rs 2423 crore in 2011-12 RE to Rs 3124 crore in 2012-13 BE. For University Grants Commission (UGC), the allocations in this year's budget do not reflect the government's stated commitments to adequately finance higher education. From Rs 8927 crore in 2011-12 RE, it has gone to Rs 10350 crore in 2012-13 BE.

Evidence from other countries clearly shows that in the interest of strong and vibrant citizens, the financing of education is primarily the government's responsibility and cannot be left to market forces. In this context, the increasing trend of private sector participation in education sector through different modes, e.g., Public Private Partnership (PPP) and vouchers, needs to be reviewed.

Clearly, education seems to have been put in the back-burner by the Union government although 'inclusive' growth sans addressing education deficits might not go a long way.

Source: March 16, 2012/Zee News

School education to get more outlay

School education sector was one of the major benefactors of the Union Budget, as allocation for the vertical was raised by 18 per cent for implementation of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Right to Education Act through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Rs 45,969 crore was allocated to the Department of School Education and Literacy of the Human Resource Development ministry. Last year, the figure stood at Rs 38,957 crore.

"The Right to Education (RTE) Act is being implemented with effect from April 1, 2010 through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). For 2012-13, I have provided Rs 25,555 crore for RTE-SSA. This is an increase of 21.7 per cent over 2011-12," Finance

Minister said while presenting the General Budget in Parliament here on Friday.

Allocation for the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan was raised by 29 per cent, as the Finance Minister earmarked Rs 3,124 crore for its implementation.

At Rs 15,458 crore, allocation for higher education sector witnessed a 15 per cent boost. In the last budget, Rs 13,463 crore was allocated to the sector.

"A scheme for education loans is being implemented by banks. To ensure better flow of credit to deserving students, I propose to set up a Credit Guarantee Fund for this purpose," the Finance Minister said.

However, the hike did not match the demands of the Human resources Development ministry which had asked Rs 85,000 crore for school education and Rs 25,000 crore for the higher education sector.

Source: March 16, 2012/Deccan Herald

Educationists see nothing much, barring PPP hope for schools

Educationists say the Union Budget allocation for 2012-13 has little for the sector, but it will be a good move if Pune also gets one of the 2,500 schools to be started under a public-private partnership (PPP) at the block level. Also, the 29 per cent increase in allocation for Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is a boost for school education.

Anil Kawde, chief education officer, Pune Zilla Parishad, said, "Creating new school buildings and new classrooms has been of high priority for us and in 2011-12, we set up 790 of them. Though we don't know how much of the Rs 3,124 crore set aside for RMSA will be for the Pune district, hopefully we will be able to increase this number." On being asked about the PPP model for schools, Kawde said it would be a first for Pune if the district is included in the list.

The Finance Minister has announced that under the 12th Plan, 6,000 schools have been proposed to be set up at block level as model schools to benchmark excellence.

Of these, 2,500 will be set up under the PPP model.

Educationist Ramesh Panse said it is time to bridge the "funds gap" in education through such PPP models. "It will be a big leap for the education sector in Pune if we get schools at the block level that will run on PPP model."

Source: March 17, 2012/Indian Express

Teachers protest against PPP-model schools

Primary school teachers have opposed the government's decision to set up model schools under public private partnership (PPP) framework, saying that the move will further commercialize education making it a costly affair for children belonging to weaker sections of the society.

The Human Resource Development Ministry, which plans to set up a total of 2,500 model schools at block levels in PPP mode, has already initiated efforts to open 500 such schools by inviting expression of interests from private entity including corporate.

"Schools to be opened under the PPP mode will be out of the reach of children from poverty stricken family and under privileged sections of the society as tuition fee, cost of uniforms and other requirements will be beyond their capacity," S Eswaran, secretary general of All India Primary Teachers' Federation (AIPTF), said .

Private gain

It will transform education from public good to "private gain" as private players will do no public service. "Education has become and industry.

Those who have opened schools or colleges are earning a lot of profit from their ventures," AIPTF president Ram Pal Singh said.

India has already made "major strides" towards achieving the goal of providing quality education for all.

The net enrollment ratio in class-I has reached 97 per cent.

Need of the hour

"The need of the hour is not to open schools under PPP framework but augment teaching work force and infrastructure facilities in government run schools.

There should be at least one teacher for every class in a school", he said.

The government cannot abdicate its responsibility to provide quality universal elementary education to all irrespective of their caste, creed and financial capacity, he added.

The AIPTF members and activists, staging a demonstration in the national capital, also demanded the government to stop recruitment of "non-professionals" as teachers.

It sought the government bringing existing untrained para-teachers to the "main stream" by providing sufficient training and regular pay scale to them.

AIPTF is an apex body of 24 state primary teachers' association affiliates.

Source: March 17, 2012/Deccan Herald

Centre plans 2,500 model schools

In a first, the Centre has come up with a reverse Public Private Partnership (PPP) model proposal in the school education sector. As per the new proposal, the Centre has decided to tie up with private schools to set up around 2,500 model schools across the country.

Under the new system, the Centre will not provide land and buildings which is crucial for setting up educational institutions. Instead it will sponsor 25 per cent of the students. School managements will have to arrange for everything else like land, developing the school, design, finance, infrastructure, operation, maintenance, management etc.

The Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) plans to have one model school at every block level. But this time, instead of Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), MHRD is planning to restrict these schools only to non-EBB areas. In the first phase, MHRD is planning to set up 500 such model schools. According to the plan, MHRD will fill up 25 per cent seats available in these schools. It will contribute to recurring costs on per capita basis. An additional 25 per cent of such support will also be provided in respect of sponsored students as infrastructure grant. Initially both, the private party and the government, will sign agreements for 10 years.

Only schools affiliated to CBSE for classes between V and XII are eligible. Speaking to this newspaper, a senior officer of the Education department said that the new initiative was expected to enable the MHRD to bring down investment on infrastructure required to set up new schools. "It is like extension of the Right to Education Act's provisions. Here instead of compulsory reservation, government will have 25 per cent stake in the available seats," he said.

Source: March 19, 2012/Deccan chronicle

Global education gets desi

Studying abroad and settling overseas was perceived as prestigious in the society. But not for long. Outsourcing and the mushrooming of BPO and KPO companies in India resulted in foreigners awakening to the managerial potential of Indians. With such developments, our higher education system is also undergoing a dramatic makeover and going globally-desi.

Many foreign universities are setting up their campuses here. If you get into analysing why youngsters want to go abroad, there are plenty of reasons, but one thing that is predominant is the quality of education. India has good colleges and universities that offer various courses but they do not prepare the student for going up the career ladder quickly.

"The higher education sector has enormous strengths in India, particularly in relation to technical and scientific disciplines. However, the demand for higher education is now outstripping supply in many areas, especially business and management studies.

The Indian government, educational institutes and industry acknowledge that in the short-term there will be a huge need for graduates in these fields," explains Prof Phil Taylor, academic director of programme at Strathclyde SKIL Business School (SSBS), set up by Strathclyde University, Glasgow, in Greater Noida, UP. SSBS offers management programmes where the students get to spend a term in Glasgow.

Fifty per cent of the faculty are from there. An international curriculum provides the students global exposure and they have foreign collaborations which might further help them in securing a job.

There are many benefits to studying abroad. You get a different perspective on international affairs, politics, economics and social life. Interactions with professors and students abroad will enhance your knowledge and satellite campuses promise that they will not lack such opportunities.

Foreign education will also give you a career boost as employers look for candidates who have international knowledge base and cross-cultural communication skills. If campuses are set up overseas then the question arises would the course be of high standards and expensive?

"When students join Indian companies for work after completing their studies abroad, they do not know the nuances of Indian companies. But when foreign education is given in a regional context, they will be better suited for Indian companies," says Ravi Saxena, managing director, Mumbai International School of Business Bocconi (MISB), Mumbai.

MISB is a business school, set up in partnership with Universita Bocconi, Milan, which will offer a postgraduate programme in business and start admissions from July. The fee for the first year will be over `7 lakh and students will go to Milan for their last semester.

"Most of the faculty are from mother universities and there will be research done before teaching. If this happens, then production and delivery of knowledge takes place automatically" says prof Bhimaraya Metri, dean at SSBS. He dismisses any doubts on the quality of education offered at the satellite campuses. He says professors should have real-time experiences to share with the students and they need to have in-depth knowledge to address the students'

queries. Having an international syllabus there will be a new perspective in lessons as there will be cross cultural teaching, which will bring in quality.

Saxena says the quality in management education is still poor in India as they do not shape up the managerial talent and prepare them for work. So the initial few satellite campuses that have been set up are in the management, finance and business sector. The fee is definitely on the higher side but the students don't mind the extra cost.

Says Debanuj, a student at SSBS, "The fee might be slightly high when compared to other Indian colleges, but you will get quality education and good

placements". He says that most colleges give various promises but only a few of them live up to it and even though every college needs a profit, they have to provide quality education.

Advantages are many if foreign universities set up their campuses here but how will that affect Indian universities? Many people look at it like a turning point and say that universities here are bound to improve their education system. Students' preferences might shift from one university to the other but after a turbulence there is always a change, hopefully for the better.

If the Foreign Educational Institutional Bill, which is pending in the Parliament, is passed, then many foreign universities will show an interest in setting up campus here. The existing campuses have been set up through a trust or management that functions as a seperate body in India. What the future holds, we can never tell, but students can expect a change in the system of higher education. World class education might arrive in India and with diversifying job markets, it is justified that we need a thorough system that can equip students with life skills.

Source: March 24, 2012/express buzz

Private colleges looking to shut down triple in a year

As many as 138 private institutes across the country, including 65 management and 15 engineering colleges, have sought permission to close from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). This is more than three times the number of institutes that had come up with the request last year.

"We have received applications for closure from 138 institutes. But the final closure can be done only after we get a no-objection certificate from the state governments and the universities concerned," said SS Mantha, chairman, AICTE.

Of the 138 colleges that have sought permission in this regard, 53 are from Andhra Pradesh. As many as 3,800 engineering colleges and 4,000 management colleges in the country come under the AICTE.

Mantha said the council has received applications for opening 669 new institutes this year. "If we take this into consideration, I am sure there will be an overall increase in the number of institutes, even after closure of some that have applied."

Stating that a majority of the institutes say they are not able to get students, he said, "Most of them are located in remote areas, possess poor infrastructure facilities, and have practically zero interaction with industries. The institutes will have to enhance interaction with the industry if they want to boost employment opportunities for students," he said.

In a bid to bolster industry-institute interaction and increase employment, the AICTE will identify private institutes across the country on a nominative basis, where industries can set up their research arms, Mantha said. "To begin with, we will identify 100 institutes where industries can set up research centres from the next academic session. This can later develop into clusters," he added.

Source: March 25, 2012/Hindustan Times

Kapil Sibal banks on reforms to get Bills passed in House

Desperate times call for desperate measures. No one knows this better than Union minister Kapil Sibal .

Hemmed in by fierce and never-ending opposition to practically all (read 14) of his Bills in the Parliament, the minister, it seems, is now desperate to see at least a few of his promised education reforms being implemented.

So, at his behest, the human resource development (HRD) ministry is working on alternative ways to get around the stalemate and introduce some reforms till the legislative processes get back on track.

STALLED IN THE HOUSE	MINISTER'S ALTERNATE PATH
Some education Bills stuck in Parliament	Non-legislative alternatives to push reforms
■ **National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010**	■ **Delink tribunals Bill, unfair practices Bill and accreditation Bill so that they can be passed independently**
■ National Council for Higher Education and Research 2011	■ To achieve aim of foreign universities Bill, UGC asked to come up with regulations to allow foreign institutions to partner with Indian ones
■ **Foreign Education Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill 2010,**	■ **To achieve aim of National Academic Depository Bill, all central institutions & CBSE schools to be directed to issue electronic certificates**
■ National Academic Depository Bill 2011	
■ **Education Malpractices Bill 2010**	■ To achieve aim of tribunals Bill, central institutes of higher education directed to establish ombudsman

As the first non-legislative work around, the ministry is taking three Bills - National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill and the Educational Tribunals Bill - back to the cabinet to de-link them from each other. According to the provisions of these Bills, any institution that has been denied accreditation or any student wanting to file a petition against some malpractice will have to, compulsorily, approach the educational tribunals first.

"The three are inter-linked. Bills on accreditation and unfair practices cannot be passed unless the tribunals Bill is approved. But now we will amend the Bills to de-link them from each other. In other words, the complaints regarding accreditation and malpractices can be taken directly to the courts," a senior ministry official, who is not authorised to speak to the media, said.

The second and the most predictable alternative is to usher in as many reforms one can through the ministry's autonomous regulatory bodies such as the UGC, AICTE and CBSE.

So, even as the Educational Tribunals Bill - which proposes to set up such tribunals in the country to redress students' grievances - awaits parliamentary nod, Sibal has asked UGC and AICTE to order all central and deemed institutions to establish their own ombudsman.

To push the reforms intended under the Foreign Universities Bill (to allow entry and regulate presence of foreign institutions in India) that is also stuck in Parliament, UGC has been asked to come up with regulations that will allow Indian and foreign institutions to partner together through a twinning arrangement. Programmes offered under such an arrangement will allow students to study in India and also abroad where the partnering foreign institute is based.

And lastly, in order to achieve the aim of the National Academic Depository Bill (to issue electronic certificates and degrees and maintain a database of the same), the ministry will soon direct central institutes of higher education through UGC and AICTE and schools through CBSE to award electronic degrees and certificates.

These "desperate measures" are being adopted only after Sibal tried reaching out to the Opposition parties before the winter session of Parliament through specially convened meetings of several MPs.

The minister has also written to BJP leader Nitin Gadkari to seek his party's cooperation in getting his Bills passed in the House.

"Going by the looks of it, expecting political parties to keep the interest of students above their own seems like expecting too much. So we won't wait for the House's approval and introduce as many reforms we can through other means," another HRD official said.

Source: March 25, 2012/ India Today

Tata Institute of Social Sciences to start vocational education school

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) is setting up a school for vocational education on its Deonar campus. But this is just a step towards a larger plan that TISS has in mind: to set up a national vocational training university.

The school will offer two-year-long certificate courses and students who pass out will qualify as technicians. TISS and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), which is promoting vocational education at top institutes in India, will sign a memorandum about the new school on Tuesday. The AICTE will provide financial assistance of Rs 10 crore for three years to TISS.

The AICTE, through the National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework (NVEQF), wants to develop and manage vocational education in the country and integrate it with academic

streams of higher technical education, noted a statement released by the AICTE.

Apart from training students, the school will focus on research in vocational education, conduct studies on skill requirements, build content for various sectors, develop teaching methodologies and pedagogy, train the trainers, and prepare a system for measuring skill assessment.

The school will set up a joint working group with members from TISS and the AICTE, which shall regularly review the working of the courses.

Source: March 25, 2012/ Times of India

Top US universities to participate in Yale Hindi debate

Students from top American universities, including Columbia, Cornell and Harvard, would participate in the fourth edition of the Yale Hindi debate.

The one of its kind debate with the preliminary on March 30 and final on April 6, the students from these top American universities would debate on theme "Higher education is not worth it".

The debate, a pride for the Yale, was started in 2008 as an internal competition; it has since over the years grown to become a national event, the university said in a statement.

Debate witnesses participation from undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty from Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Pennsylvania, New York University, Cornell, Wellesley, UCLA, Welseyan and Texas. It's a platform for students to debate issues of social, economic and political relevance.

The annual Yale Hindi Debate was conceptualized and founded by Nikhil Sud, a 2006 graduate of St. Columba's School in New Delhi and a 2010 graduate of Yale College who is now studying at the Yale Law School.

"It has been an incredibly gratifying experience to have founded the Yale Hindi Debate and to have been able to nurture it, making it bigger and better every year," Sud said.

In the statement, the university said the Yale Hindi Debate has truly emerged as one of the most unique and significant efforts of the Yale India Initiative and the growth of South Asian Studies in the USA, an initiative that not only bolsters the study of South Asian languages and cultures at the universities, but also transcends it, as the issues debated pertain to society as a whole, not only to members of the South Asian community.

Source: March 29, 2012/ Indian Express

Ancient Indian Education and Ethics – Its Relevance Today

We are actuality to alarmingly accept the appliance of Age-old Indian apprenticeship arrangement in the avant-garde time. Has the avant-garde apprenticeship appearance has helped to accept the Indian society. Do we wish to become aboriginal thinkers afresh or abide in the present arrangement which breeds mediocrity? India charge to anticipate anxiously how abundant adopted arrangement of apprenticeship has helped her. Time has appear to go aback to top akin of apprenticeship which will aftermath thinkers.

Basis of Indian apprenticeship has been acquirements and understanding. It became just abstraction afterwards endless invasions. India was the a lot of affluent nation in the apple in the age-old times. It believed in corruption of the accustomed assets just that abundant which was needed. Excessive corruption of accustomed assets was not done nor was it encouraged. In India humans adoration nature: plants, wind, fire, water, sun and so on. This proves the account it gave to all the active plants and animals on the Earth. In Hindu adoration it is said that over corruption of the sea, should be abhorred and that is accepted as "samudramanthan." Giving apprenticeship was advised as blue-blooded job, a austere assignment of the abecedary and he should not apprehend accomplishment from the students. A abecedary acclimated to be committed and did yield teaching as a mission.

Academics as well helped to ameliorate the societies. We could anamnesis the addition fabricated by the abundant economics abecedary of Takshashila and Nalanda Universities; Chankaya who accomplished that for bread-and-butter development in the arena it was all-important to accomplish an absorbed nation: India. He helped Chandragupta to authorize the Mauryan Authority which disqualified the absolute subcontinent and beyond. This authority in contempo time gave the arrangement that gave us the ethical standards which Indians amount even now. The apprenticeship standards were top and humans came from far acreage to abstraction all streams of capacity actuality in India. Indians as well adoration goddess of apprenticeship "Saraswati." Even today it is acclaimed with abundant fanfare.

The destiny of higher education in India was shaped by several factors. If it was like a 'cottage industry' in the pre-British times, it assumed a colonial

pattern and became very Anglicist during the British rule, only to be pushed towards nationalisation in the 20th century.

Source: March 15, 2012/Blogger Schools

Impact of Liberalization in Services on Higher Education

Since independence, the higher education system has grown rapidly and today, India is the third largest higher education system in the world (after China and the USA) in terms of enrollment. However, in terms of the number of institutions, India is the largest higher education system in the world with 17973 institutions (348 universities and 17625 colleges).

The actual expenditure has increased by more than 100 times from Rs. 140 million in the first Five-Year plan to Rs. 15 billion in the eighth Five-year plan at current prices, and 6.5 times in terms of real prices. Thus, although higher education in India is characterized by massive public investment, this investment is still regarded as much below the required levels. Based on the United Nations Provisional Central Product Classification, trade in educational services is organized in five categories of service — Primary Education, Secondary education, Higher Education, Adult Education and other Education.

Different modes of higher education services are-- Mode 1: Cross-border Supply, Mode 2: Consumption Abroad, Mode3: Commercial Presence, and Mode 4: Presence of Natural Persons.

It is estimated that nearly 70,000 to 90,000 students leave India every year for studying abroad. At any given time these 320,000 students cost the country a foreign exchange out flow of nearly US $9 billion per year or nearly Rs. 400 billion per year, enough to build 40 IIM's and 20 IIT's per year. India can become an Educational Hub for the world and earn US $ 100 billion per year, after 10-20 years. Indian needs to start now, but has to liberalize higher education further.

Presently India is incurring on an average expenditure of about Rs. 50 thousand per head for about 1,800 foreign students coming under the purview of the ICCR. Some of the leading universities are reluctant to accept ICCR scholars from abroad at normal fees.

Presence of female students in the higher education in India has been constantly increasing. Female students' percentage in academic year 2001- 2002 rose to 39.8% from 36% from that of 1995-1996.

To combat the declining competitive advantage of India with respect to China and to emulate the Excellency of higher education institutions of US, UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, the following steps may be initiated:

• Develop efficient Higher Education Statistical Systems.

• Reduce multiplicity of regulatory system (create credible mechanisms to strengthen regulation and universal access policies).

• Diversify existing branded public institutions into different modes of trade in higher education services.

• Setting up of export oriented higher education institutions/ institutional areas (Like 100 % export oriented manufacturing units).

• Eulogize abroad 'Study India Programme'.

• Provide incentives for expanding into new geographical region for private sector higher education institutions.

• Ease of facilitation for Indian faculty members & scholars while pursuing Mode- 2&4.

• Differentiated academic system for fostering excellence.

• Create at least 10 to 20 world class self sustaining higher educational and research facilities like ISB in the next five years.

Source: March 15, 2012/SSRN

Investment by private players will improve education sector

Pune's education sector cheered some of the announcements in the Union Budget like the scheme for education loans, public private partnership (PPP) for new schools, national programme of midday meals and upgradation of existing government medical colleges to the level of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

Former vice-chancellor Ram Takwale said, "Giving the banks the role of distributing loans to deserving students is welcome. Implementation of the scheme by another agency would have caused problems."

Educationist Ramesh Panse said, "PPP for new schools will somewhat halt government's dominance in the education sector. There is no school with PPP model in Pune. Investment by private sector will help improve the education performance and overcoming paucity of funds. India spends only 3% of total gross domestic product (GDP), which actually should be between 6 and 8%."

National head of midday meals scheme, Leena Joseph said, "The increase in funds will add more

value to food. Cost of everything has gone up. Generally, we spend Rs3.75 per child from standards 1 to VII and Rs4.75 per student from standards VI to VII. But I am doubtful how the funds will be distributed across the country. Many a times we have to struggle for funds at grassroot level."

"Upgradation of existing government medical colleges to the level of AIIMS will help enhance availability of affordable healthcare," said dean of BJ Medical College, Ajay Chandanwale.

Source: March 17, 2012/DNA India

'Emphasis on higher education has paid off'

Emerging trends and changes in the Indian higher education system especially in the context of inclusion, expansion, access and quality concerns.

Expanding higher education alone cannot ensure a continuous and growing supply of quality manpower, it has to be combined with fundamental reforms of the curriculum and service conditions by fully exploiting the possibility of private sector initiatives to attract high quality faculty.

"The emphasis that the country has put on quality higher education decades ago, by setting up IITs and other premier educational institutions, has paid us rich dividends. However, the educational infrastructure has to be enhanced in the contest of rising challenges and this is being done, as seen in the focused initiatives of the government in the establishment of new IITs, IISERs, Central Universities and IIMs in various parts of the country and the upgrading of NITs as national-level research institutions.

The scope for expanding capacity through private sector initiatives in higher learning must also be fully exploited, while also ensuring that quality standards are not diluted. Unless this is done on an urgent basis, we will fail to attain global standards.

Quality education for all can be achieved through proper utilization of the advanced technological resources available to the open distant education (ODE) system.

The need of the hour is to create a broadband-enabled network, linking all teachers, learners and other stakeholders, particularly partners from industry and civil society to enable the system to best utilize the technology at its disposal.

"Distance education is becoming more abundant, especially online, and location independent, increasing the need for effective course-management systems and teaching strategies that utilize technology. Various studies have shown that well-designed and well-managed distance education programmes produce learning outcome equal to those of conventional face to face instruction. The main function of open and distance education is to extend higher education to non-traditional learners by adopting an open, flexible and relatively inexpensive approach. Increasing access to higher education, which is relevant and need-based, has been and remains the mantra of the ODE system. This inclusiveness is aimed especially at those who are at a disadvantage in the conventional system with respect to age, gender, geography, social and economic background.

Source: March 18, 2012/Times of India

Marginal higher education budget rise does not match ambitions

India has allocated only marginal increases to higher education in its 2012-13 budget announced by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee last week, despite a stated aim to dramatically increase the higher education participation rate from 17% now to 30% by 2025.

India's overall education budget for 2012-13 rises by 18% over last year compared to a 24% increase in 2011-12.

Last year higher education had a massive 34% increase in its budget. But this year school education will receive the lion's share of the education increase. Some experts expressed disappointment that the budget allocation to higher education of Rs1.54458 trillion (US$3.08 billion compared to US$2.9 billion last year) has not given the sector priority.

"The budget can be seen as a reflection of thinking, where the government does not want to announce new schemes but to focus on improving the capacity and quality of existing institutions," said a senior education ministry official.

The budget presented on 16 March was closely watched for indications of the direction of the 12th Five Year Plan 2012-17, for which this is the first budget. The plan has already stated an aim to focus on quality and consolidation of existing higher education institutions rather than on expansion.

However, K Balaveera Reddy, former vice-chancellor of Visvesvaraya Technological University in Belgaum, said: "There is a dire need to help universities in order to improve higher education. The budget is discouraging as far as higher education is concerned."

ASERF E News Bulletin on EDUCATION

India's National Knowledge Commission has estimated that India needs 1,500 universities compared to around 370 now, as the gross enrolment ratio rises to 30%.

But there is no funding provision for building new universities, or for innovation in higher education, despite these ambitious targets.

According to Bhushan Patwardhan, vice-chancellor of Symbiosis International University in Pune: "Any country's development is directly connected to an increase in the number of students accessing higher education. We need significant investment in higher education for this to happen.

"We had given several pointers to the government and we hope to see them reflected in future budgets," said Patwardhan, who is also a member of the steering committee of the Planning Commission on Higher Education.

Narayan Ramaswamy, head of the education sector at consulting firm KPMG Advisory Services, said: "I was hoping to see some incentives to bring in private capital and private-public partnerships in higher education, to enable expansion of quality institutions. But the budget has nothing to offer on this front."

Instead, the budget focuses on skills development of graduates and improving secondary school retention rates, with a proposed outlay of Rs10 trillion for the National Skill Development Fund to bridge the education-employability mismatch amid complaints by many employers that university graduates rarely possess the skills required for the workplace.

This would help in funding vocational institutions and sustainable skills training initiatives that can benefit millions of young people nationwide, according to Dilip Chenoy, CEO and managing director of the National Skills Development Council in New Delhi.

Mukherjee has also exempted vocational training institutions from service tax and provided tax benefits to manufacturers for costs incurred in training and developing talent.

Some experts believe the focus should be on better management of the higher education budget as weak management of projects has meant that money allocated is often either not spent or not utilised properly.

"The 12th Five Year Plan aims to invest five times more in education, but do we have the capacity to absorb the funds and utilise them?" asked Professor R Govinda, vice-chancellor of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration in New Delhi.

"Under the 11th Five Year Plan, 50% of the funds allocated to higher education could not be utilised. Even with less allocation, we need to improve implementation and usage of funds," Govinda said.

Under the 11th Five Year Plan from 2007-12, the government announced the setting up of 51 public-funded higher education institutions – including eight Indian institutes of technology and seven Indian institutes of management.

Most of the proposed institutions have been plagued by setbacks, including delays in land acquisition, shortages of qualified faculty and, in several cases, disputes between the central government and states.

Source: March 18, 2012/University World news

UGC to devise AICTE-like rules for foreign varsity tie-ups

Showcased by this government as part of its reform agenda, the Foreign Education Providers Bill now has little or no hope of being passed by Parliament. But the Union Human Resource Development ministry has no plans of giving up.

Keen to forge collaborations between Indian and foreign varsities with or without legislation, the ministry has asked the University Grants Commission (UGC) to formulate regulations for the same. Sources said that a UGC committee is being set up to devise these regulations on the lines of the twinning formula of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

The AICTE has drawn up rules for collaboration and partnerships between Indian and foreign institutes in the field of technical education and students enrolled for these courses can complete semesters in partner institutes. With this 'twinning' arrangement working fine, the ministry is of the opinion that a similar format be followed for varsities as well. "Most of the provisions of the Bill can be effected through UGC regulations. Only a foreign university cannot come to India and set up a standalone full-fledged campus on its own. It can, however, do so in collaboration with an Indian institute. Students enrolled will be able to complete one semester in the Indian institute and complete the rest in the foreign institute fulfilling the purpose of the Bill. This arrangement will effectively at least allow a foothold to foreign educational institutes in India," an official said.

The issues that UGC will have to find a way around are those of degree awarding and and fee

regulations. It is expected that in three-four months the regulations can be readied and approved by the UGC, paving the way for entry of foreign partners in India's university system.

Source: March 20, 2012/Indian Express

Expert: Need for innovation in tech field

Engineers can be engine for economic growth provided they are taught management subjects too, said N Ravichandran director of Indian Institute of Management (Indore).

Ravichandran was addressing the valedictory session of the two-day national level seminar on 'Innovation, opportunities and challenges ahead in technical education' at Shri Govindram Seksaria Institute of Technology and Science (SGSITS) here on Sunday.

Ravichandran highlighted the need for innovation in the field of technical education. He expressed concerns over employing engineers as substitute of IT diploma holders.

Speaking on issues of teaching management subject to the engineers and restricting the engineer flow, Ravichandran said, "In coming two to three years permission should be restricted to start new branches or increase the batch size in engineering disciplines. Sub-segmentation of engineering branches should be brought under one umbrella."

Source: March 26, 2012/Times of India

Accreditation for higher learning institutions a must: Kapil Sibal

The government proposes to enact a crucial bill this year to make it mandatory for every higher educational institution to be accredited in the country, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said today.

"I hope in this session of Parliament we will carry through (the bill)," he said at a global summit of accreditation here.

The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill has provisions under which assessment of such accreditation has to be made before the institution starts the process of admission to the programmes.

The existing educational institutions have also to get their accreditation within three years, official sources said.

The bill also seeks establishment of National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Education, which shall register and monitor accreditation agencies.

Maintaining that the passage of the bill is critical to ensure quality, Sibal expressed the country's eagerness to join the Washington Accord with full signatory status so as to help Indian engineering students and professionals have global recognition.

"...We desire to be part of the family of that quality of the Washington Accord," he said.

At present, India is a provisional member of the Washington Accord, which is an international agreement among bodies responsible for accrediting engineering degree programmes.

The accord recognises equivalence of quality of programmes and recommends that graduates of programmes accredited by any of the signatory bodies may be recognised by the other member bodies as having met academic requirements for entry to engineering, thus, facilitating international mobility.

Hu Hanrahan, who is the chair of the Washington Accord, who was present at the meeting, did not provide a timeline for India becoming a permanent member but said the process was underway.

While experts from abroad are helping India in this exercise, Hu said, "The HRD Minister assured that he is serious" about joining the Accord as a permanent member.

However, he said India is yet to invite the Washington Accord for the auditing of its accreditation system which is critical in the process of becoming a permanent member.

As of now, 14 bodies with permanent status in the Accord include Engineers Australia, Engineers Canada, Engineering Council, UK, Japan Accreditation Board of Engineering Education.

Source: March 26, 2012/DNA India

Babus ruined education, says IIT-M former head

Higher education in India remained underdeveloped because the government had been leaving various regulatory bodies in the hands of 'floating' bureaucrats rather than having committed educationists to run them, former IIT-M director P.V. Indiresan said.

Taking part in a debate at the first national convention on India higher education organised by Education Promotion Society for India (EPSI) at New Delhi recently, Prof. P.V. Indiresan, said that

power and money alone couldn't ensure quality in education.

He said there should be a system without the regulation or existence of regulatory bodies like University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). "We need complete autonomy and universities or colleges should be able to decide on subjects like student's admission, fee structure and faculty recruitment. What does a 'babu' know about education," he questioned.

"We should have an objective system and institutes must be given full autonomy," Prof. Indiresan added.

Dr. G. Viswanathan, EPSI president and chancellor of Vellore Institute of Technology stressed on the importance of bridging the gap between government and private educational institutions.

He reiterated India being one of the largest higher education system in the world with 600 universities and 32,000 colleges cannot continue to follow the old schooling system. At present none of our universities have secured a spot in top 300 universities in the world. India needs reform in policies along with accessibility and knowledge sharing," he said.

Inaugurated the two-day meeting, union minister of state for HRD E. Ahmed, emphasised the importance of private players and urged them to invest in the higher education sector to meet the augmenting demand of quality education.

He said, "The government is open to engage all private players in constructive and inclusive reform process. Academicians and policy makers must discuss the pending bills in order to make the reform process more viable for private sector players. We need a number of new universities and colleges to accommodate to the demand in higher education in next 10 years and a huge investment will be needed which government alone can't make," he said.

Source: March 27, 2012/Deccan Chronicle

Soon, Indian B.Tech degrees may be recognized abroad

Engineers with undergraduate degrees will find it easier to seek jobs and opportunities for higher studies abroad from 2013, if India's bid to join the elite Washington Accord for international accreditation is accepted.

If it comes through, undergraduate engineering degrees from India will be brought on a par with those of the US, UK, Australia, Canada, Singapore, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa and six other nations, easing mobility for Indian undergraduate engineers.

The National Board of Accreditation, under the aegis of All India Council for Technical Education, plans to bid to become a permanent member of the Washington Accord in June 2013.

Said G Prabhakar, an NBA member and president, Andhra Pradesh chapter of Institution of Engineers (India), "In 2013, NBA will be a full member of the Washington Accord. The accord recommends that the graduates of programs accredited by any of the signatory bodies be recognized by other members as having met academic requirements for entry to engineering." India was granted the status of a provisional member in 2007.

India is yet to invite the Washington Accord to audit its accreditation system, a crucial process for becoming a full member, despite the country being granted a provisional status in 2007.

Hu Hanrahan, the chair of the Washington Accord, who is in India for the first World Summit on Accreditation 2012, refused to commit to a timeline for India becoming a permanent member, saying the process was under way.

Even if India is granted membership of the accord, only about 20% of the 4,000-odd engineering institutes in the country are likely to make the cut.

India's mentor for the accreditation, past president of Singapore's Institution of Engineers Lock Kai Sang, said, "India's bid to receive permanent membership in 2013 will be very challenging. There is still a lot of implementation work that needs to be carried out based on outcome assessment and accreditation."

Around 140 institutes have applied for accreditation under the new framework.

National Board of Accreditation (NBA) officials said that India could be looking at a two-tier system of accreditation - creating international benchmarks for some institutes and settling for lower standards in other colleges.

The HRD ministry has already proposed a legislation to make every higher educational institution mandatorily accredited in the country. "I hope in this session of Parliament we will carry through (the bill)," HRD minister Kapil Sibal said.

The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill has provisions under which assessment of such accreditation has to be made before the institution starts the process

of admission to the programs, while the existing educational institutions will have to get their accreditation within three years.

The bill also seeks establishment of National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Education, which shall register and monitor accreditation agencies.

Source: March 27, 2012/Times of India

Investments will boost India, US economies: Harvard India meet

The role of bilateral foreign direct investment in boosting the economies of India and the United States was highlighted at the Harvard India Conference here on the theme of "India: The Next Frontier."

Leaders from international business, government and the non-profit sector gathered here over the weekend to discuss India's economic challenges and opportunities at the 9th India Conference at Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School here.

Panelists at the conference focused on India's revolutionising role at a time of opportunity and change as close observers of and participants in India's decision making articulated their concerns, expectations and vision.

Focusing on anti-corruption movements in India in the panel on Political Accountability, senior Supreme Court lawyer Prashant Bhushan called for public engagement on the Lokpal Bill.

"The bill is not a silver bullet and every institution can fail if there is no support from the public," he said.

The conference featured a keynote address by India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Hardeep Puri.

Executives of the Tata group, title sponsors of the conference, focused on education, innovation, healthcare, entrepreneurship and political accountability.

"Tata is committed to strengthening both the U.S. and Indian economies. Throughout the United States and specifically here in Boston our longtime relationship with Harvard has enabled us to further our commitment to education and to contribute to this important global dialogue," said Kapil Sharma, Senior General Manager of Tata Sons Ltd.

In 2010, Tata companies, the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Tata Education and Development Trust gifted $50 million to fund a new academic and

residential building - "Tata Hall" - on the HBS campus.

The gift will support HBS' international mission of fostering the next generation of global business leaders, the Tata Group said

Source: March 27, 2012/Two circle.net

Higher education bill not to impact powers of Bar Council of India: HRD Ministry

Amid opposition from the Bar Council of India (BCI) to the Higher Education and Research Bill,HRD Ministry today made it clear that present powers and functions of the council with respect to legal education will not be affected by the proposed legislation.

The Ministry said the council shall have the powers to lay down minimum standards for grant of degrees leading to professional practices.

Ministry officials said an overall consensus was arrived on these issues following a meeting between the bar council and HRD Ministry chaired by Kapil Sibal.

The BCI had contended that certain provisions of the proposed bill might have an adverse effect on the autonomous functioning of the body as well as of the universities providing legal education.

The bill proposes to create an overarching body in the higher education sector subsuming several other bodies including the UGC and AICTE.

Officials said BCI shall be the designated accredited agency with respect to evaluation of minimum standards and also have the powers to determine fees to be charged from institutes for the purpose of accreditation.

There was also a consensus that the council shall follow norms and process of accreditation as set out by the government or by appropriate statutory authority.

BCI, the apex body representing 1.7 million lawyers in India, had earlier submitted a memorandum to Sibal drawing his attention towards certain provisions of the draft Bill which are not acceptable to them.

Source: March 27, 2012/Economic Times

India's university system in 'deep crisis'

After studying for two years to be a teacher, Anam Naqvi found out that the degree her school offers is worthless. Now, instead of attending classes and finishing a mandatory internship, she and her

classmates protest every day outside the gate to their university in the northern city of Aligarh.

It is a story being replayed across many Indian cities. Poorly regulated, unaccredited and often entirely fake colleges have sprung up as demand for higher education accelerates, driven by rising aspirations and a bulging youth population.

"New colleges are mushrooming everywhere, but many are flouting norms," said Nilofer Kazmi, director of the government's regulatory commission for higher education. "Many are conducting courses that have no approval or accreditation from the government regulators."

More than 5 million Indians enter the 15-to-24 age group every year, adding a demographic thrust to the demand for more colleges and universities. Properly educated and employed, these young people could bring the country a demographic dividend, the sort of surge in growth that buoyed many of the Asian "tiger" economies from the 1960s to the 1990s. But if India does not create high-quality colleges for its youths, it risks reaping a demographic disaster.

The higher education commission recently released a list of 21 "fake universities," many of them no more than a mailing address or signboard hanging over a shop, temple or hole-in-the-wall office space. A government regulator that focuses on technical schools named 340 private institutions across India that run courses without its accreditation. Of more than 31,000 higher education institutions, only 4,532 universities and colleges are accredited.

"India's university system is in a deep crisis," said Devesh Kapur, director of the Center for the Advanced Study of India at the University of Pennsylvania, who has written extensively on the subject. "There are so many regulatory barriers to setting up a college or university that it deters honest groups but encourages those who are willing to pay bribes. Millions of young Indians will have high expectations, paper credentials, but will be poorly educated. We can be absolutely sure that it is not going to be pretty."

A need for more schools

India aims to raise its college enrollment rate to 21 percent in five years, up from 13 percent now. In contrast, the enrollment rate is 23 percent in China and 34 percent in Brazil. Kapur said that to reach its target, India would have to open one new college every working day for the next four years.

With much of the government's money directed toward combating rural illiteracy by boosting primary school education, the private sector has filled the gap for colleges. Even so, many of India's colleges and universities — both private and public — face acute shortages of faculty, ill-equipped libraries, outdated curricula and poor infrastructure, according to a report last yea by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

Source: March 27, 2012/[Washington Post](#)

The Einsteins of India are not in its universities: Yale professor

Dr Shyam Sunder, a James L Frank Professor of Accounting, Economics, and Finance at the Yale School of Management was in India to deliver a lecture on Reforms in Higher Education in India and China, a study compiled and worked upon by him. At the IIT campus in Gandhinagar, he spoke about what ails higher education and what can be done to improve the situation.

What do you think of higher education in India?

To me, higher education seems to be in a major crisis, and the sad part is that the crisis seems to be unrecognized. Most people in India make tall claims about higher education but actually reverse is the case. Indeed number of colleges, varsities and students enrolling in these are on the rise. But the pertinent question here is who is teaching these students? Who is doing research work? What is the quality of the papers being churned out? We should remember that the quality of education invariably depends on the quality of teachers.

Can you elaborate a bit more on this?

I will give you an example. The farmer saves the best seeds to be sown for the next year. The country's best brains are the seeds for the society of tomorrow. But are we able to get them into the education sector? Our best brains are selling soaps and getting into civil service, nothing wrong in that, but we are not able to attract them to a sector that is most important to us – education – particularly higher education. To put it simply, 'The Einstein's of India are not in our university'.

Can the private sector help in the matter?

Let me tell you I have travelled across the world and have been to several universities and colleges. I have not seen a university that does not get a big subsidy or charitable funding. But in India the private players who have entered the arena are into making money. We should remember that there is no profit-making in education. A for-profit education

or profitable education in the end doesn't deliver quality at least not in higher education. I am not against private sector in education but I am against the 'for-profit' model of education. Private sector can set up charitable organisations aimed at improving quality of higher education, can help sponsor institutions for the same.

So what should be done?

What we need is an India-centric solution. This is because solutions that worked in other countries may not work here. Secondly, we need to attract talent to the field of education. We need to identify our brightest people and ensure that they are in this field. At present a teacher's job is perhaps the last resort for a person. We also need to bring about a change in the mindset of both our business people and leaders that education should not be seen as a profit-making initiative. "Several of our so called education institutions are run by these people, isn't it?"

A lot has been said about India's poor record in research…

To be very honest, I don't think there is any one reason for it. I think there are a complex set of reasons and but none of them alone will explain it. If research has to be promoted then you have to realize that the rules applicable to civil service cannot be put in practice to get the desired results.

Source: March 27, 2012/(DNA)/Education California

Ombudsmen must for education sector

It will be mandatory for professional colleges in the state to have an ombudsman from the academic year 2012-13, to redress the grievances of students.

His/her jurisdiction will be over grievances related to denial of admission, ignoring merit in admission, non-implementation of applicable regulations for reservations, withholding of documents and original certificates and non-refund of fees in the case of cancellation of admission, or any kind of discrimination and other issues of students of the institution.

At first, it will be the engineering, pharmacy, MBA and MCA colleges that will have the ombudsman as the AICTE will soon issue a notification to this effect to the technical institutions that come under its ambit. But the same requirement has been mandated by the Union ministry of HRD to the UGC, MCI, NCTE and deemed universities.

"Each institute has to appoint an ombudsman with legal experience," said Prof. S.S. Mantha,

chairman, AICTE. "If the college managements find it difficult to find persons with legal experience for each and every college, some colleges, located in a particular area, can come together and constitute a cluster ombudsman," Prof. Mantha said, adding, "In that case, it should comprise three experts, including a retired High Court judge, an eminent social personality from the education field and an academician."

Source: March 27, 2012/Deccan Chronicle

Higher Education in India: Quest for Quality and Excellence

Although education and knowledge both are closely related and are often referred as synonymous to each other yet both are not exactly the same. Knowledge is in fact an inherent trait of human beings according to Swami Vivekanand and is a fundamental quality and also the requirement of the soul or mind and we as human beings cannot remain self-contented without knowledge.

Since there is no limit to the power of development of a man as a famous French philosopher Condorcet commented in 18th century, the requirement of knowledge and, consequently, education, too, is limitless. It is, in fact, a capacity or power as said by a well-known British philosopher Thomas Hobbes. Also to know our requirements, as we do possess a physical body and its demands which are material and also spiritual, is something a very natural instinct. As against this, education is a means, of course, a very powerful means as the great Greek philosopher Plato had commented as long back as in 4th century BC, in his monumental work The Republic through which not only knowledge is acquired but also the proper and healthy environment for full blossoming of soul or mind is created. Thus knowledge is an end and education is a means to this end. As knowledge-gaining process begins even prior to birth because a foetus in the uterus is found to be attempting to gain knowledge as has recently been proved by scientists, this process goes on throughout life that ends only in death. Although a life-long process, education in its formal shape begins in schools, colleges and universities and also other institutions of higher learning, thereby providing a variety of knowledge pertaining to different aspects of life as well as its needs, yet in its informal form, each and every source of education provides some kind of knowledge or vice versa. This system of acquiring knowledge through schools, colleges or universities has been continuing since quite a long past in all over the world.

In ancient India, there were world famous institutions of higher learning known as Tuxshila, Patliputra, Mithila, Vikramashila, Daranagar, Anhilwada, Malkhed, Kalyani, Somapura, Jagaddala, or Nalada and Tanjavur Universities which were famous for their erudite teachers and used to attract students from the whole world besides other forms of system of imparting education including Gurukul system. As it goes â€œsa vidya ya vimutkayeâ€←, meaning thereby that it is only the true education that makes oneâ€™s soul free from the bonds of birth and death which is a metaphysical connotation but at the material level it means freedom from pleasure and pain, desires, hatred, enmity and all mental maladies. That is knowledge has its higher objectives- spiritual or metaphysical etc. â€" which is well brought out in different religions and their moral discourses. That is the true meaning of life is to know it in its entirety because life is not simply confined to material world. There is another world with which the present life has its deeper connections because that only makes one able to know oneself ie. know thyself. Thus the importance of education canâ€™t be ruled out as it has both its material or temporal aspects as well as spiritual or metaphysical one and as it is the most powerful means through which a human life can be properly addressed to make it realise its true self. If this be so, the role and importance of the education becomes one of prime necessity to understand and reform at each stage of its growth and development, whether it is primary, secondary or higher education. And with this spirit in hand, as there have been several problems that are still today, the education system needs to be reformed and updated matching with the present aspirations and demands and also with the emerging challenges of the days to come.

Against this backdrop, what should be the aim, purpose and methodology of higher education in facing the grave crises of the present times viz. social, economic, political and cultural- all enmeshed to further complicate the situation- ie. how should the institutions of higher learning like universities, institutes and other centres of advanced studies, respond to the present as well as the future challenges having potential of tearing apart the socio-cultural and emotional bonds of humanity characterised by and being based upon universal and moral values. Since institutions of higher learning occupy a pivotal position in the society and country for creation, dissemination and preservation of knowledge, the knowledge so produced determines to a great extent the future course of progress and development of not only the society and polity but also the whole mankind. The social relations among individuals get affected by the prevailing education system because much of their thinking and behavioural pattern happen to be the outcome it. Also the national economies do rest upon the educated and skilled workforce because their calibre and performance can ensure the growth and prosperity and the material well-being which is also very necessary for the onward spiritual journey of human life particularly in this present age of consumer culture characterised by rising materialism and lustful approach towards life. Further the universities are responsible for development of educated and skilled workforce vis-a- vis development of science and technology in almost all fields of life as there is a massive expansion of it. Evidently, it is the responsibility of such institutions of higher and advanced learning, again, to direct the society as well as the nation in such a way as to be able to tap the maximum utilisation of new inventions and innovations created due to growth and progress of knowledge.

A particular context attached, in this context, here is that of globalisation and liberalisation and the information revolution and related advancements etc. which have together fundamentally altered the entire scenario of human life in which an individual and his self has acquired the centre stage devoid of almost all social obligations reminding us of John Lockeâ€™s philosophy of atomic individualism. All these forces including globalisation- almost an irreversible process- will lead to where and which end, is a very difficult question to answer because all these transformations took place at such a rapid pace that the institutions of knowledge are still in the process of absorbing the shock waves created by the technological advancements. Surprisingly, the knowledge institutions which are supposed to bring about change in the society are at the receiving end due to excessive use of internet and IT generated gadgets like mobiles, I. Pods, Smart phones MP-3s, 3G and higher versions, Tablets etc. These developments have added to the pomp and show of todayâ€™s youth who are mostly confined to their selves, particularly, their meaningful employment and future prospects.

Perhaps it is the most undesired outcome of the present modern education system that it has led to the making of such an arrogant, pleasure seeking and selfish man who thinks of himself as end in himself without any concern for other fellow beings and also having no regard for his elder generations. A self-created false aura of perfection makes him drive to write his destiny. Instead of inculcating submissive attitude and respect for seniors among the new learners, this system leads them towards

cut throat competition at every stage right from entry into schools to the level of entry into jobs for livelihood. Besides providing a mechanical system of knowledge mostly devoid of conscience among them, this system has not been able to create internal balance or improvement of quality or character building among them (today's youth). Most of them have no faith or reverence for universal values or ideals and eternal truths as they consider their present as the only truth and nothing beyond that. As a result consumerism rules the roost and human and social relations have got transformed into commercial relations.

As against these, the need of the hour is to go beyond the boundaries and create new paradigms of learning as well as assessment in higher education which may put full emphasis on character building and internal balance of personality thereby inspiring for attainment of excellence with true knowledge for welfare of not only the own self but the entire humanity and that too in consonance with the global requirements of present times and also for the future. There should be a new global curriculum comprising of cultures of all countries which could be adopted transversally all over the world. It should be interdisciplinary and should promote divergent and convergent thinking. It should also cater the global standards of ethical and quality norms based upon universal moral values. Apart from these, the mobility of students and faculty should also be facilitated at national and international level. Unlike earlier days of agriculture and industries when the physical labour was the main source of livelihood and it was valued as the principal resources for development, today in the knowledge society, information and knowledge have become increasingly important inputs to the development process. All economic activities are becoming knowledge intensive. Increasingly, higher education is becoming a tool for preparing the youth for employment in the short term rather than a place to gain knowledge, wisdom and scholarship. Hence more and more people are going for higher education. Consequently there is tremendous pressure upon it as to how to balance between unrestrained and rising aspirations of people at large and the rhythm of nature and universe and universal moral values.

Obviously the present system of higher education needs to be immediately reformed because we have been using the British model of Universities since 1857. Thereafter, since independence, our university system was also influenced by few features of the US's university system, thereby making it a hybrid of both British and American

systems and retaining and reflecting the "twisted roots" of the Western University Model. In recent years the US pattern has served as a benchmark in our self-directed academic efforts to restructure the Indian Higher education system. But overall picture is not encouraging as, perhaps, due to ignorance or complacency or lack of drive for our own indigenous knowledge and cultural-educational heritage, we have not been able to develop our own national model of education, what to speak of higher education. In fact, even in the days of globalisation, no country can afford to ignore or dilute its commitment to the unique heritage of culture and knowledge, and at the same time keeping sharp the competitive edge of our institutions. Hence it is an overdue reform or innovation that awaits our attention and action before we embark upon the path towards meaningful higher education. On the face of it, there are few major hurdles before the present system restraining towards excellence: First, Indian universities and colleges today lack dedicated and committed students who may honestly strive for pursuit of knowledge; secondly, the autonomy of the university including financial autonomy, is still far from reality as there are various grounds of interference into its affairs; thirdly, the undergraduate programmes are fragmented from the university campuses; fourthly, the present system of affiliation of colleges to universities is the bottle neck for their autonomy and freedom to grow with innovations. Besides these, the other issues of world class infrastructure, research facilities, laboratories and libraries and computer and internet facilities, sports facilities etc and above all character building and social obligation exercises and a conducive ambience are also required to be addressed.

Beginning with the Radhakrishnan Committee, many committees and working groups were constituted by the Government and the UGC for bringing out the required reforms in the higher education. They have submitted their reports and recommendations on various issues of the higher education. The recommendations remain in lips and letters but most of them were not implemented in right earnest for obvious reasons. Many seminars and conferences were also held in this context but nothing concrete has been accomplished so far. What is urgently needed is a healthy public debate comparing the major and conspicuous differences between Indian and well known world class universities could perhaps set a tone for bold structural changes in the XIIth plan for higher education. As our goal of the education system should be the creation of a knowledge society

including world class university, the role of information as well as Information Technology assumes considerable significance. Information Technology if utilised properly can help students grow tremendously academically and foster diverse talents and ways of learning. Analysing organisational performances strongly affects the performance of stakeholders from within and outside of the institution. In which area an institution concentrate it IT development effort? We expect that today's students would prefer classes that use modern technology and increasingly demand technology in support of learning. Instead we find a preference for digital library use. If given free access to inflibnet and other latest resources, it can go a long way in improving their educational skills thereby improving and expanding the quality as well as quantity of knowledge.

Further, to ensure the survival and growth in this neck-to-neck racing business environment, universities need to measure their performance from time to time and make necessary adjustments depending upon circumstances. And to participate in the global community of world-class universities as a competitive partner requires enormous reserves of determination, tremendous effort and a plethora of resources. Even while taking as a benchmark the models developed and refined in the core industrial societies, middle income countries must not give up their own indigenous cultural-intellectual traditions. At the same time these countries should try to remain relevant to the global intellectual community, and also careful so that they may not become a victim of any emerging neo-colonial threat today. Now, in rapid advancing world where educational possibilities are endless, the system of higher education has to adapt itself to contemporary requirements and must respond to new challenges.

Source: March 27, 2012/Global Politician

India's got talent - but too few places where it can grow

Private help is needed to upgrade the country's higher education sector, business college chief tells Rachel Williams.

It is probably not an exaggeration to say that Indu Shahani, the principal of a Mumbai higher education college, has the academy in her blood.

Her maternal grandfather was the head of an engineering college; her father, who was a reader in economics and a university department head, went on to found HR College of Commerce and Economics, the institution she graduated from and now leads.

But if Shahani's upbringing - which she is quick to point out had nothing to do with her current role or her gaining an undergraduate place - led her to enter higher education, her experience since has been no less of an influence on her outlook.

The 60-year-old, who has been at the University of Mumbai-affiliated college for 22 years and has served as its principal since 2000, is a passionate advocate of collaboration between business and academia. She believes that private provision is the way forward if India is to make even a dent in its plan to treble university places by 2020.

She credits her husband, who heads the Indian operations of pharmaceutical company Novartis, with inspiring her focus on encouraging academia-industry link-ups, the subject of her PhD.

In fact, she nearly went into industry herself. "I had a very lucrative offer of a corporate job," she recalls, "but somehow my mother convinced me that the smiles of the students would give me far better returns than I would get selling soap and shampoo."

Increasing the number of university places in India from 13 million to 40 million will require 800 new universities, she says. In addition to forging links with industry, opening the market to foreign institutions will be crucial, Shahani adds.

"India is the youngest nation in the world; 50 per cent of the population is under 25. No amount of education given by the government is going to be able to keep pace with the demand.

"We'll have to do everything possible: bring in corporates, foreign players, and give more and more incentives to people to set up educational institutions," she adds.

Demand outstrips available places

Shahani knows at first hand the desperate shortage of places in India. Her state-funded institution, founded in 1960, has been growing in prestige; the University of Mumbai has just judged it the best of its 625 affiliates for 2010-11. But like other higher education colleges in Maharashtra state, it educates not only undergraduates but also pupils in the final two years of high school.

Pupils who are accepted for study at that level are automatically offered an undergraduate degree place at the college, so competition is fierce. Last year the institution received 37,000 applications for 800 places at this "junior college" level.

The infrastructure of higher education, she says, is "crumbling" as demand grows: HR College of Commerce and Economics currently educates 6,000 students (1,800 of them school-age) on an 18,000 sq ft campus in three daily shifts.

She is frustrated that the Indian government's foreign providers bill - which would allow overseas universities to award degrees independently and set up campuses in India - has yet to be passed after two years before the Indian parliament.

Online distance learning could be another solution, but Shahani is critical of the Indian government's reluctance to give equal weight to qualifications delivered this way.

A brain drain of talent to Europe and North America is not the problem it used to be, Shahani says, but she notes that Indian higher education lacks vision and needs to focus more on research, which is currently limited to the major public universities. Affiliated colleges such as hers are teaching-only.

India is, she observes, "just putting the train on the tracks; we're not really creating direction for our institutions. We're not creating new knowledge, we're just delivering it. We don't get time to sit down and think about where we're going and what we need to do - we're overwhelmed with numbers."

Shahani does not share the concerns of some in the sector that increased privatisation will have a negative impact on quality as providers try to make a quick profit.

"If you're not giving quality education, if you're here on a commercial venture, people see through that. It's not going to be sustainable if you're coming in trying to cheat people...I'm sure the market throws out such people."

Training on tap

She is worried, however, that the focus on boosting higher education provision is ignoring a yawning gap in vocational training, and she calls for the "McDonaldisation" of education with courses being offered anywhere they are accessible, including shopping malls.

"We need to have these educational hubs where people can be skilled up everywhere," she says.

Higher education is not Shahani's only passion. Since 2008 she has been sheriff of Mumbai, an honorary role intended to link citizens and the government.

And for all her concerns about the education sector, it is the people Shahani meets that give her confidence for the future. "Our supply side is facing a number of challenges.

"But the difference I'm finding wherever I visit is the brightness and the motivation of youth. India today is a country of aspiration. That's the good thing."

Source: March 29, 2012/Times Higher Education UK

They make big bucks by peddling degrees

A plethora of private engineering and management colleges have sprung up in Gurgaon over the last five years. But rather than providing quality education, many of them charge hefty fees and provide no placements — leaving gullible students in the lurch. A large number of students who had taken education loans — as the fee structure in most of these institutes is high — stares at the prospect of unpaid EMIs.

Gurgaon has about 24 management and educational institutes by the private sector. The total intake for the MBA/BBA and engineering courses in the city is 10-12,000 annually.

The institutes lure students through newspaper advertisements highlighting their 'air-conditioned' classrooms and 'sprawling' campuses, but the grim reality is that most of them are just money minting enterprises, with some of them functioning from dingy small rooms. While some of the institutes charge a whopping R6-7 lakh for MBA and R3-4 lakh for engineering, most of them do not have a placement cell.

AICTE chairman Dr SS Mantha said, "Yes, to an extent, a lot of colleges have become money minting enterprises. But we are doing our best to address the problem (See interview)."

There's also a lack of intent by these institutes to conduct good industry exposure programmes. "I was lured by the false promises of the institute about placements. After a few days, I realised I was conned. The faculty was inexperienced and there was hardly any industry interaction," said a student, who paid R6 lakh for an MBA degree from one such college.

"I cannot even pay the EMIs of the education loan I took as my salary is not sufficient," he said, adding that he's working for a paltry salary of R12,000 per month.

Besides, there are hundreds of MBA and engineering institutes running as franchisees of other universities across India. They just don't offer 'prestigious' degrees, but promise "good marks" also.

"We can help you pass your MBA with a good percentage of marks. But that will cost extra," assured a consultant at one such institute to the HT reporter who posed as a prospective student.

Though all these colleges are recognised by the All Indian Council of Technical Education (AICTE), experts believe getting approval from AICTE is more of a formality.

"If you can show them a building, a few classrooms, you get recognition. After that, colleges are on their own to decide the curriculum, faculty and quality of books," said the director of a reputed business school in Gurgaon.

CS Nagpal, director of a city-based technology and management college, said, "Most of the students at such colleges scored 30-40% in qualifying exams. Since they can't get admission in a good college, they fall prey to fake promises."

Source: March 29, 2012/Hindustan Times

8 projects shortlisted for US-India knowledge initiative

In a first-of-its-kind collaboration between Indian educational institutes and top US universities, the Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative is set to launch eight key projects — four each from India and the US.

While Cornell University will collaborate with the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Rutgers University will coordinate a research project with Tata Institute of Social Sciences. University of Michigan will join hands with Nashik-based Maharashtra University of Health Sciences. University of Montana will work with Bangalore University.

Projects approved by India include collaborative research between Banaras Hindu University and University of Pittsburg, IIT-Kanpur and Virginia Tech, IIT-Delhi and University of Philadelphia, and Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, and Duke University. The projects will include a series of exchange visits and activities that will lead to the achievement of the project's objectives within a three-year period, sources in the Human Resource Development Ministry said.

The Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative was jointly announced in 2009 by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President Barack Obama. The projects will be funded through an estimated $10 million corpus with equal contribution from the Indian and US governments and centre around energy studies, sustainable

development, climate change, environmental studies, education and education reform, community development and innovation.

While US-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) is the nodal authority for this initiative from the US side, the UGC is administering it on behalf of India. A joint working group comprising Indian and US officials met on March 19 to shortlist four projects each from the 101 proposals received by the USIEF and 41 received by the UGC. The funding pattern and finer modalities will be worked out and announced at the Indo-US Higher Education summit slated for June 2012.

Source: March 30, 2012/Indian Express

Engineering colleges back Washington accord

Heads of engineering colleges in the city have said that Indian engineering students will find it easy to get jobs abroad once institutions get permanent membership in the Washington accord.

The accord has evoked a positive reaction among engineering institutions in the city.

India, along with Pakistan and Bangladesh, are provisional members of the Washington accord. As per provisions, a country is eligible to apply for a full-time membership after two years.

A permanent membership would mean that undergraduate engineering courses will be brought on par with US, UK, Japan, Australia, Singapore and ten other countries. The full-time membership would result in enhanced accessibility of education and jobs abroad for Indian students.

If successful in its bid in June 2013, the accord will benefit students across the 2,000-odd engineering schools in the country recognized by the apex body, All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE).

Only AICTE-deemed courses will be eligible for auditing conducted by the Washington accord.

Anil Sahasrabuddhe, director of College of Engineering, Pune, said compliance with the accord will give global exposure to Indian students.

"Usually, Indian engineering students have to take a test to get a job abroad. But, international accreditation would mean that engineering courses in India would be recognized worldwide. Thus, getting a job abroad would become much easier, " he added.

Sahasrabuddhe also remarked that compliance would enhance the standard of engineering education in India. He said that along with state-of-art infrastructure, there will be an increased

emphasis on creating a quality pool of engineers in the country.

B S Karkare, principal of Vishwakarma Institute of Information Technology (VIIT), said, "If we are successful in our bid, there will be a globally recognized seal of approval for Indian engineering institutes. This would help our students to participate in constant exchange of innovative ideas with students across the world. Exchange of ideas would not merely improve the standard of engineering courses in the country, but will also provide leverage for local students to go abroad for higher education and jobs thereafter."

VIIT has two engineering courses accredited by National Board of Accreditation (NBA), which works under the aegis of the AICTE.

"We have six engineering courses at the undergraduate level in our institute. We are planning to get all the six department accredited by the NBA in the next two years. Once, we achieve that goal, there will be around 2,400 students who will benefit from the universal standardization of curriculum," she added.

Sunil Karad, executive director of Maharashtra Academy of Engineering and Educational Research's (MAEER) Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT), Pune, said, "The standardization of courses will provide international exposure to students here, which, in turn, will improve engineering standards in the country. Quality of education will improve because of this Accord."

R P Joshi, director of Pune Vidyarthi Griha's College of Engineering and Technology, said that there will be an improvement in engineering education in the country in order to comply with the international standards required by the Washington accord. The accord will enforce quality consciousness in engineering classrooms, which will boost India's technical know-how in the long term.

Source: March 30, 2012/Times of India

RESOURCE

A large share for higher education

The reasons for this are challenges of enrolment, physical access and employability.

The study says the country's higher education enrolment ratio is 11 per cent, which half of the world average and way behind that of developed countries (54 per cent).

The report highlights three banes plaguing the higher education scene: not enough children go to college, not enough children have physical access

to college and many colleges give degrees but don't lead to jobs.

The study titled, 'Massifying Indian Higher Education: The Access and Employability Case for Community Colleges' argues for solutions that would combine the needs of policy makers, employers and the youth.

"Community colleges could be an important innovation because they are part ITI, part-college and part-employment exchange," says Mr Manish Sabharwal, Chairman, TeamLease Services.

Enrolment in higher education is about 1.6 crore in 2012. The community college offering two year programmes could increase enrolment by 8 million from small towns, unorganised workers and the traditionally disadvantaged.

Source: March 26, 2012/The Hindu Business Line

It's a global market

The Indian higher education system, which witnessed a significant growth over the last decade with private educational institutions playing a catalytic role in that direction, lends its infrastructure to students sponsored by foreign universities. This will not only help Indian institutions to place their credibility on the world map of higher education but also earn foreign exchange for the country.

The process in this direction started a couple of years ago under which some of the reputed private universities and colleges equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and quality faculty conducted curricular programmes in professional courses for students sponsored by foreign universities. The centre of 'Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)-KLE International Medical School /Programme' in Belgaum city is an example worth emulating by other government and private centres of higher education across the country.

Considering the fact that the Indian higher education system was one of the largest in the world with more than 500 universities in the country (including central, state, private and deemed universities), it can tap the potential available in the global 'market' of higher education. Many small countries fall short of required infrastructure, faculty and expertise in various subjects and they require huge funds for their creation, even as their students look forward to learning opportunities in higher education and professional courses such as engineering and medicine. This gap can well be filled by Indian institutions, as being done by the KLE University.

The USM-KLEIMP Director, H.B. Rajasekhar, explains the process of development of the centre to The Hindu Education Plus

Malaysia is presently experiencing a shortage of doctors and medical professionals in its health sector and the universities there are ambitiously looking forward to strengthen the doctor-patient ratio. The demand for doctors is very high in Malaysia. The USM, a government-funded university which offers courses in medicine in its home country for about 170 students in a year, was keenly exploring tapping the existing facilities available to train its students in centres of higher learning across the world, including India.

The Beginning

During its search, it came across the KLEU and being convinced about the good facilities, quality of teaching and standards, the USM signed a Memorandum of Understanding with KLE Society in November 2009, to start an International Medical School at Belgaum. This resulted in the establishment of the first medical school of the Malaysian Government in a private university in India. Incidentally, the KLEU is credited with being the first private university to adopt the programme for a university funded by the Government of Malaysia.

The first batch started functioning in September 2010 when 44 of the total 100 seats sanctioned were filled. The strength went up with 83 students taking admission for the second batch in September 2011.

With the growing demand from Malaysian students, the third batch commencing in September this year will be hopefully full to the capacity.

How it Works

The students are selected by USM strictly on merit and admitted to the medical programme following which the students undergo training as per USM time-table and curriculum. The USM provides academic inputs and the KLEU facilitates with logistic and administrative support. The USM also evaluates student performance and offers degrees after successful completion of the programme.

The college has got state-of-the art infrastructure including dissection hall, anatomy museum/clinical skill lab, multi-disciplinary lab, digital library, separate examination hall and programme-based learning facilities. Construction of a new hospital complex is under progress.

The entire five years of the M.D. (as called in Malaysia and equivalent to MBBS in India)

programme will be conducted at Belgaum under the expert tutelage of KLE lecturers and governance by the USM faculty members. After the completion of five years of training and evaluation exercises, successful candidates will be awarded the M.D. (Doctor of Medicine) degree by USM, recognised by the Malaysian Medical Council, and they can practice in Malaysia.

The development marks not only the establishment of a dynamic liaison between two educational centres of excellence but also serves mutual requirements as well. However, it is a challenging task.

Source: March 26, 2012/The Hindu

Indian faces challenges on higher education front: report

India is facing an emergency situation in the higher education segment, according to the India Labour Report by Team-Lease Services. This has been caused due to low college enrollment, employability crisis of unskilled labour and lack of flexibility of the education sector, the report said.

"The issue of employability is centred on two challenges. The first one is lack of access to education and skills, and the second is rigour in education quality standards. Calculated investment and new technology can take care of the first issue. The second challenge is more about quality of students which results in aspiration mismatch between skills and job/salary expected. Hopefully, over a period of time, the market will start paying a premium in compensation for people with high quality vocational skills thereby turning the tide in favour of vocational training," said Judhajit Das, Chief HR Officer, ICICI Prudential.

The study informed that India's 30% gross enrollment ratio objective by 2030 plans requires solutions that combine the needs of policy makers, employers and youth. Community colleges offering 2 year associate degree programs – not normal degrees on a diet but vocational education on steroids – combine all stakeholder needs. These colleges would end the dead end view of vocational education by allowing those with certificates and diplomas to convert them into associate degrees and degrees with additional study. They would expand geographic access via multiple delivery modes (small centers, large campuses, internet/satellite campus and apprenticeships), and place employers at the heart of curriculum, certification and outcomes.

The study explained that despite enrollment growing from 2 lakh in 1947 to 1.6 crore in 2012,

India still lags behind its international counterparts. The higher education gross enrolment ratio of India is 11% which is merely half of the world average and way behind developed countries (54%). "The low enrollment is compounded by an uneven spread of higher education; only five states have more than 20 universities and five have only one. Sixteen states do not have a single central university," the release stated.

The study showed that non-availability of courses, inadequate infrastructure facilities, inadequate financial resources, lack of flexibility and autonomy to the institutions among others have dented efforts in improving the quality and scale of education, employability and employment.

"India's higher education challenge lies at the difficult trinity of enrollment, access and employability. Community colleges could be an important innovation because they are part ITI, Part College and part employment exchange. This mezzanine layer of two-year programmes could increase enrollment by 8 million from small towns, unorganised workers and the traditionally disadvantaged," Manish Sabharwal, Chairman, Team-Lease Services said.

It also pointed out that higher education system in India can scale up in quality and reach only by creating competition with transparent regulation. Some of the proposed solutions include legitimising distance education, fostering public-private partnership models, deregulating higher education and tweaking the skill and employment ecosystem.

Source: March 27, 2012/<u>Business Standard</u>

State invests in future, school education gets Rs 14,552 crore

The state has invested in the future with an allocation of Rs 14,552.82 crore for school education - the highest allotment to any department in the budget. The money will be spent on free uniforms, footwear, school bags, accessories like geometry boxes and colour pencils, textbooks and notebooks apart from school infrastructure and other expenses. Educationists described the decision to give priority to school education as progressive and farsighted. However, they said efficient spending of the allocation and timely release of funds for various projects would be crucial to ensure that the sector gets the fillip it requires.

They noted that funds for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan had reportedly more than doubled over the past two years but there had not been a commensurate improvement in the standard of education or infrastructure under the scheme.

The Planning Allocations Institutions Studies and Accountability report released by Pratham Foundation recently said the shortage of separate toilet facilities for girls had gone down only marginally from 30% in 2009 to 27% in 2011, while the shortfall of classrooms matched the 2009 figure of 50% in 2011, after a dip in 2010 when the shortage went down to 47%.

"Based on unit costs available for teachers' salaries, construction of classrooms and toilets, and provision of drinking water facilities, PAISA estimated the state's total cost to meet Right To Education norms at 815 crore," an education analyst said. PAISA is a project that tracks elementary education in the country.

However, some educationists criticized the cash incentive to reduce the dropout rate in classes 10, 11 and 12 have as a populist measure. State Platform for Common School System general secretary P B Prince Gajendra Babu said, "All parents now want to send their children to school. So instead of offering such rewards for children to stay in school, the funds should have been used to improve quality of education."

Academics lauded the free laptop scheme that students are thrilled about.

Source: March 27, 2012/<u>Times of India</u>

India faces 50 percent nursing shortage

The fledgling health sector in India is facing a 50 percent shortage of nursing staff due to demand outstripping supply and many female nurses preferring to work overseas for higher compensation, a senior health official said Thursday.

"There is a 40-50 percent shortage of nursing personnel due to increasing demand for nurses, nursing and allied services in the healthcare sector across the country and globally," said V. Ravi, registrar of the state-run National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (Nimhans) at an international conference here on 'Nursing education & training in a global context'.

Admitting that it was becoming a challenge to maintain a healthy ratio of doctors and nurses in state-run and private hospitals across the country due to various factors, Ravi said the Indian healthcare sector would ideally require one nurse for every patient suffering critical illness and five nurses for every patient in psychiatric cases.

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"As it is very difficult for any country to fully meet its nursing requirements, the stakeholders would have to use tele-nursing and auxiliary services, for providing personal patient care and create capacity building to churn out hundreds of nurses," Ravi told about 300 delegates participating in the day-long conference, organised by the private-run Dayananda Sagar Institutions in collaboration with California State University and Sagar hospitals on the city's outskirts.

Noting that global demand for nurses was rising due to ageing population, especially in the developed countries, California state university associate professor Marilyn Stonar said despite advancement in medical science and enhanced longevity, more number of people become victims of chronic diseases such as AIDS and cancer.

"As patients suffering from chronic diseases require personal attention and caring, demand for experienced nurses is going up worldwide. There is a need to innovate newer methods of delivering nursing services to the community," Stonar said.

For instance, of the 250,000 nurses serving in the US, one-third of them are on the verge of retirement this year.

"It is not only people and patients growing old in the US, but also nurses," she quipped.

Advocating increasing use of medical technology for delivering efficient healthcare and overcome shortage of paramedical staff, Stonar the US government had stipulated two nurses for every patient in the intensive care units (ICUs), four-five nurses for every patient in day shift and six nurses in night shift.

"We are open to partner with Indian institutions like Dayananda Sagar to train more personnel in using technology for healthcare and collaborative research under education exchange programme," Stonar observed.

According to Pia Hagquist, a nursing faculty member at the Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences in Finland, promoting health is more important than curing a disease in conformity with the adage that prevention is better than cure.

"The Finland government focuses on problem-based learning to promote importance of public health," Hagquist noted.

Under the education exchange progamme, nursing students from Finland have been learning nursing practices and clinical methods at Dayananda Sagar institutions since 2007

Source: March 29, 2012/Two circles

IIT-Delhi India's top ranking institution

Indian Institute of Technology- Delhi is the country's highest ranking institution in world with a global rank of 218, the Rajya Sabha was informed today.

Minister of State for HRD D Purandeswari said during Question Hour that as per the Quacquarelli Symonds global system of ranking of higher education institutions for 2011, IIT-Delhi is the overall highest ranking institution in India at serial number 218.

"As per the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for 2011, IIT-Bombay is the highest ranked institution at serial 317, while the Academic Ranking of World Universities has ranked Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore at serial 321," she said.

As per the 2011 QS Engineering & Technology Rankings, IIT-Bombay is at serial 43, IIT-Delhi at 50, IIT-Kanpur at 59 and IIT-Madras at 60 in Computer Science and Information Technology.

In the same ranking system in Civil and Structural Engineering, IIT-Bombay is ranked at serial 30, IIT-Kanpur at serial 38 and IIT-Delhi at serial 43.

As per QS Global Business School Report, 2012, Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad has been ranked second in the Asia Pacific region, next to INSEAD (Institut Europeen d Administration des Affairs), Singapore while IIM-Bangalore, Indian School of Business, IIM-Calcutta and SP Jain Institute of Management and Research, Mumbai figure in the top 20 institutes.

According to Financial Times London Global Buiness School rankings, IIM-Ahmedabad is at serial 11 and Indian School of Business at serial 13.

Source: March 30, 2012/Times of India

US official to visit India to prepare for strategic dialogue

US under secretary of state for political affairs Wendy Sherman is travelling to India next week to hold discussions with her Indian counterparts on a wide range of issues including Iran and the up-coming US-India Strategic Dialogue in Washington.

During her four day India trip, Sherman besides her meetings in New Delhi would make a trip to Patna - the first by such a high-ranking US official to Bihar on April 3.

In New Delhi, Sherman will meet with the foreign secretary Ranjan Mathai and other senior Indian officials to discuss preparations for the US-India Strategic Dialogue, to be held in Washington DC in

mid-June, the State Department said in a statement.

Iran issue will also be discussed during the meetings. "She will also hold meetings with figures from Indian civil society, higher education, political opposition and youth organisations," the statement said.

On Monday, April 2, Sherman will give a speech at the American Centre in New Delhi on US-India relations.

She will then travel to Patna on April 3, where she will meet with local officials, the State Department said.

From India, Sherman would travel to Kathmandu, Nepal, where she will meet with the Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, other Nepalese officials and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Secretary-General Ahmed Saleem.

She will also hold a roundtable discussion with LGBT activists and meet with Tibet community leaders.

From Kathmandu, Under Secretary Sherman will travel to Dhaka on April 5.

While in Dhaka she will meet with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, foreign minister Dipu Moni, and other Bangladeshi officials to discuss a broad range of bilateral and regional issues including governance, civil society, women's issues and economic prosperity.

Under secretary Sherman will also visit a Grameen Borrower Group site outside of Dhaka.

Source: March 30, 2012/Times of India

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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