



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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Fellowship opportunities

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

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Internships can be in diverse areas from services, government and nonprofit.

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**Opportunities for Partners In The Education Sector**

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India has estimated that the country's market for primary, secondary and tertiary education will be worth over \$50 billion by 2015.

The country has close to 13 lakh educational institutes. Of this, 12.8 lakh are schools, the rest colleges and universities. "The Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world. Against only 20 universities and 500 colleges with 0.1 million students at the time of independence, we now have about 611 universities and university-level institutions and 31,324 colleges as of August 2011," says Sanjeev Pathak, Country Head, Attach & Emerging Business, Personal Systems Group, HP India.

The sheer size of the educational system in India presents a huge opportunity for IT. At the same time, educational institutions are increasingly looking at IT as an enabler to spread quality education. According to a report from Springboard Research, India's education sector will step up its IT spending to \$704 million in 2012.

In addition, the education sector is delighted with the recent announcements in the union budget. An increase in allocation by 21.7 percent for the Right to Education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, to Rs 25,555 crore, and by 29 percent for Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan to Rs 3,124 crore, reiterates the government's commitment to education.

As proposed, 6,000 schools will be set up at the block level as model schools in the 12th Five Year Plan. The government has articulated several initiatives to give a boost to public-private partnerships (PPPs) in this sector. PPP schemes for 2,500 schools and the credit guarantee fund for education loans to students is likely to pave the way for more private investment in higher education.

Growth factors

Factors such as online learning, foreign collaboration, competition among institutes offering higher education, and the efforts of vendors and partners have been driving the demand for IT products and services in the sector. Many colleges and universities have invested in or plan to invest in online courses, virtual classrooms, and sector-specific software applications. WLAN, SAN and ERP are the three most popular IT solutions adopted by educational institutes in India.

A lot of investments are happening in the education segment. "I think these investments will grow by 40-50 percent in the next 12 months. We have seen more than 30 private equity and venture capitalist funds active in this space. The investments are expected to increase from \$100 million to \$300 million plus in the next one year," forecasts Abhilesh Guleria, Country Head, Multimedia Product Group & IT Platform, NEC India.

Opportunities for partners

One of the top attractions of the education sector for partners is the long opportunity window it assures. According to industry observers, even basic computerization has not reached several thousand schools in the country. Through the government's ICT@Schools program, of 1.6 lakh secondary schools 50,000 are already computerized with 1.1 lakh still to be covered. But even after the target is achieved, 11.2 lakh schools will still lack computerization.

Due to the composite nature of this sector, there is place for every type of channel partner. Due to the vast spread of schools and colleges in the country, IT vendors have to rely heavily on their partner networks to target the sector.

"Barring large state-led education orders, no manufacturer can hope to go direct. Although several engineering colleges and business schools speak directly to vendors for bulk pricing and technology discussions, the order fulfillment is always done by channels," says Karthik Padmanabhan, Country Manager, ISV & Developer Relations, IBM Software India/South Asia.

"The higher and technical education stream is looking at packaged solutions, so there are opportunities in virtualization, security, bandwidth, automation, etc. As far as the K-12 and higher education addressable markets are concerned, they are expected to touch \$600 million in 2012," says Sitaram Venkat, Director, Enterprise Solutions Business, Dell India.

Adds Tarun Malik, Director, Product Marketing, Microsoft India, "K-12 is looking at fast upgradation and adoption of infrastructure products like mail systems and networking. Higher education is looking at ERP, CRM and other productivity as well as infrastructure tools."

"A huge opportunity exists for partners under the government initiative to connect all universities through WAN under the National Mission on Education," says KK Shetty, Director, Sales, TE Connectivity. "Partners can leverage their skills to design LANs and wireless networks, implement them, and handle service contracts."

Partners also confirm the traction in the sector. "About 30 percent of our total revenue comes from this sector. We have experienced growth of 15-20 percent YOY in our revenue from education," informs Harinder Salwan, Director, Tricom Multimedia.

"Only on the education front, we have grown 30 percent in FY2011-12 compared to the last fiscal," says Sandeep Vahi, CEO, Compton Computers, a Delhi-based solutions provider. According to Vahi, "Since most of the opportunities in education demand end-to-end solutions and not box-selling, partners need to improve their capabilities to deliver IT-as-a-Solution, be it content, networking, servers, storage or data center."

While there is huge demand for PCs, servers and software, new opportunities exist in e-learning, digital classrooms, educational content, campus networking and connectivity.

Digital & virtual classrooms

From blackboard teaching to technology-enhanced pictorial teaching, education has gone through major changes over the past decade. "Education today is drifting toward interactive methods of teaching. The market size for digital classrooms was estimated at Rs 3,000 crore in 2011 and is expected to grow by 25-30 percent in 2012," says Rajesh Sethia, Head, Marketing, Tata Interactive Services (TIS). According to Sethia, opportunities for partners exist in the digitization of classrooms through hardware deployment, software packaging as well as support services.

TIS has so far executed about 300 digital classroom projects, including 40 for Campion School, Bhopal, and 40 for St Thomas School, New Delhi. "Another 400 projects are under execution, the majority of them in tier-3 and tier-4 cities," informs Sethia. He says that schools in tier-3 and tier-4 cities are competing with their counterparts in tier-1 and metro cities, hence there is greater opportunity in those locations. TIS has executed projects in places like Tirunelveli (TN), Kurnool (AP), Latur (Maharashtra), Kulti (WB), Danapur (Bihar) and Sasaram (Bihar).

Adds Anand Ekambaram, VP, HCL Learning, "We have Implemented the HCL Digischool solution in various places such as the Udgam School, Ahmedabad; Ebenezer Marcus School, Chennai; and Kamaraj Matriculation School, Chennai. Recently the solution has been deployed in St Paul's School, Darjeeling."

"We are in talks with Guwahati University and Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak," informs Vahi. "Each project would cost around Rs 3.5 crore. The entire mechanism would have a small data

center within the university; a video conferencing facility with cameras, microphones and speakers; and middleware to connect the setup to the students through thin clients."

E-learning & educational content

E-learning is the one of the buzzwords of the moment. "Since regular courses in India are getting very expensive and highly competitive, distance and online education is fast becoming an option for students," says Pathak.

Players like TIS, Campus Collab, Educomp, Everonn and NIIT have developed dedicated solutions targeted at educational institutions that aid learning or bring automation to administration. "There are close to 50 e-learning systems which are being licensed for Rs 30-1,300 per student per month," says Raj Kamal, Managing Partner, Interactive Learning Systems. "The opportunity lies in not just reselling but in deployment, training and support."

Several IT vendors have collaborated with content vendors to offer classroom solutions to educational institutes. "We have tied up with smart class content providers such as Pearson and Everonn, and are involved in several mid to large school projects across India," informs Venkat.

"We are working on a project where 1,300 schools across 38 districts of Bihar are going in for digital learning," adds Ajay Maitin, CEO, Graphic Trades. "While the total project may be worth about Rs 125 crore, our contribution in terms of providing large format displays may run into about Rs 1 crore."

Campus networking

Campuses are opting for Internet connectivity, and this presents one of the juiciest opportunities for partners. Several partners have tied up with ISPs to provide last-mile connectivity. "We have tied up with Sify to provide broadband connectivity to organizations. There has been demand from schools and colleges which are looking at extending Internet services to campuses," says Badri R, Manager, Business Development, Webkraft, a Sify partner.

Many partners have implemented end-to-end networking solutions in various institutes and universities. Reveals Ajit Mital, MD, Acme Digitek Solutions, "We completed a networking project worth

Rs 2 crore for Purvanchal University, Jaunpur. Another project worth Rs 2 crore was for Kumaon Engineering College, Dwarahat, Uttarakhand."

Wireless technology is emerging as a choice among many premier institutes and universities because it can easily provision or de-provision network resources depending on requirements. Since it eliminates the use of cables, it means less capex

and fewer cables to throw away at the end of their lives.

Informs Manjit Singh, MD, Ruckus Wireless India, "We have deployed solutions at VIT Vellore and VIT Chennai to support a campus-wide, high-speed Wi-Fi network for over 20,000 students."

"Most educational institutions are upgrading their infrastructure; this also means an opportunity for WAN connectivity," says AL Srinath, CEO, Shell Networks. "Funds are being allocated through different schemes, and since decisions are decentralized the opportunities for partners are excellent."

Cloud computing

Institutions are now looking at the cloud model of infrastructure and software. Besides automating fees collection and the admission process, they are putting educational ERP and e-learning content on the cloud. "Although these are currently popular among the top 5-10 percent schools, they are expected to proliferate among other schools looking to automate their processes," remarks Padmanabhan.

"There is a high chance that institutions which are not adopting IT today and do not have major investments in data centers and server farms will directly move to the cloud model. There are ample opportunities in the education sector for this," comments Pari Natarajan, CEO, Zinnov Management Consulting.

"Both public and private institutions can use the cloud to deliver better services even as they work with fewer resources," agrees Malik. "By sharing IT services in the cloud, educational institutions can outsource non-core services and better concentrate on offering students, teachers and non-teaching staff the essential tools to help them succeed."

Informs Salwan, "We implemented the MS Sharepoint application on the cloud for the Public Health Foundation of India, Delhi, on a pay-per-use model at Rs 500 per user per month. We also implemented Adobe Connect in the Shailesh Mehta School of Management at IIT Mumbai; this enables lecturers to share lectures and educational content with students from any location. The annual subscription to the cloud-based solution costs Rs 1,000 per user per year."

Social networking

Schools and colleges are investing in modern Web 2.0 applications and taking to social networking tools to connect with parents, students and teachers.

According to Ekambaram, "Teachers and students are using social networks as a communication tool

to extend classroom discussions; to post assignments, tests and quizzes; and to assist with homework outside of the classroom setting."

"Social media have emerged as a trend among institutions to attract the most talented students as well as faculty. It helps them to create a social network and initiate interactions among students which goes up to the alumni level. Schools are readily going in for active Websites with facilities to connect with students and alumni and get feedback," notes Padmanabhan.

Venkat points out that "institutions are also encouraging BYOD (bring your own device) which encourages social networking; the research community is also involved in social networking wherein they form forums for discussions."

"Schools have started thinking beyond basic Websites, and are using the Web to communicate key information (such as the performance of students to parents). The Web will be a very important delivery tool," says Ganesh Mahabala, Senior VP, Value Point.

Security

While a number of educational institutions are already investing in IT infrastructure, security has also got their attention now. Apart from traditional UTM solutions, data loss prevention and content filtering are necessary for any educational institution connecting to the Internet and offering free broadband to students.

"There has been a huge uptake of security software by this sector in the recent past. We work with companies such as Educomp as partners for large projects. On an average we sell 5,000 licenses per month in Pune only. We see a growth of 15-17 percent in the next five years," discloses Shyamal Das Gupta, AGM, Government & Education Verticals, Quick Heal. "Recently we did a smart classroom project with Educomp for the Bihar State Electronics Development Corporation with a requirement for 2,000 licenses. We also did similar projects for BIT, Mesra (in Jharkhand) for 1,800-2,000 licenses."

Software applications

Schools and colleges are taking a keen interest in deploying licensed software. This includes operating systems, office applications, school management software, school ERP, databases and teaching aids.

"These days we are seeing low levels of piracy in educational institutions. Vendors like Microsoft and Adobe offer discounts up to 70 percent on software solutions for the education sector. For students they offer up to 90 percent discount. This has led to the

use of original software in most of the institutes," says Salwan.

Vendors are also trying to create low-entry barriers for educational institutions to adapt to their technologies and software. For example, IBM and Microsoft are working with universities by offering them free software and hardware for courses in the curriculum that promote their technologies. "Microsoft carries out several market development initiatives such as Live@edu and the Microsoft Dreams Park that catalyze the adoption of IT in schools and colleges," adds Malik.

Opportunities in such cases come in deployment and training, for which partners are often roped in. "We have offered floating licenses of Modo 3D software at Rs 10,000 per year to various institutes like IITs and the JJ College of Architecture, Mumbai," says Salwan.

Client infrastructure

Opportunities for partners have increased manifold in the education segment with better form-factors like tablets and thinner AIOs, apart from desktops and notebooks. The prices of the products have also reduced over the past two years.

Apple has plans to launch its iBook2 and eBooks for students in India. Various schools (such as Mumbai's Billabong High International School) are intending to introduce iBooks for their students from June.

Sam Pitroda, advisor to the Prime Minister, has introduced the country's first cloud-based tablet solution called E-tutor for students of Class 1-12. This would be available at Rs 7,500, inclusive of content, from April 2012.

"The spread of the tablet into schools is bound to be a big opportunity," remarks Venkat. "At the moment it is popular only in the metros, but it will percolate to tier-2 and -3 cities in the next 2-3 years."

Peripherals

A number of specialized educational tools are being positioned for the segment including printers, projectors, digital whiteboards and markers.

"The projector market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 50 percent for the next five years," says Rajeev Singh, Country Manager, BenQ India. "We are seeing more traction from private players than government schools. Private players contribute 75 percent of our revenue from education, the rest comes from government institutions."

"Education plays a key role in Epson's business, and the contribution from this vertical for key businesses like projectors is around 30 percent in FY2011-12. As institutions integrate ICT with

education, the adoption levels have grown the most compared to other sectors," says Samba Moorthy, Senior GM, Sales & Marketing, Epson India.

BenQ has 15 short-throw projector SKUs meant for the education segment, four entry-level SVGAs, and more than 20 SKUs in entry-level SGA projectors. The company has also launched its Smart Eco projectors, in association with Philips, targeted at the education segment.

Physical security & biometrics

Schools and colleges are becoming sensitive about their physical security needs. They have started investing in CCTV, biometric authentication and other surveillance solutions. A few colleges have deployed biometric systems to automate the recording of staff attendance. Many partners, in addition to upfront sales, also offer pay-as-you-go models of such solutions to their education customers.

Another solution is a vehicle tracking system which is increasingly being used to track school buses. "We have created a SaaS platform which schools can use to track buses and inform parents about the movement of the buses," informs S Raghu, Director, Telematics4u, Bengaluru.

In FY2011-12 Bangalore University spent Rs 1.44 crore on an innovative program of smart cards for students through which they can get access to their mark sheets besides the library and other facilities.

Thin clients

Many educational institutions are considering investment in thin clients, primarily for security reasons but also to reduce energy costs. Says Manish Sharma, VP, Ncomputing, "We see thin clients being deployed especially in cases where schools have challenges in terms of power, and also especially in B- and C-class cities and rural India."

HP is another vendor which has been betting on end-to-end virtualization for the education market. Pathak explains. "The HP MultiSeat t150 thin client allows up to 10 students to simultaneously share a single host computer using a simple USB connection, hence schools can maximize the number of computer seats without increasing their technology budgets. No separate power is required, and all the users can be connected to the network through the host PC."

Vendors' strategies

Vendors support channel partners through focused marketing exercises. Informs Moorthy of Epson, "We conduct special events targeting decision-makers in educational institutions. We participate in exhibitions targeting the segment and advertise in trade and industry-specific journals. We also do

direct marketing campaigns to update decision-makers about new products and solutions.”

Vendors like Cisco, IBM and TE Connectivity popularize their solutions by setting up laboratories for free in various premier institutions. “We have set up laboratories in universities and institutes like IITs and NITs, and also train faculty and students in LAN cabling and fiber installations. This gives us the opportunity to create a brand among future decision-makers,” says Shetty.

“Students recently started shying away from IT specialization. We realized that the major reason for this was that the existing curriculum was not in sync with the requirements of the industry. We therefore collaborated with various institutions to develop and update the curriculum to meet the requirements of the industry,” says Krishna Kant, Senior Program Manager, EMC Education Services.

EMC has collaborated with the Rajiv Gandhi Proudyogiki Vishwavidyalaya to provide knowledge in the field of information storage and management, cloud infrastructure services, backup recovery systems, data science and big data analytics. According to Kant, “So far EMC has forged alliances with 150+ educational institutions in India and has trained over 65,000 students.”

“Under its Live@edu program, Microsoft offers hosted email and calendaring with a 10 GB inbox and instant messaging via Outlook Live; the ability to access, share and collaborate via SkyDrive with 25 GB online storage space; and the ability to create, view, edit and share MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote files online with SkyDrive,” informs Malik.

Challenges

Some of the challenges partners speak of in this sector are pressures on margins and delayed payments. However, as the partners move deeper into the solutions and services game, margin pressure ceases to be an issue.

Another roadblock in the sector is the haphazard order placement due to a long decision-making hierarchy and last-minute interventions by trustees or senior management in some cases. The best solution for this, according to seasoned channel players, is to improve relationships with all the people involved in the decision-making process and continue with rigorous follow-up.

“The challenge in this segment is delays in approvals,” says Vahi. “Unless the project is decided by the cabinet or the HR ministry, getting local-level approvals in government universities is very difficult. Compared to this, in private institutions, the decision-making is quick. The lack of infrastructure is also an issue as most of the

universities with e-classes plan to have examination centers at remote locations that do not have even electricity.”

Adds Venkat, “One of the biggest challenges is that IT is not a priority on the agenda of most schools, and therefore we need to put in a lot of effort to create awareness and show them the benefits.”

Source: April 12, 2012/[CRN](#)

NEWS

Govt invites private companies to start secondary schools

Govt seeks expressions of interest from firms to open 2,500 secondary schools over the next five years.

Following a road map laid out in the budget, the Union government has invited proposals from companies to open secondary schools, amid increasing concern over the quality of education being imparted in India’s class rooms.

The human resource development (HRD) ministry, which oversees education, has sought expressions of interest from companies in joining the public-private partnership (PPP) project to open 2,500 schools over the next five years.

Private entities will procure the land, and design, develop, operate and manage the schools, the HRD ministry said in a document outlining the proposal. The government will offer a 25% infrastructure grant and the recurring cost of education for students sponsored by it.

Under the Right to Education Act, at least 25% of a school’s students can belong to underprivileged families and are entitled to free education.

The government will pay for their schooling.

Finance minister Pranab Mukherjee, in his 16 March budget speech, outlined a proposal to open 6,000 model schools, including 2,500 on the PPP model, in the 12th Five-Year Plan period that began on 1 April.

The budget pegs an outlay of Rs. 972 crore in 2012-13 for the model schools.

The 2,500 secondary schools, to be modelled after the Central schools run by the HRD ministry, will be planned as joint ventures between the Union government and private firms.

This is the first such move by the government, which has repeatedly said that the public sector on its own will not be able to boost the country’s education sector.

According to details in the ministry's documents, even companies without any experience in education can bid to open schools. "A corporate entity would be eligible for one school for every Rs. 25 crore net worth subject to interest bearing deposit of Rs.50 lakh each for up to three schools and Rs. 25 lakh per school thereafter," it said.

An education firm already running at least one Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) school—from which at least two consecutive batches have graduated from class X—can qualify for three schools under the PPP project.

Firms with schools that have not scaled up to the class X level will be eligible for one school, the ministry said in the document explaining the eligibility framework.

A company can qualify for three schools if it has run educational institutes for five years and can deposit Rs. 25 lakh for each school. While the interest from the deposits will accrue to the government, the capital will be released to the company in three annual instalments after the school starts operation.

"I think this is the best way of leveraging both the government and private sector to solve the education challenge. Let's hope they (government) make some real progress in the next one year," said Satya Narayanan, chief executive of CL Educate Ltd, which runs a chain of schools and test preparatory centres across India.

He added that the documents seem to suggest that interested players need to have "reputation and a track record or net worth. In a way, even if you are a liquor company, you can still bid for it (a school). However, the interest-bearing deposit clause seems like a guard against non-serious players." He said his company "would definitely participate in the process to open PPP schools". There are an estimated 290 million students enrolled in kindergarten to class XII (K-12) schools in India, of whom 7.4 million attend private schools in the cities, according to Parthenon Group, an international consulting and advisory firm.

Of the private school population, about 7.1 million students pay less than Rs.40,000 in annual fees, the firm said in a recent report.

India's education market was worth \$40 billion in 2008, of which the K-12 segment was worth \$20 billion, according to securities firm CLSA.

Though updated data wasn't available, CLSA had predicted in its report that by the end of 2012, the K-12 segment alone would be worth \$29 billion. It

also said the school and private college segment had huge growth potential.

At a meeting of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) nations on Thursday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reiterated India's focus on education and job creation.

"In India, for example, we need to create 8-10 million jobs every year over the next decade to absorb the expected growth in the labour force. We are working on ambitious programmes of skill upgradation and education and creation of an environment conducive to an expansion of productive job opportunities," he said. "We would like to learn from the experiences of other Brics countries on how they are dealing with these problems."

India has a labour pool of about 429 million that is likely to grow by around 12 million every year, according to the Economic Survey 2011-12. Here, the education and training of this workforce will be a key challenge for the country, which spends less than 4% of its gross domestic product on education, the survey report said.

Source: April 2, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

Australia launches an education portal for Indians

Indian students looking to study in Australia will now be able to use a new website, MyUniversity (myuniversity.gov.au), to select a suitable university for them. The website was launched recently by the Australian minister for tertiary education and skills, senator Chris Evans, who said students will now have access to relevant, up-to-date information to help them make the right choices.

On helping students in making an informed decision, Australian High Commissioner to India, Peter Varghese said, "MyUniversity will help Indian students to make the right choice as part of their overall research in deciding on the best course and institution for them,"

Students will be able to compare universities on a range of indicators, including course details, entry scores, results of student satisfaction and graduate destination surveys, student-to-staff ratios, information on access to student services and campus facilities, and employment outcomes.

"Indian students looking to obtain a high quality education through an Australian study experience are now armed with greater information than ever before," added Varghese.

Source: April 05, 2012/[Hindustan Times](#)

MNC R&D on the upswing in India

The research and development (R&D) arms of companies, both global and Indian, have been showing signs of revival in the past one year. According to a report by management consultancy firm Zinnov Consulting, the number of R&D centres of multi national companies (MNC) in India has been increasing at a steady pace, touching 871 in 2011 as compared to 780 in 2008. The salary hike in the industry also touched 13% in 2011.

While the total amount spent on R&D by the top 1,000 R&D spenders had contracted in 2009-10 from \$549 billion to \$538 billion, in 2010-11, it rose by 8.2% to \$582 billion. With more than one-third of the top 1,000 global R&D spenders having centres in India, the industry here is showing signs of buoyancy too.

This growth is reflected in the average pay hike of 13% that the MNC R&D industry in India witnessed in 2011 with expectation of 12.6% hike in 2012.

This is slightly higher than the 12% overall average pay hike in India predicted by HR firms. The high performers got as much as 15% hike on an average. The total R&D employee base stands at over 2,00,000 engineers, growing at an average rate of 9% for the last five years showing consistent growth.

Asian economies, which are expected to grow by 9% in 2012 in terms of R&D spending, are emerging as the main drivers of growth.

European and American R&D spend is expected to grow by 3.5% and 2.8% respectively, as per a global report brought out by Battelle, which manages multiple R&D laboratories in the US. India is also gaining visibility as an R&D centre in South-East Asia for companies having headquarters outside of the US, with 28% of them having a centre in India.

The Zinnov report brings out a peculiar fact of the MNC R&D workforce in India. PhDs, which usually account for the bulk of the research workforce abroad, account for only 0.3% of the MNC R&D staff in India.

The report also says that few companies are placing these requirements when hiring and haven't tied up with educational institutions either to promote the same. This may also be due to the fact that around 45,000 engineers suitable for R&D work graduate in India every year.

"It's a combination of both factors - lack of top PhD talent which goes abroad as also the easy supply of engineering graduates. And you don't need a PhD for all kinds of research. An MTech or a MSc would

suffice in cases. It's about choosing the best you have," said E Balaji, CEO of Ma Foi Randstad, an HR consultancy firm.

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

The Strengthening of India – Israel Academic Relations – Agreed Outcomes

In the context of the twentieth anniversary of full diplomatic relations between Israel and India during which economic relations have flourished and innovation has become a shared value and goal and taking into account the strong desire of both countries to continue cultivating their long term economic, academic and technological ties, both governments have decided to substantially further enhance their academic cooperation by launching a joint program that will facilitate mutually beneficial research and academic activities.

The Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri. Kapil Sibal, Israel's Minister of Finance, Dr. Yuval Steinitz, Israel's Minister of Education and Chairman of the Council for Higher Education, Mr. Gideon Sa'ar and Israel's Chairman of the Planning and Budgeting Committee, Prof. Manuel Trajtenberg, have agreed in principle to establish a long-term program that will bring together Indian and Israeli researchers to carry forward research in areas of mutual interests. This in principle agreement was arrived at during Shri Kapil Sibal's visit to Israel from which he returned this morning. The total scope of the program will reach US\$ Five Million from each side annually in steady state, over a three year period.

Both sides have agreed that the program will be coordinated by the University Grants Commission (UGC) on the Indian side and the Israel Science Foundation (ISF) on the Israeli side.

The particulars of the program will be finalized in accordance with the decision taken by the joint working group on April 3rd 2012 and subject to the required approvals in each country. The first call for proposals is expected to be published in December 2012.

The joint working group has identified broad areas for cooperation, such as Renewable & sustainable energies, Bio-medical sciences, Cyber-security, Humanities and Social sciences, etc.

Source: April 09, 2012/[PIB](#)

World Bank offers \$500 million for Indian education project

In an effort to support India's secondary education project and make quality education accessible to

the students, the World Bank has approved a \$500 million credit.

The project will support all activities envisioned in the \$12.9 billion Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) programme, a flagship Government of India programme for gradual universalisation of secondary education.

The International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's concessionary lending arm, will finance the project would be financed by a credit from the International Development Association (IDA). It provides interest-free loans with 25 years to maturity and a grace period of five years, World Bank said in a statement.

Roberto Zagher, World Bank Country Director for India, said, "RMSA is a young programme which is expected to grow rapidly and hence it is an opportunity for the World Bank to support the Government of India in building effective systems as the Programme expands while improving quality."

The RMSA programme will undertake expansion, repair and renovation of 60,000 existing government secondary schools, around 44,000 upper primary schools will be upgraded to secondary schools and about 11,000 new secondary and senior secondary schools will come up in underserved areas.

Besides, most of the economic and employment growth in India is taking place in skilled services like information technology, financial services, telecommunications and skill-intensive manufacturing, all of which require, at a minimum, a secondary education degree, it said.

Source: April 11, 2012/[Infra Window](#)

AICTE joins hands with Microsoft in Providing Cloud Technology for Engineering Students

In a bid to broaden educational reform to improve technical education and prepare students for the workforce of tomorrow, AICTE chairman Dr S.S Mantha in the presence of Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Kapil Sibal, announced at a function held here yesterday that it is deploying microsoftlive@edu as one solution amongst many such initiatives with IT majors and Industries to more than 10,000 technical colleges and institutes throughout India. Live@edu is the first step in AICTE's deployment of Microsoft cloud computing for education, making it Microsoft's largest cloud customer ever. This will expand students' access to high-quality technical education and collaboration.

The event also witnessed the launch of AICTE'S two new management programmes by Shri Kapil Sibal. A Five year integrated masters level management programme is intended to educate and groom the students to get entry level managerial positions in manufacturing / services organizations or to start and run own ventures with good business knowledge. It will be a flexible programme which will provide an undergraduate degree in 3 or 4 years followed by a Master's degree in five years. The admission to the Programme at first year level shall be through a Common Entrance Test conducted for the purpose by AICTE. Apart from this a five year dual degree management course will also commence from this academic session. Students will be admitted through the CET at X plus II level. The students graduating through this programme shall have opportunities to work at management levels in the core engineering industry.

Source: April 13, 2012/[PIB](#)

Cross border collaboration

The Indian School of Business (ISB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, on April 13 to provide executive education in Pakistan. The MoU was signed by Deepak Chandra, deputy dean, ISB and Ishrat Husain, dean and director, IBA, Karachi, at the ISB campus.

Under the agreement, the Centre for Executive Education (CEE) at ISB will provide executive education courses to senior management executives looking to fast track their careers. The course offerings will include 'Open Programmes' or short-duration programmes that are driven by research, 'Custom-Designed Programmes' or specialised courses devised to cater to specific needs of a particular organisation as well as workshops and seminars. To begin with, the proposed programmes would focus on family business, entrepreneurship, business leadership, strategy and related domains. This would later be expanded to include programmes on Public Private Partnership (PPP) as well.

Chandra said, "We are delighted to associate with the IBA to provide executive education programmes. We are confident that this partnership will help generate tremendous opportunities for cross-collaboration between the two schools and sets the tone for many more future associations aimed at nurturing business leaders and entrepreneurs who would contribute to the growth of business and industry in Pakistan."

While ISB will focus on the design and delivery of the programmes, IBA will be responsible for their marketing and promotion. The programmes will be conducted by ISB's faculty. The first programme is slated to commence June, 2012.

Source: April 14, 2012/[Times of India](#)

News on Right to Education

Supreme Court Upholds Education-Access Law

Supreme Court upheld a law Thursday that supporters say can transform access to education for hundreds of millions of poor children but critics claim infringes on the rights of private schools to admit whom they want.

School boys walk past women as they fill containers with drinking water in their residential colony in Hyderabad, March 22, 2012

The Right to Education law, which went into effect in April 2010, requires private schools to give one quarter of their places to low-income children. Two judges of the three-judge bench that was hearing the challenge by over 30 petitioners found that the law did not violate the constitutional rights of those running private schools.

However, they carved out an exemption for private "minority" institutions, such as those run by religious groups, finding that the act "infringes the fundamental freedom" of such schools.

The third judge, however, found entirely in favor of the petitioners, writing in a dissenting order that to compel any private schools "to admit 25% of the students on the fee structure determined by the State, is nothing but an invasion as well as appropriation of the rights guaranteed to them."

The new law makes education free and compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 14, and requires schools, even private schools that don't receive any public funding, to set aside places for low-income children, for which they will be reimbursed at rates that cannot exceed spending per child in government schools.

India's public education system is in shambles, plagued by teacher absenteeism and meager resources, and the law was designed to try to ensure that all children have access to learning. The particular provision about private school admissions also had a broader social goal: to minimize the class and caste divisions that persist in Indian society despite years of economic gains.

India's education minister said he was happy with the court's decision.

"What the court has given us today is clarity on the issue so that all controversies are set to rest," Kapil Sibal told the news channel NDTV. "Our vision of education moves forward."

But private schools opposed the provision, saying it placed an excessive financial burden on them and that educational standards would go down.

Damodar Prasad Goyal, the president of the Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan, the lead petitioner challenging the law, said: "The bench recognized that unaided private schools have the right to run education institutions freely and without any interference." But he added, "a section of law recognizes that there are certain reasonable restrictions on the functioning."

Usha Albuquerque, who heads an educational consultancy called Careers Smart, said the schools' reluctance to implement was a reflection of India's deep class divide.

"The class and economic divisions are too stark and thus a lot of schools also opposed" the mixed-income experiment, she said.

Source: April 12, 2012/[Wall Street Journal](#)

India's right-to-education law 'valid' - Supreme Court

Critics say that schools run by both federal and state governments are poorly run

A law that makes education a fundamental right and reserves 25% of school seats for poor children is valid, India's Supreme Court has said.

The court ruling follows petitions by some private schools that complained the law violated their autonomy and was a drain on resources.

India's minister for human resource development, Kapil Sibal, has expressed his "happiness" over the court order.

Millions of children aged six-14 do not attend school in India.

Under the law, every child between those ages can demand free, primary school education.

The court, however, said that the law will not apply to schools run by minority groups that receive no government funds.

Some private schools had petitioned the court, saying that reserving one-quarter of their places for poor children will exhaust their resources.

Groups such as the Society of Unaided Private Schools and the Independent Schools Federation of India say that the Right to Education Act violates

their autonomy. But the Supreme Court verdict has overruled this complaint.

Speaking to NDTV, Kapil Sibal said that all "controversies have been put to rest" and "our vision of education can now move forward".

Education-made man

Critics complain that schools run by both federal and state governments are poorly run and badly managed, although several government schemes are running to attract more children to schools.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said enough funds would be made available to ensure that children had access to education.

He said the government was committed "to ensuring that all children irrespective of gender and social category have access to education".

Recalling his own childhood, Mr Singh, a qualified economist, said: "I read under the dim light of a kerosene lamp. I am what I am totally because of education."

"So I want that the light of education should reach to all," he added.

Source: April 12, 2012/[BBC](#)

'RTE Act violates right conferred on unaided minority schools'

Reservation will change their character, says Supreme Court

The Supreme Court on Thursday held that the Right to Education Act would not apply to unaided minority schools.

The majority judgment by Chief Justice S.H. Kapadia and Justice Swatanter Kumar said: "Reservation of 25 per cent in such unaided minority schools will result in changing the character of the schools if the right to establish and administer such schools flows from the right to conserve the language, script or culture, which right is conferred on such unaided minority schools. Thus, the 2009 Act including Section 12(1) (c) violates the right conferred on such unaided minority schools under Article 30(1)."

While upholding the Act in respect of others, the Bench said: "The Act has been enacted keeping in mind the crucial role of Universal Elementary Education for strengthening the social fabric of democracy through provision of equal opportunities to all. There is a power in the 2009 Act coupled with the duty of the state to ensure that only such government funded schools, which fulfil the norms and standards, are allowed to continue with the

object of providing free and compulsory education to the children in the neighbourhood school."

Dissenting judgment

Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan in his dissenting judgment said: "Article 21A, as such, does not cast any obligation on the private unaided educational institutions to provide free and compulsory education to children of the age 6 to 14 years. Article 21A casts a constitutional obligation on the state to provide free and compulsory education to children of the age 6 to 14 years."

He said though the purpose and object of the Act was laudable, "that is, social inclusiveness in the field of elementary education, the means adopted to achieve that objective is faulty and constitutionally impermissible. The law is well settled that the state cannot travel beyond the contours of Clauses (2) to (6) of Article 19 of the Constitution in curbing the fundamental rights guaranteed by Clause (1), since the Article guarantees an absolute and unconditional right, subject only to reasonable restrictions. Article 21A requires non-state actors to achieve the socio-economic rights of children in the sense that they shall not destroy or impair those rights and also owe a duty of care."

The judge said: "The state, however, cannot free itself from obligations under Article 21A by offloading or outsourcing its obligation to private state actors like unaided private educational institutions or to coerce them to act on the State's dictates. Private educational institutions have to empower the children, through developing their skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence and to respect their constitutional rights. Children who opt to join an unaided private educational institution cannot claim that right as against the unaided private educational institution, since they have no constitutional obligation to provide free and compulsory education under Article 21A. Needless to say that if children are voluntarily admitted in a private unaided educational institution, they can claim their right against the State, so also the institution."

Source: April 13, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

India's elite private schools ordered to reserve quarter of places for poor

India's elite private schools have been ordered to reserve a quarter of their places for poor children.

The order was made by the country's Supreme Court after some resistance to the government's Right to Education bill 2009 which made primary education compulsory for all children more than 60 years after the country became independent.

The lack of compulsory education and the priority given by the government to higher education institutes has been blamed for high levels of illiteracy in the country.

More than one in three Indians and half of Indian women are illiterate, which campaigners say reflects the fact that half of India's children do not go to school. Of those who do, half drop out before the age of 11 from schools where absenteeism among teachers is rife.

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill will create a three year school building programme and end the powers of government officials to award places to favoured families.

Campaigners say the proof of the government's commitment will be in its funding for new schools and training for thousands of new teachers in a sector where many expect to be paid without turning up to teach. Officials will also have to persuade millions of parents that their families will be wealthier in the long run if they send their children to school rather than work.

But the impact of the bill will be felt most keenly by India's elite private schools, many established in the 19th century and modelled on Britain's public school system where some of the country's wealthiest children will for the first time be taught alongside those of some of the country's poorest families.

Several private schools mounted a legal challenge to the bill, but their objections were overruled by India's Supreme Court in a move which heralds a caste and class revolution in some of the Indian establishment's most cherished institutions.

Although traditional boarding schools in the Himalayan foothills and hill stations in the south – which charge around 3,000 pounds per year – are exempted, those with day pupils will have to open up places to the poor – some of whom survive on 34 pence per day.

These include some of the country's old colonial schools, like Bangalore's Bishop Cotton's, which have educated some of India's leading public figures since independence. Nandan Nilekani, the founder of India's leading information technology company Infosys is an old boy, as was Lord Colin Cowdrey, the legendary England cricket captain.

The court's ruling was welcomed by India's education minister Kapil Sibal, who said "we must remember that education must be child-centric and not institution-centric."

Although the bill has aroused resentment in many of India's leading private schools, Ameeta Mulla

Wattal, principal of Springdales, one of New Delhi's leading private schools, said she welcomed the ruling.

"After 64 years of wait, India can dream of educating its children. But the government has to do a lot of hand-holding to private schools to make RTE a success. Children have to be given equal opportunity to quality education," she said.

But she warned the government will have to ensure it funds the changes and help recruit new teachers.

The support poor children receive must include help with books, uniforms, and computers, she said, to stop 'ghettoisation'

"It will be a challenge for us to erase the divide between have and have-nots in a class room," she said.

Source: April 13, 2012/[The Telegraph](http://www.thetelegraph.com)

RTE Act: Lack of clarity, not an excuse anymore

"We need more clarity" – this has been the prevalent refrain among many private schools in Chennai for the last couple of months in regard to implementing the Right to Education (RTE) Act. With the Supreme Court upholding the constitutional validity of the Act and the Tamil Nadu State Government taking steps for its implementation, private schools cannot use lack of clarity as an excuse anymore.

While the Act envisages a series of reforms in school education, the clause on reserving 25 per cent of seats at the entry level for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups has remained in focus.

Private schools have been using different strategies to escape from this clause. Some school heads said they were not sure how the government would reimburse the costs. A few private schools in Chennai sent out letters to parents, seeking to mobilise them against its implementation.

In fact, some schools went to the extent of telling parents: "Your child's quality of education will suffer seriously as the teachers will have a very difficult time managing and educating a few children who are not qualified for the particular class, or who are very difficult to manage." Certain other schools claimed they were already enrolling children from economically weaker sections. However, such attempts have been rendered futile by the Supreme Court's verdict on Thursday. Now, what next?

The School Education Department has chalked out a detailed plan of action. A total of 12 Government Orders have been issued and the Directorate of

Teacher Education Research and Training (DTERT) is the nodal agency for its implementation. Training programmes are being held to educate school heads. After quite a delay, the government has moved the files to constitute the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR).

It is now mandatory for all private unaided schools to admit 25 per cent of children at entry level from weaker/disadvantaged sections residing within one-km radius. If a school does not receive any application, it has to put up details of the number of vacant seats available for such students on its notice board. While some processes for the Act's implementation have been outlined (see graphic), the state government rules vis-à-vis the same clause in the parent Act point to certain areas of concern.

As per Tamil Nadu's rules for implementing the Act, any child whose parent or guardian's annual income is less than Rs. 2 lakh can be admitted under 'weaker section'. The 'disadvantaged group' comprises students belonging to SC, ST, BC, MBC categories, in addition to children with HIV, children with disability, children of scavengers or transgender community. While the RTE Act talks of 'children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood', Tamil Nadu's rules say 'weaker section/disadvantaged group'. It would suffice if private schools admitted students from either of the categories, implying that students who may need it the most may not actually benefit, unless schools take it up as a social responsibility.

According to the Act, every school will have a School Management Committee (SMC), with a PTA representative chairing it and parents, teachers, head, local body member, educationist/philanthropist/activist and an SHG representative as other members. The SMC will monitor several aspects, including teachers' attendance, students' learning abilities and prepare a comprehensive school development plan.

Additionally, the DTERT help desk and the SCPCR will also monitor the implementation, receive complaints and, perhaps, address them.

With the Act having been rolled out, rules framed and roles defined, it is now in the hands of schools and parents to do their part, not just in terms of adhering to this clause alone, but also in ensuring that institutions make significant advancement in infrastructure and quality. However, given the current inadequacies in many government and private schools, only a larger commitment from all sections, including the state government, private

schools and parents, can help translate what the Act envisages into reality.

Source: April 13, 2012/[The Hindu](#)

What They Said: Supreme Court Upholds Right to Education Act

Under a top court ruling upholding the Right to Education Act, both private and public schools would have to give one-quarter of their places to low-income children.

India's top court Thursday upheld the Right to Education Act, which makes education free and compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 14, and requires schools, including private ones that don't receive any public funding, to set aside places for children from low-income families.

The law requires schools, both public and private, to give one quarter of their places to low-income children. Two judges of the three-bench panel hearing a challenge by more than 30 petitioners ruled that the law didn't violate the constitutional rights of those running private schools. The third judge was in favor of the petitioners.

The bench did make an exemption for private "minority" institutions, like those run by religious groups, saying that the act "infringes on the fundamental freedom" of such schools.

Indian media had different takes on the ruling. Here's a roundup of what some had to say:

In a Friday editorial, The Hindu argued that private schools shouldn't view the court's decision as a "loss of prestige." Instead, they should see it as an opportunity to open their doors to students of all social strata, helping them to integrate with others.

"The letter of the law is a far-going reform measure and has the potential to create a generation of Indians who are equipped to participate in nation building."

The editorial said the Supreme Court decision would speed up reforms. It added that government and municipal schools lack infrastructure, while more affluent private schools can rely on advanced teaching methods. This is where RTE would come in. "The RTE rules have provisions to bridge this asymmetry," the editorial says.

"It will take relentless efforts to turn the legislation... into a revolutionary movement," it adds.

The immediate challenge, it noted, lies in the recruitment of teachers, a problem that plagues the Indian education system, with an estimated shortfall of one million teachers.

Continued economic growth should help in allocating the approximately \$88.2 billion that the Planning Commission thinks is needed for the implementation of the Right to Education Act over the next five years, the editorial added.

The Indian Express, in an editorial headlined "Learning Curve," said that apart from justice and greater inclusivity, the court's decision would lead to something greater: "A classroom where children from diverse backgrounds learn together is likely to produce a clearer idea of the world than one where the narrow assumptions of home and school reinforce each other."

It says private schools have proved to be more efficient than government schools and are therefore a preferred choice for parents. "Consigning poorer children to a less driven system is unfair, given that educational inequality leads to income inequality later."

The editorial says the judgment is a "strong statement of equity" but affects only a "section of elite schools." This, it says, is an opportunity for government schools to pull their socks up.

"Just as private schools are brought in to share a larger common commitment, government schools should also invite ideas and operational help from the private sector and NGOs."

Firstpost's R. Jagannathan disagrees with the exclusion of private minority institutions and writes that, given the scale of illiteracy and educational disparity, everyone (from state schools, private institutions, aided or unaided schools) should consider the Right to Education Act "as a national mission till we achieve universal literacy."

"There is no scope for minorityism in the business of universalization of education," he says, adding that the "minority institutions should not be given a pass on national priorities – even while they are allowed to maintain their minority characters."

He adds that the idea of inclusiveness calls for better quality teachers who are sensitive to the needs of poor children. But the right infrastructure needs to be in place, he says. "For example, it is fine to talk of child-centric education and 30:1 child-teacher ratios, but the infrastructure for this simply does not exist. We don't have either the classrooms or the teachers for even existing students, leave alone the poor who will now be joining the class."

Source: April 14, 2012/[The Wall Street Journal](#)

A class revolution: India's private schools open to poor

India's elite private schools have been ordered to reserve a quarter of their places for poor children.

The order was made by the country's Supreme Court after schools challenged the government's right to education bill which made primary education compulsory.

More than one in three Indians and half of Indian women are illiterate, which campaigners say reflects the fact that half of India's children do not go to school. Of those who do, half drop out before the age of 11 from schools where absenteeism among teachers is rife.

The legislation will create a three year school-building programme and end the powers of government officials to award places to favoured families.

Thousands of new teachers will have to be trained in a sector where many expect to be paid without turning up. Officials will also have to persuade parents that their families will be wealthier if they send their children to school rather than work.

The impact of the bill will be felt most keenly by private schools, many of which are modelled on Britain's public school system. For the first time, some of the country's wealthiest children will be taught alongside some of the poorest.

Some schools challenged the legislation, but were overruled by the Supreme Court in a move which heralds a caste and class revolution in the Indian establishment's most cherished institutions.

While traditional boarding schools in the Himalayan foothills and hill stations in the south - which charge around pounds 3,000 per year - are exempted, those with day pupils will have to open up to the poor, some of whom live on 34p per day. These include colonial schools such as Bangalore's Bishop Cotton's, which have educated some of India's leading public figures. Kapil Sibal, the education minister, welcomed the court's ruling. Ameeta Mulla Wattal, principal of Springdales, one of New Delhi's leading private schools, also welcomed the ruling.

"After 64 years of wait, India can dream of educating its children," she said.

But she warned that the government will have to fund the changes and help recruit new teachers. Poor children need help with books, uniforms, and computers, she said, to stop "ghettoisation"

Source: April 14, 2012/[DNA India](#)

Miles to go on the RTE roadmap

The judgment last week by the Supreme Court, making it mandatory for the government, local authorities and private schools to reserve 25% of

their seats for the economically weaker sections, is one more step in making the right to education a reality for Indian children. The road, however, is long and the journey arduous, as there are still millions who face barriers in accessing education.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) was enacted in 2009 to ensure that all children of India between 6-14, regardless of their economic status, caste, class or gender, would be given an elementary education by right and by law. In addition, the Act made some time-bound commitments, to ensure schools achieve certain minimum standards of quality, many of them culminating on April 1, 2013.

April 1, 2012, marked two years since the notification of this historic Act. The National RTE Forum, which is a coalition of over 10,000 NGOs and organizations working on RTE, held a convention last week to take stock of the progress. While all states, with the exception of Karnataka and Goa, have notified the Act, movement on several vital fronts has been slow.

Millions of children- the most marginalized and the most disadvantaged such as child labourers, street and migrant children, those in conflict-affected areas and the disabled - are still out of school. According to an estimate, there are 28 million child labourers in India. Since these kids are working, they are clearly not in the classrooms. Considering the widespread nature of conflict in 180 districts across the country, the number of children affected by wars could be in the millions. The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) estimates that 40,000 children in seven districts of Chhattisgarh alone are out of school. The numbers of children out of school on account of conflict could run into several hundred thousand. Delhi alone has 51,000 street children - most of them denied their right to education.

Although RTE still has some significant gaps, for instance neglecting the age group 3-6, it nevertheless has many strong points. If implemented in its true spirit of ensuring a neighbourhood school of an acceptable standard of quality, it would go a long way in ensuring that all children get equal opportunity in education. However, what we find in India today, unfortunately, is an education system that promotes inequality, with excellent schools for the rich, and bad schools for the poor. Even within government schools, there is a multi-tiered system with Kendriya Vidyalayas at the top end and MCD schools at the bottom. Many states don't have grievance redressal mechanisms, and even where they exist, the rate of disposal of complaints is not

very high. According to an answer provided to a Lok Sabha question recently, of the 2,215 complaints that the NCPCR received until November last year, only 110 were disposed of.

The financing of RTE remains a big issue. Finance minister Pranab Mukherjee put aside only Rs 25,555 crore for 2012-13 for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which falls way short of the recommended financial requirement of Rs 1.82 lakh crore. The single largest area of spending tends to be on teacher salaries, followed by infrastructure. This doesn't, however, ensure quality of teachers or proper infrastructure.

RTE mandates a 30:1 pupil teacher ratio - i.e. classes should have no more than 30 children, and that there should be one teacher for every 30 children. However, ASER 2011 data shows that about 60% of all primary schools fail to meet this critical criterion. In states like Assam, Kerala and Manipur, despite the sanctioning of teacher posts, no teachers have been hired, according to an answer provided to a LS question in November last year.

In Bihar, although there has been an increase in teacher recruitment, the pupil-teacher ratio norm is routinely ignored, with many primary schools having as many as 80 children in a class. These teachers tend to be untrained as well. Bihar and UP lead the charge with over one lakh untrained teachers.

The RTE Act promises a neighbourhood school for each child which provides quality education. This also implies making available good educational support and an environment in which children do not experience discrimination. In essence, the concept should mean that all children in a neighbourhood - no matter whether their fathers are doctors, cleaners or farmers - should go to the same school, and that all schools should have trained teachers, classrooms, toilets, books and learning materials for all. Only then would all of India's children have an equal opportunity to quality education. The RTE has infused new hope into them. Let us not fail them.

Source: April 15, 2012/[Times of India](http://timesofindia.com)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Developments in IT benefitting education sector

In the absence of a responsive state-managed education system and despite a relatively rigid regulatory environment, private education in India is thriving since it addresses the aspirations of

middle-class Indians and offers services that resonate with them.

The education sector faces many problems. These include low enrolments across the education ecosystem, shortage of schools and colleges, outdated curriculum and teaching methodologies, shortage of trained teachers, a restrictive and non-transparent regulatory regime, low technology penetration and, above all, a pre-condition that mandates that all educational institutions be run on 'not-for-profit' basis.

India has among the highest per capita spend on education and this trend is growing. The potential of the education market can be gauged from the fact that India has over 550 million people below the age of 25 years. According to census figures, over 32 per cent of India's population is between the age group 0-14 years.

This means that the number of people in India needing primary and secondary education alone exceeds the entire population of the US! Since these students will be seeking higher education in India over the next decade, it clearly illustrates the sheer size of the market and the urgent need to increase capacity and usher in quality standards.

India's education sector is currently estimated at \$40 billion with a potential 16 per cent CAGR over the next five years. This spans the kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) segment (\$20 billion), private professional colleges (\$7 billion) and tutoring (\$5 billion), vocational training (\$1.4 billion), test preparation (\$1.7 billion), and preschools (\$1 billion). New segments like e-learning and V-SAT training will also share the pie as it expands.

Information technology is now radically altering the world, impacting the way we live and particularly, learn and educate ourselves. Today, the learning environment has metamorphosed to what we call a 'smart-class', where computers and content, teacher and the taught integrate in a stimulating environment that not only challenges all knowledge delivery mechanisms of a decade ago but dramatically improves the outcome of education.

IT-enabled education has also led to tectonic shifts in the overall quality of educational content and its delivery. Digitization of content has allowed for instantaneous upgrading of content, quicker verification of data, comparative notes, references popping on the screens within nanoseconds, evaluations of answers by teachers in real time, instant feedback from mentors, and a transparent and verifiable means of calibrating students progress.

All this is impacting academic performance of students tremendously. It has also made teaching a more exact science, removed the drudgery of old-style teaching and converted it into a far more satisfying experience for teachers.

The overarching and parabolic impact of all this has been the democratization of education. Education can now come to where the student is. A teacher can teach likewise. The cost of such instruction has reduced dramatically and bulky expensive hard copies of books have literally been done away with. The entire world library, news or information on current affairs is now just a click away.

Overall, the new trends in education delivery in the last two decades have been transformational. Going forward, if policies are designed sensibly, there is every reason to believe that we can meet the targets of this exponential market in a manner that puts the Indian student on par with the best in the world.

Source: April 01, 2012/[Express Buzz](#)

The higher education myth

Latest study: India's enrolment ratio is still well below global average

The enduring myth about India's superior higher educational institutions was tested recently, with a report assessing the country's labour force and its preparedness. The report, released by staffing company TeamLease, found that India is failing to properly educate its workforce, especially beyond the high school level. According to the report, India's gross enrolment ratio (GER) — the number of students enrolled versus the number of eligible students — for higher education was a mere 13.2 per cent in 2003; it is now projected to rise to 15.7 per cent, still substantially lower than the global average, marking slow progress in the government's goal of attaining a GER of 30 per cent by 2030. India is a laggard compared even to other developing countries, whose GER averages 36 per cent. And there are as many as 374 districts where the GER is even lower than the fairly abysmal national average.

Not only is the Indian state failing to get its youth into higher educational institutions, the college graduates it does produce are by and large ill-prepared to enter an increasingly globally integrated labour market. They lack the skills to get the jobs they trained for and are not considered employable. Study after study, such as the McKinsey-NASSCOM one in 2005, quotes employers stating their dissatisfaction with the quality of graduates. There are jobs — in the IT sector, for instance — but not enough qualified engineers to fill them. According to

the TeamLease report, well over half — 58 per cent, in fact — of young Indians suffer from some degree of skill-deprivation.

The challenge for the state is threefold: first, it must get eligible students into college or provide them with some form of higher education training; second, it must improve the quality of instruction available at such institutes; and third, it has to do this in a way that is cost-effective. Although the 2012 budget increased education spending by 18 per cent, the dismal state of India's public finances will hobble any effort to seriously address the higher education deficit on both quality and quantity.

Expanding access to such institutions must be a priority if India is to reap any kind of demographic dividend from its young labour force. More than half the country's population is under 25, and a third are less than 15 years old. The drive towards the universalisation of primary education via the Right to Education Act and a push for the expansion of secondary school education (with the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, for which the World Bank recently lent India an interest-free \$500 million) means that more and more of these young people will be eligible for — and aspiring towards — at least some college-level instruction.

Certainly, the number of universities and colleges has increased since liberalisation. A fast-growing economy needs skilled labour, and this demand was matched by people's changing aspirations, leading to a sharp growth in the number of public and private higher education institutes in the country. In 1991, India had 184 universities and 5,748 colleges; by 2011, this number had increased to 537 universities and 25,951 colleges. A lot of this growth has been driven by private colleges (many affiliated to state universities). But, as a FICCI and Ernst and Young report found last year, most higher education institutions, public or private, had poor physical infrastructure, suffered from faculty shortages and had outdated curricula, with little power or incentive to update them.

The UGC, the principal higher education regulator, released a list of 21 fake universities earlier this year, some of which are just hole-in-the-wall offices. AICTE, which regulates technical institutions, identified 340 private institutes that are not accredited — indeed, only about 4,500 of all of India's universities and colleges are accredited. The proposal to unify different regulators under a single body, the National Commission for Higher Education and Research, fails to address the reasons for the structural weakness of current regulators.

Even if one sets aside the quality of instruction, only about 8 per cent of the labour force are university graduates; the rest enter the competitive global economy at a serious disadvantage.

Clearly, the government has to work towards both expanding access and ensuring a modicum of quality, and there are at least nine pieces of legislation in the pipeline to help improve the supply of quality universities and colleges for a whole generation of young Indians. But whether these bills will be enough to successfully reform the country's broken higher education sector is another matter, especially given the limited availability of quality faculty.

It is easy to be hoodwinked into believing that there is nothing broken in the Indian higher education system — there are, after all, plenty of success stories of people graduating from IITs and IIMs and then going on to receive dream job offers. But those institutes service a tiny fraction of our population, and even they do not perform well in global university rankings. If the government is not careful, our hypothetical demographic dividend is going to turn into a very real demographic disaster, with plenty of young people with paper credentials but no skills and no jobs.

Source: April 02, 2012/[Indian Express](#)

At Home in the World

Jonathan Long, new principal of Woodstock School, Mussoorie, talks to Aaditi Isaac on the emergence of international school education in India

Q- Woodstock School (founded in 1854) is the first international school in India. How receptive has India become to providing international education?

An increasing number of students have joined international schools in India in recent years, as parents see the benefits of an international school education. However, there are many different "types" of international schools. Some international schools serve a largely expatriate community and focus on teaching a set national curriculum that provides access to tertiary education back in a particular home country. Other international schools have far more diverse student populations and offer opportunities for young people to graduate into a worldwide educational environment.

Woodstock has responded to the need for an international education that offers far more than a traditional academic curriculum. Our holistic approach to learning is an opportunity to specifically develop cross-cultural understanding, a global outlook, and an ability to build quality relationships with people from different backgrounds and creeds. Woodstock may have been India's first international

school but its understanding of internationalism has moved well beyond the confines of strap-line, curriculum or aspiration.

Q- The model of international schools has become quite common in India. What is your view?

Several international schools have sprung up across India in recent years, but one would question just how genuinely international some of these new schools are in character. By this, I mean do they have an international student and staff body, is their curriculum global and internationally-accredited, do their students go on to study at international institutions, and is their governance international in its make-up? Currently about 80% of our students go on to study at international universities, and we make sure we consistently fulfil these criteria to maintain the international character of the school.

At Woodstock, we value the term global over the term international. Our aim is to prepare young people for tomorrow's world, not yesterday's.

Q- What is the profile of the school - faculty and students?

Currently, about 40% of our students are Indian nationals, and the other 60% are from other countries around the world ranging from the US to the UK, Germany to Japan, and [Afghanistan](#) to Australia. Our students represent about 30 different countries across the globe, and staff about 20 different nationalities.

Q- Can you elaborate on the different boards/examination systems followed by the school?

We offer an international curriculum including the Advanced Placement (AP) and IGCSE, as well as the Indian mark-sheet and the US High School Diploma. This means our students have access to higher educational institutions around the world and in India.

Q- Since the school follows many examination systems, how do students fit in to the Indian higher education system, if they do not go abroad?

For students intending to attend university in India, the school offers the Indian mark-sheet, which is accepted as equivalent to 10 + 2 by the Association of Indian Universities, the Indian Institutes of Technology, and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations.

Source: April 02, 2012/[Times of Indian](#)

Sam Pitroda urges youth to be 'change-agents;' calls for liberalised education

Advisor to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Public Information, Infrastructure and Innovations,

Sam Pitroda, has said youth need to become agents of change to facilitate holistic development across the country.

Pitroda made these comments on the sidelines of a convocation ceremony organised by Chandragupt Institute of Management Patna (CIMP) here.

Highlighting the plethora of problems in Indian cities, Pitroda exhorted the country's youth to actively participate and provide their skills in the development and interests of the nation.

"My message to young people is, you have to be change-agents. You have to rebel at times. If you also think like your parents, you are finished. We do not have enough change agents in this system. We need change agents everywhere. We need change agents to clean our garbage, we need change agents to improve our traffic, we need change-agents to provide more energy, improve education, you name it," Pitroda said.

Pitroda further underscored the need to liberalise India's languishing education sector.

"We need to really do what we did to the economy. We liberalised economy, and we need to liberalise education," Pitroda said.

Reflecting on the raging issue of corruption, Pitroda maintained that change in the system was only possible if every individual acted with a conscience.

"Everybody agrees that corruption is a challenge. But by campaigning, you are not going to solve the problem. You can only solve the problem, if enough of us say, I am not corrupt," said Pitroda.

Source: April 02, 2012/ANI/[NewstrackIndia](#)

Education is a collaborative exercise: Sibal

Education is a collaborative exercise said, the Minister of HRD, Shri Kapil Sibal in the Higher Education Conclave organized by Indian Chamber of Commerce on Monday 2nd April 2012.

It is not the responsibility of the Central and the State Government to implement quality education in the country. Neither the industry will take the responsibility of a value-based education. Education sector has to be looked upon holistically. It has to be aligned with Nation-building.

Moreover Sibal said about demographic dividend which is getting reduced due to the lack of quality education in the country. Sibal told that MHRD had introduced 14 legislations in the Parliament which are all pending for approval. According to him, the political system of India is paralyzing the growth of India in the educational arena. He said, " We are not working collaboratively for the betterment of education sector of the country. Every time we are

putting the responsibility on the shoulders of the Government but it is neither the responsibility of the government nor the industry. It is the responsibility of every citizen, teachers and educational institutes in the country."

He also said that Education is the national mission to empower the youth and to do that we have to give access to knowledge for the youth of the country. Also he stressed upon the need to be flexible for educational institutes in designing curriculum so that every child has the option to choose his or her discipline based upon his or her own interest. "Unfortunately the University system does not provide the same for which there is a gap in the Higher education scenario in India," said Sibal.

Moreover he said that Universities have become mere affiliation bodies rather than emphasizing more on research and development. He also told that administrative level of higher education institutes should focus on collaborative thinking process and academic council should stop focusing on vested interests of few people.

"A major reform is needed in maintaining uniformity on Higher Education as well as in the administrative level of higher educational institutes," said Sibal.

Also he stressed on the National Knowledge Network where 604 universities are connected with each other with 31000 colleges where the intellectual resources of these universities can be shared among the students of various colleges. A Professor of a particular college in this network can teach students of different colleges in different areas on a particular course and by attending the course a student can get credit in University examinations. Apart from this he stressed upon the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework where a student can register from Class 9 in different vocational courses like tourism, hospitality, telecommunication, Infrastructure and many other courses so that he has option to choose his career between academics and skill development.

He also stressed upon NCHER and NAAC bill which would revolutionize the educational sector of India and said that the world would need one-third of its workforce from India by 2030.

Source: April 02, 2012/[India PR wire](#)

Education system needs revision: Kapil Sibal

Speaking at the higher education conclave organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, minister of human resource development, Kapil Sibal stressed ways to improve the existing

academic patterns. "Most of our universities are not forward-looking and follow archaic academic systems and policies because their highest decision making bodies - the academic and executive councils - are run by people with vested interests," he said.

"The statutes and ordinances in most universities have outlived their utility and need revision. However, the academic and executive councils comprise people who are often politically motivated and do not want such changes. Naturally, there's a stalemate!" Sibal said.

He went on to criticize the dichotomy in the policies of universities across the country, causing a severe disparity in levels of learning. "There are forward looking universities that have converted colleges affiliated to them into the semester system, whereas there are many others who take exams at the end of three years. Naturally, there will be a wide gap in the quality of students produced," Sibal stressed.

He criticized affiliating universities that keep taking colleges under their wings, reminding everyone of Calcutta University that has nearly 400 colleges affiliated to it. "Such universities cannot concentrate on academics anymore because they have become centres that set exam question papers and publish results," Sibal said without mincing words.

He went on to elucidate on the plan of a single engineering entrance exam for the entire country. The idea is that not only the IITs and centre-run engineering institutes will take students on the basis of one central exam, but even the state run colleges.

"We do not want to force this on the states. Each state will be consulted before a final call is taken. We will be able to remove the disparity between the different school exam boards by arriving at a formula that is being devised for the purpose by the Indian Statistical Institute," Sibal explained.

Source: April 02, 2012/[Times of India](#)

Customise teaching of English - 'One teacher fits all' does not work; they need training specific to the students' level

ENGLISH language teaching in India is at the crossroads today. Though planners and teachers keep meeting to decide that change is required at all levels, when it comes to changing the curriculum, everyone is happy to maintain the status quo. It is difficult to comment upon the whats and whys of this mindset but the fact is that it refuses to evolve. Every educated person agrees that education in India does not deliver proficiency in English and this is a fact accepted by all.

It is difficult to quantify English learning and use but now the English Proficiency Index (EPI) has been created as a standardised measurement of adult English proficiency (www.ef.com/epi), comparable between countries and over time. It is the first index of its kind to give countries a benchmark against which to measure the average English competence of the working population. The index uses a unique set of test data from over two million adults who took free online English tests over a period of three years. Because this group of test takers is so diverse and the entry barrier to taking an online English test is so low, the resulting scores are reasonably representative of the average English level of adults. While there is no guarantee that this particular proficiency score corresponds to the academic and economic goals set by an individual nation, the Education First (EF) EPI does provide a uniquely standardised comparison of English proficiency. This is useful for citizens and governments alike when trying to evaluate the effectiveness of their English language policies as compared to those of their neighbours.

India ranks at number 30 within a group of 44 countries. There are five categories of English Proficiency: 'Very High', 'High', 'Moderate', 'Low' and 'Very Low'. India is labeled 'Low' in English proficiency along with countries like Italy, Spain, Saudi Arabia and Russia. Norway is ranked number one on this list with the highest score of 69.9, while Kazakhstan is at number 44 with the lowest score of 31.74. India has a score of 47.35. Even within the 13 Asian countries on the EPI list, India is placed at rank eight, after Malaysia, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia and China.

Most stakeholders in education feel that there are several reasons for this low ranking. One, the government schools have failed to live up to the high benchmark set at their conception. There are stray exceptions here and there but by and large, these schools do not provide any kind of methodology, role model or impetus for learning English. Two, the private schools, especially the so-called 'convent' schools, are fast losing the acquisition-rich environment that fosters the learning of English. Even when they manage to deliver fluency, they lose out on accuracy. Three, taken on the whole, across the country, graduation is no guarantee of English-proficient adults. In that regard, even the technical institutes fail to polish up language skills. Four, there is a whole alternate universe that maintains an industry for the person who wants to learn English and most learners depend more upon the institutes in this universe rather than the colleges they attend.

Where most fields of learning recognise specialisation and super-specialisation within their paradigms, in India English and its related experts could never assert the fact that a teacher of English is no longer a 'French Fry' that can fit into any kind of meal combination. Just as a neurologist can't efficiently treat a patient of bronchitis, a teacher who teaches English to postgraduates cannot be very effective in a primary-level classroom. But, apart from the very hegemonistic and elitist distinction between school, college and university teachers, there is no attempt to impart any kind of special training to teachers of English at different levels and geared towards differing purposes. The whole system treats all teachers of English as one huge blob: amorphous and homogenised. Right from designing the 'minimum professional requirement' for a teacher to conducting the interview to the subsequent teacher training (if any), at no level is there any input from any activity directed at profiling the learner or conducting a needs analysis to decide what the learner/course requires. This explains why the most brilliant scholars in the field of English may perform dismally in the classroom as teachers.

Most engineering colleges have one paper called 'Communication Skills in English' as part of their syllabus, but all students need special workshop sessions by outside experts when proficiency in English is required for placement. College graduates study English as a compulsory subject in all three years without learning the use of English in their daily interaction. Most college graduates cannot write a flawless letter in the language or conduct a dialogue with ease in English. But the same student goes to an academy, learns the language for six months and gets a Band 6 (proficient user) in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS.) A school child in a government school cannot respond to simple questions in English but when the same child is taught the language by an NGO, he can answer every question fluently. These are a few sample situations across the board and many more can be witnessed across the country.

So, what is the difference between a regular academic course and a short-term burst of English learning? The difference stares us all in the face but we are scared to accept it. At the deepest level, the difference lies in the subconscious mind of all stakeholders involved in 'education'. Wittingly or unwittingly, a curriculum is designed not around the needs of the learner but around the expertise and reputation of the involved parties. An academic curriculum showcases the organisation without addressing the needs of the learner. Such intensive 'non-academic' classes usually don't have a

prescribed textbook; they are conducted in everyday, colloquial English and use interactive methodology.

Each classroom for teaching English is a different universe with distinctly individual requirements — a primary school teacher needs psychology along with the technique of teaching very young learners, a secondary school teacher should be adept at holding learners' attention along with an understanding of the teen psyche, a college teacher will need to be proficient in both literature and language while being capable of evaluating communicative competence and a postgraduate teacher would be from a specialised field within English studies. The teaching of English is not a homogenised compound but a totally heterogeneous set of sub-systems, each with its unique demands and the Indian student will not become proficient in English until all of us face, accept, understand and act according to this reality.

Source: April 03, 2012/[The Tribune](#)

The week in higher education

The 1994 Group was dealt a blow last month when four member universities - Durham, Exeter, York and Queen Mary, University of London - announced that they were ditching the network of "small but beautiful" universities for the gorgeous, pouting Russell Group. So how are things since the break-up? Not great, to judge by the 1994 Group's statement about the Higher Education Funding Council for England's grants and student number controls for next year. Michael Farthing, the group's chair, lamented the government's decision to allow unlimited recruitment of only students with A-level grades of AAB and above. He said: "There are only so many AAB students to go around, and they are likely to be snapped up by a few self-declared 'elite' institutions, able to rely on historical brand prestige to attract applications." Whoever can he mean?

Sally Hunt, general secretary of the University and College Union, has won the latest stage of her bid to flush out a hard-left group in the union seen by critics as a vehicle for the Socialist Workers Party. On 29 March, the UCU announced that 88.6 per cent of members who voted in a recent consultation had backed Ms Hunt's plan to shrink the national executive committee. A similar proportion, 85.1 per cent, voted to be balloted on offers in disputes "whenever the majority of negotiators believe a final offer is on the table" - which trims the sails of NEC members keen to strike at all costs. The SWP's newspaper, *Socialist Worker*, had said that the moves would "hollow out

democracy". But after months of internal turmoil, the UCU may now have some energy to direct to pay negotiations with the employers.

Deep in the vice-chancellor's bunker at the University of Bedfordshire, Les Ebdon, the new director of fair access, may have stretched a finger towards the red button of his much-famed "nuclear option". Almost all Russell Group universities fell short of targets for admitting more state-school pupils in 2010-11, according to figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Of the 20 large research-intensive universities, only Sheffield and Liverpool hit Hesa's benchmarks. The University of Oxford had the Russell Group's lowest proportion of state-school entrants, 55.2 per cent, while 59 per cent of students entered the University of Cambridge from the maintained sector.

Scholars often ask: "What is higher education for?" But teaching Buddhist monks to spout corporate mumbo-jumbo is rarely offered as an answer. On 2 April, the *Financial Times* reported on Keisuke Matsumoto, a monk at a Tokyo temple who took a break to complete an MBA at the Indian School of Business at Hyderabad. The course had helped him to discover "how to manage a temple as a mission-orientated organisation" and to master the art of thinking "outside-in" rather than "inside-out", he said. Lessons on customer relations management paralleled the Buddha's practice of adapting teaching to a student's ability, he said: "I was struck anew by the Buddha's management capability."

The education secretary has made another play to bring universities and his own department closer together with a call for Russell Group universities to determine A-level content. In a letter to Ofqual, the exams regulator, Michael Gove says he is "particularly keen that universities should be able to determine subject content, and that they should endorse specifications, including details of how the subject should be assessed", the BBC's *Newsnight* reported on 2 April. However, the move appeared to irk non-Russell Group institutions, with Universities UK saying that the "whole sector" should be included.

It seems that plagiarism scandals can topple even presidents. Hungary's Pal Schmitt resigned this week after a doctoral dissertation he wrote 20 years ago was revoked last week, *The Independent* reported - crediting the Associated Press - on 3 April. Budapest's Semmelweis University found that much of his thesis on the modern Olympic Games had been copied from the work of two other authors. Mr Schmitt, who won Olympic gold medals for fencing in 1968 and in

1972, was elected to the largely ceremonial role of president in 2010.

Source: April 05, 2012/[Times Higher Education UK](#)

'Sans humanities, the centre of Indian education doesn't hold'

Homi Bhabha, director of the Mahindra Humanities Centre at Harvard University and renown-ed cultural theorist, has been awarded a Padma Bhushan for his contribution to literature and education. Bhabha spoke with Srijana Mitra Das about flaws in Indian education, why Bollywood's a global hit - and how you need a little more than food to live fully:

You work in a field few Indians know about - what is India losing by treating the humanities so poorly?

There's a deep neglect of the humanities in Indian education today - but we must remember that India's image as a global force is not restricted to its economic performance alone. The arts, literature, design, fashion, architecture, film - all the areas belonging to the sphere of culture have given India prominence beyond the rupee. If the global image of India depends so much on its culture, why does the country not actively further the study of the arts and humanities?

There's a sorry answer to that question. Paradigms of development we have suggest that in a relatively underdeveloped country, you go for technology, financial markets, management. Therefore, there's huge emphasis on these in the educational sphere. But many employers feel people trained just in technical fields don't have a rounded education, they can't represent their corporation as a whole, particularly not on a global level. Only the humanities produce that - being integrative forms of knowledge, the humanities help you pull together the social sciences, the professions, technology and the sciences. They produce a crossroads which allows you to hold different aspects of a society together. Unfortunately, because that has fallen out, the centre of Indian education doesn't hold.

The old universities, Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, where you had integrated education have been left to fail, the emphasis only being on specific institutes looking at just one kind of study - but it's the humanities that allow you to communicate across boundaries.

Speaking of which, how do you see Bollywood's success - internationally?

One of the great things about Bollywood - and I speak here as a Freudian - is that it takes people's fantasies and actually represents these in a movie.

You have somebody taking a long, lonely walk, feeling he wants to be romantically involved with whomever - and suddenly that happens! It was a great awakening that fantasies don't have to be presented only in a covert, subtle, dreamy way - Bollywood's been an inventive instrument of bringing people's fantasies out, giving them a live place in public cinema.

Elsewhere, you've expressed more guarded views on Indian writing and art - do western audiences for these worry you?

No. We have to share and translate our ideas. When something gets spoken of in another language, new things happen - new ideas emerge, people's views meld. It's a complex but rich way of re-tilling the soil of the world...what I'm concerned about is how certain powerful institutions - in publishing, galleries, museums - are continually looking for new markets, new artists, new writers. Institutions fostering culture and innovation should also be rooted in India...If it wants to be perceived as a global player, the state must recognise this as an important part of its future.

The problem is, you're always facing responses like - 'You want us to put money in galleries and museums when people can't have six chapatis a week?' But if you see the amount of money that haemorrhages in this country, you feel with some prudent housekeeping, art and culture could get the support they need. Men do not live by chapatis alone - although chapa-tis are absolutely essential.

Source: April 06, 2012/[Times of India](#)

Funds for higher education inadequate'

The trend of Indian students going to foreign countries in pursuit of higher education should be reversed and there should be a two-way traffic in the field. The country's education infrastructure and the quality should be increased, Principal Secretary of the Higher Education Department Siddaiah said.

Speaking at a one-day workshop on 'Trends in Higher Education: Problems and Prospects' organised at National College in the city on Thursday, Siddaiah stated that a Working Group of the Universities Grants Commission (UGC) had allotted Rs 1.90 lakh crore for a campaign titled 'Sarva Shiksha Uchch Abhiyan' in the 12th Five Year Plan which would focus on Higher Education.

"That is the kind of money needed in order to achieve goals in higher education," he said.

Presenting his views against privatisation of education, he said that a majority of courses offered by private universities were market-driven and "not focused on holistic teaching and only on getting the

students a high pay package. Serious questions can be raised about their commitment to society and the nation.”

Adding that the State’s allotment for higher education was “somewhat inadequate” and that a gradual withdrawal of support to private players is making them focus more on professional courses.

Speaking on the occasion, former Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University N R Shetty stated that just a basic revision of pay scales was not enough to improve the quality of education and that reforms are needed at the national level.

“The National Knowledge Commission, under the chairmanship of Sam Pitroda, had recommend disbanding of the affiliation system. It is a legacy of the colonial system,” he said.

Under the UPA-II government, necessary actions like the abolishment of UGC, AICTE and NAAC, along with the establishment of a National Council of Educational Research, are long pending.

“Fifteen bills are pending for the past three years. There is a paralysis in higher education sector currently and till reforms are brought about, it won’t go away,” he said.

Shetty added that another way of tackling the problem of affiliation is to establish more and more autonomous colleges. Making a case for groundwork research being the basis of policy framing, former Secretary General of the Association of India Universities, Prof K B Pawar said that the present method of having policy reforms through legislation is devoid of grassroots research into the need for policies.

The workshop also contained various paper presentations and other sessions by academicians from around the country.

Source: April 06, 2012/[Express Buzz](#)

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Source: April 07, 2012/[Ibn Live](#)

Importance of humanities & social sciences

We live in a rapidly changing world with unsystematic human behavior. On basis of knowledge of humans past actions and their present situation one cannot predict what they will do next; human minds does not exhibit underlying thoughts unlike computer with monitor which shows us the clear picture of internal processing. The most obvious thing that happens inside societies is that people have new ideas and want to change their

social status accordingly. Rapid technological changes in western societies were stimulated by acceptance of the idea of progress. Europe made progress because it believed in progress and underwent rapid social change because Europeans wanted "change". In this process of social change education, especially technical education played a vital role. They made tremendous technological advancement but simultaneously promoted humanitarian values and law & order enforcement in their societies.

Humanists and social scientists are called upon to supplement and evaluate critically the economic and political framing of globalization through a focus on culture and the imagination. Formal education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills and techniques, good judgment and wisdom. Informal education has as one of its fundamental goals of imparting development from one generation to the next. Hence both types of education has the techniques and instructions to improve the concepts of life and social skills, including decision-making, negative and positive response skills, critical analysis and systematic judgment abilities. Another description of education is the propagation of a set of beliefs. Beliefs are important originator to both attitudes and behavior because our beliefs shape values and values plays very important role in shaping the structure of the society and culture. Culture is a set of expressions, activities, material and spiritual products, symbols and representations that arise from human activity. Education remains vital to occupational achievement, but as more people get more education, the minimum acceptable level of education for this objective is raised. A culture of peace consists of values, attitudes and behaviors. It reflects and inspires social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, human rights, tolerance and solidarity and rejects violence and extremism. All present developed and peaceful societies of the world reveal this purpose predominantly.

Technical progress has not only changed lifestyles of mankind but also the thought and social setup of the people. Technological advancements altered the world in all respects. However the basic beliefs and values produced dramatic changes in the world history. For more than a century, social scientists have confidently predicted the end of religion but religion is present in the hind site of all modern societies of the world and is effecting even the internal and international polices of developed countries. To teach religion and cultural values is need of the day. Education of theologies in positive direction is very important to shape the character

of the students. By implementing this in educational system we can promote the culture of moderation and tolerance according to respective beliefs and values of societies. Teaching of humanities and social sciences as core courses at under-graduate level is essential; however we need to update and modernize the course outlines and teaching techniques according to the prevailing, moderate, tolerant and challenging national and international scenario. Most of the world religions and specially Islam has given the concept of value-based society so it should be the part of our curriculum along with other technical and professional courses at all levels of education. For serving this purpose we need highly trained, moderate, thoughtful and brilliant faculty.

Teaching of humanities and social sciences can promote the culture of peace in addition to psychological effects by addressing the following implications: Humanities and social sciences courses should be teach to promote understanding of moderate and cultured society at all levels of education, through cultural exchanges and youth volunteer work. Volunteer and social work is the compulsory component of humanities education in all developed societies but in our country there is no concept and culture of practical social work in our educational set up at all levels of education. We should create awareness to reducing manufacturing and distribution of arms and ammunitions and should discourage the culture of extremism and militancy. This task can be achieved only by the effective teaching of humanities and social sciences. It is very important to establish the culture of peace generally in the world and particularly within the country. As famous Chinese writer Jing Lin contends in her article that there is a great need for educators to reconceptualize education in the 21st century. She also discussed the danger of global wars, environmental breakdown, moral vacuum and nihilism in societies so we need to update humanities and social sciences courses.

Our educational strategy should be able to develop the ability to articulate participatory proposals for teaching and learning as well as in planning, assessment, decision-making and management, understanding, problem-solving and social sense. And education of humanities should provide opportunities for development of these skills and be linked to social participation, the sciences, the arts, technology, communication skills, creativity, and intelligence for increase in educated, well- informed, skilled and sensible manpower ratio and quality population in the country.

In light of the above we can conclude that education of humanities and social sciences should contribute

to the strengthening of unity, involvement, harmony, honesty, creativity, critical and analytical thinking, and commitment to accept change and establish healthy relations with international community. Globalization has stimulated several new study programs in academia. As knowledge becomes increasingly diversified, we need to find new ways for the production, structure, and promotion of knowledge in the different disciplines of humanities and social sciences. Sharing of information is essential to the development of global movement, as stated in the UNO resolution. The authorities should come to the conclusion that humanities should not only remain a topic, but become a compulsory part of each technical and professional degrees curriculum.

Source: April 07, 2012/[Pak observer](#)

What's taught in school vs what industry needs

They may hire the cream of the crop of graduates in India, but during his visits to some globally competitive companies in India, Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam found that these companies still took pains to set up in-house colleges to retrain these "exceptionally-capable minds".

Mr Tharman said that the chief executives told him they hire people based on entry tests but the graduates do not come with the skills required to "operate in the real world". These companies, therefore, have "put in an intensive structured training programmes to help them adapt", he said.

Mr Tharman was responding to a question on how to tackle the gap between what is taught in schools and industry needs at the inaugural Asia Pacific Pan Indian Institute of Technology dialogue yesterday, Identifying this lack of "practice orientation" as a gap in the Asian education system in general, Mr Tharman, who is Minister of Finance and Manpower, said: "This is true both for institutions at the pinnacle, like the IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology), as well as for institutions that should be providing high quality technical education for the needs of industrialising economies as well as the needs of the modern economy."

The IITs are a group of elite technology and engineering-oriented institutes of higher learning in India. They are represented by more than 200,000 alumni globally under the umbrella Pan IIT organisation, with about 1,000 of them in Singapore alone.

In Singapore, Mr Tharman noted that the education system's "technical orientation" started in the 1970s. About 65 per cent of each school-leaving

cohort now progress through the technical route either via the Institutes of Technical Education or the polytechnics, he said.

"It doesn't matter what they do later in life, but starting off with the applied orientation allows them to maximise the talent and skills they have because most people in any population, their minds work very well when they are working on something practical."

Mr Tharman also touched on the need for greater intellectual and cultural linkages between Singapore and India, noting that the connection - while understandably weaker compared with the relationship between Singapore and China - presents great opportunities for development.

Singapore could help India with urban solutions, like clean water and the environment, he said.

"The challenge in India, in this regard, is to develop urban solutions that provide a standard of living that is acceptable to a broad mass of people and can spur economic growth both in manufacturing and services," he said.

When asked how Singapore IIT Alumni association can contribute, Mr Tharman called on the grouping to create networks between India and East Asia "with Singapore being a gateway of sorts".

This could mean allowing IIT students to visit Singapore universities through deeper collaborations than what is currently available, while providing opportunities for Singapore students to go to India, he said.

Source: April 08, 2012/[Today online](#)

Relevant technology today will leverage our future education

Speaking at forum for higher education this week, NIIT co-founder Vijay Thadani touched upon three biggest issues affecting Education today - access, quality and scale.

Unless these areas are given due cognizance, India may miss the bus on being the largest economy by 2050. The immediate need lies in breaking this glass ceiling using technology.

hadani, in his speech, also referred to power of a vision that can be path breaking exercise. About 30 years ago, some of the key visionaries at NIIT put their heads together and announced that they would like to see one-third of our population technology literate over the next decade. What seemed like a ridiculous thought then has really come true.

He also referred to Prof CK Prahlad's talk on 60th Independence Day of India at New York where he,

rather than glorifying the past 60 years, talked of India@75.

His vision got so popular that almost all industry bodies and Planning Commission of India took note of it. But is technology the solution? Can technology alone respond to the tri-challenge of access, quality and scale? It is worth an exploration.

If the example of how technology has been deployed for accessing safe drinking water is any indicator, then technology is definitely a game changer. Vending machines are being used to dispense water pouches.

These are eco-friendly, therefore responsive to global conditions. The quality of the water and the money being collected in the vending slots is remote controlled by servers. Here technology seems to have responded to all three challenges - access, quality and scalability.

Education however is a different ballgame. The conservative thought or belief says that human interface is necessary for teaching students.

This may be true for primary years, but in secondary and higher education many institutions are using technology remarkably well. The phone today acts as a key to access entry into institution, doubles up as a tool to access resources like libraries and computer laboratories, is a identity card and attendance marking gadget and a tool using which test preparation and assessments can be done.

The tests are posted through the mobile and students respond in objective answers by punching keys or voice commands. Teaching of Languages, be it English or any other can be quite effectively delivered through mobile technology.

The benefits of technology in education are countless. It depends on an administrator to decide to which extent they can leverage it. The fundamental concerns of access, quality and scale have to be scientifically addressed in order to help Indian education leapfrog into next generation of learning.

Source: April 08, 2012/[DNA India](#)

India may ask universities to double intake

To produce larger numbers of qualified job-seekers to feed a growing economy, some Indian universities may have to double their student enrolment in the five years to March 2017, with students per acre of university campus being used as a measure of efficiency.

The University Grants Commission (UGC), which regulates higher education in the country, has said

in a report that a majority of 556 universities don't enroll enough students in spite of their large campuses.

"The 43 central universities, except a few like Delhi University, are functioning with disproportionately low student enrolment compared to the campus area," the report said. "A 100% increase in intake is feasible in 30 of these university campuses."

The regulator has suggested this in a document that seeks to chart the course of university education in India in the 12th Five-Year Plan period that started on 1 April. Mint has reviewed a copy of the report.

Any plan that looks at just increasing numbers is "ridiculous," according to Deepak Pental, a former vice-chancellor of the University of Delhi.

"Authorities should not equate number with quality, though we understand that a service economy needs to get enough human capital to sustain the growth rate," said Pental, who was part of a state-formed committee of vice-chancellors—who are executive chiefs of India's universities—on reforming higher education through increased transparency in their functioning.

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi has a 1,000-acre campus, but only caters to less than 6,000 students, according to its website. The University of Hyderabad has nearly 5,000 students in its 2,000-acre campus, while the North-Eastern Hill University in Shillong, spread across 1,250 acres, has a student strength of around 18,000, according to data available on their websites.

The commission strongly advocates compact campuses. "The concept of large campuses for universities needs a relook to increase their enrolment at least by 100% of the existing number," it said. "Scarcity of land has necessitated a vertical growth rather than horizontal spread."

The plan has a lot of merit and existing universities need to expand and become more comprehensive in their offering of courses, said an official at the human resource development ministry, who declined to be named. UGC is a part of the ministry.

However, increasing the number of students at JNU in a large proportion will "hamper the quality of the institution at a time when India lacks quality universities", a professor at the premier institution said, requesting anonymity. "Any step to dilute brands like JNU could be counterproductive."

Pental, however, said he was in favour of compact universities. "There should be maximum utilization of resources," he said. "Look at the universities in Singapore; they are compact and doing so well."

The commission in its report said that even if 50% of the 317 publicly funded universities increase the

total intake by an average 30%, there will be an increased enrolment of 200,000 students during the 12th Plan.

Similarly, if 20,000 colleges of the total 31,324 are allowed to expand through special funding, it will also increase enrolment significantly.

“Assuming the average strength of a college in India to be 400 from the current data, a modest average increase of 200 students per college will result in an increase of about four million in the 20,000 colleges,” it said.

However, a shortage of trained faculty could be a stumbling block for any such plan. Indian universities face a shortage of teachers in the range of 25-33%, according to official data.

“We need a lot of teachers. Instead of creating capacity for plain BA or BSc, there should be focus on skill-based, industry-worthy courses,” said Pentel. “Currently, students with 45% are doing B.Tech, what will happen to the quality if this continues?”

The commission suggests increasing the number of teachers by appointing overseas faculty and industry experts, and has recommended that they be compensated adequately and not just paid meagre sums as honoraria, which is the current practice.

It is also in favour of increasing faculty development centres from the present 66 to 100 during the Plan period to continuously engage teachers in updating their knowledge base.

Source: April 09, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

100+ Indian B-schools are perusing for International Accreditation

In an interview with MBAUniverse.com, A. Thothathri Raman, Chairman of Standards for Educational Advancement & Accreditation (SEAA) Trust, speaks on different aspects of domestic and International Accreditations.

Indian accreditation systems measure the inputs whereas the international accreditation systems measure the "outcomes" of what a school set out to deliver: A. Thothathri Raman, Chairman, SEAA.

Q: Why is international accreditation important for educational institutions?

A: People need a stamp for everything. We have seen this in the context of products that we use in our daily lives. We are more confident of a product if it is rated high or certified by an independent agency.

For quality assurance, accreditation is very important for institutions in Higher Education

sector also. The Higher Education shapes the future of our society and the country.

Therefore, institutions in education sector also need to have a stamp of an independent agency of international slandered.

This helps an institute to get into an international club of institutions which are accredited by the same agency. The accreditation brings an institute at a common meeting point where it can freely exchange thoughts across the universities or colleges across the world.

It also helps the institution to collaborate with them on various academic initiative and more importantly consult each other on curriculum and effectiveness of their courses.

Q: How do you see Indian Institutions responding to the need of international accreditation?

A: Educational institutions in India were not much aware of the benefits of accreditation till a few year back.

However, as globalization brings global competitiveness and exchange of international quality amongst the leading institutions around the world, Indian Educators have started realizing the importance of getting an international stamp for what they do.

A number of institutes in India are in the process of getting accreditation from international agencies AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA, ACBSP, IACBE and FIBAA.

While most of the B-schools in USA and European countries are double or triple accredited, India is still lagging behind.

Indian Institutions are also realizing this fact that international accreditation is necessary for their strong image and long-term brand building.

In last few years, many Indian Institutions have initiated the process for getting an international accreditation. Some of the institutes that are now accredited by international agencies include ISB, IIMA, IIMB, SPJIMR. To my knowledge, more than 100 institutes in India are aggressively perusing for international accreditation.

Q: Higher Education in India has domestic accreditation agencies like NBA or NAAC. What are the specific benefits of International accreditation?

A: International Accreditation is "independent" and the schools at their liberty voluntarily take up the Accreditation once they consider themselves ready.

International accreditation also brings global networking with other peer schools bringing in new knowledge and culture from different regions of the world.

The other reason is most of accreditation agencies we keep talking about are highly experienced and thoroughly vetted by top official agencies in their countries and are guaranteed for quality.

Most of these also have mentorship system which looks at the school, identifies the gaps and works with the school to rectify these which is not the case with the local accreditation systems.

Lastly, Indian accreditation systems measure the inputs whereas the international accreditation systems measure the "outcomes" of what a school set out to deliver. The entire accreditation process is mission driven you promise and you deliver.

Q: How expensive are the International accreditation?

A: Contrary to a common perception, the international accreditation is not much expensive. It costs around Rs. 40-60 lakh to get accreditation from an international agency.

Q: How do the accreditation agencies work?

A: First of all, an institute needs to become the member of an accreditation agency. The process is followed by mentoring of the institute by the accreditation agency on key factors like curriculum and programme effectiveness to reach to a certain level of academic standard.

Once the institute finds itself fit, it is visited by a Peer Review Team followed by External Board assessment.

Thereafter accreditation is accorded to the institutes. The primary goal of all accrediting bodies is to ensure 'student learning outcome'.

Q: What are the key parameters that are considered while accrediting an institute? Where do the Domestic accreditation parameters differ from International accreditation parameters?

A: The domestic system uses a set of rigid input values like size of the classrooms, number of student admissions, faculty qualifications, student performance measured in terms of their exam scores, placement data and so on.

The international system looks at the student learning outcomes, faculty effectiveness, institutional effectiveness and branding, corporate networking, governance which are measured using what we call as "rubrics" or scales or measurement which differ from school to school.

The outcome of this is a robust account of the quality of the school at any given point of time. The Mentors appointed by the international accreditation work closely with the faculty team to evolve these Rubrics or value measurements.

Q: What are the key areas where Indian business schools need to improve to get accreditation from international agencies?

A: The key areas where Indian institutions need to improve are research, publications, faculty quality, PhD ratios, conference presentations, international teaching, governance, better corporate networking etc.

Source: April 09, 2012/[MBA Universe](#)

Global engineers

From June 2013, finding a job in any part of the world may become simpler for Indian undergraduate students of engineering.

This will be possible when the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) in India, under the aegis of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), becomes a permanent member of the Washington Accord.

The NBA has decided to invite the WA to audit its accreditation system in 2013, which is crucial to become a permanent member.

If India becomes a permanent member of the WA, Indian UG engineering degrees will be on a par with similar degrees provided by countries like the US, UK, Australia, Canada, Singapore, Japan, South Africa, Ireland, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, Korea, Malaysia and Turkey who are already permanent members of the WA.

Elaborating further, Dinesh K Paliwal, member-secretary, NBA, says, The impact of globalisation in the current world scenario has necessitated trans-border migration of technologies, technicians and professionals to various countries at a much rapid pace than ever before.

Therefore, it is imperative to evolve a quality assurance framework to bring the quality of technical and professional education imparted by institutions /universities of international repute to meet the global standards.

The WA is an international agreement among bodies responsible for accrediting engineering degree programmes. Its membership facilitates the mobility of engineering graduates and professionals globally for employment and career advancement.

So, how does it work? Only after NBA accredits a particular programme being taught in a particular institution or university after a thorough inspection (checking whether the course falls into the parameters as required by the WA), the course will be recognised globally easing mobility for Indian engineers, says Paliwal.

According to Paliwal, for example,once NBA becomes permanent signatory of Washington

Accord, if a student after obtaining a degree in any programme that is accredited by the NBA, in future decides to work abroad, s/he will not be required to prove his/her credentials by doing another course and duplicating efforts.

The students degree will be accepted internationally and s/he will be eligible for the global job market.

To acquire full signatory status to the WA,NBA has started work on creating international benchmarking for Indian institutes.

There is still a lot of work that needs to be done on outcome assessment and accreditation before applying for a permanent status.

As of now around 140 institutes have applied for accreditation under the new framework, says Paliwal.

Every member country needs to undergo regular monitoring for five years. India is currently under the status of a provisional member of the Washington Accord.

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

Dropout rate linked to wrong academic choice

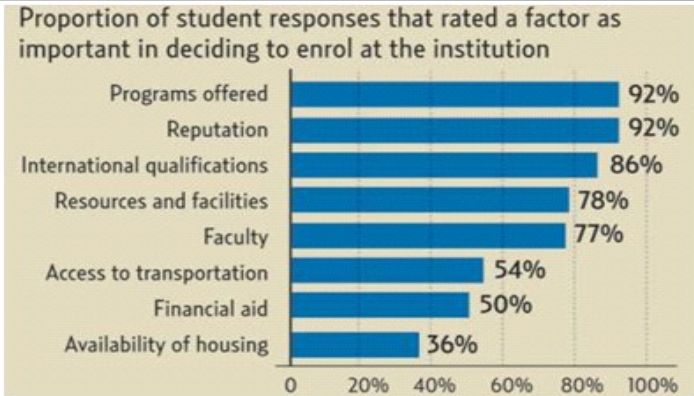
Students told to pick apt course for higher education

Dubai Choosing the wrong academic path without properly researching available options is one of the most common reasons for students dropping out of university or college, education officials have said.

At a forum titled 'Making Higher Education Choices in Dubai' organised by the Dubai School of Government in partnership with the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) yesterday, officials said that the most important decision a secondary school graduate has to make is the choice of a higher education course.

Hence high school students and parents must make well-informed choices by seeking out information using available resources while choosing higher education institutions, taking into consideration the wide range of programmes and career options available, the KHDA recommended.

The authority's recommendations to improve the students' decision-making process were presented at the forum as a policy brief, authored by Fatima Bel Rehif, Head of Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau at KHDA, and Hanan Al Fardan, coordinator at the higher education department at KHDA.



Source: Higher Education Student Satisfaction Survey, 2011

Pressure groups

The paper identifies family, friends and peers, teachers, career counsellors and mentors as the key groups that influence decisions related to higher education institutions in Dubai.

It urges pupils leaving secondary school, particularly Emiratis, to seek advice from multiple sources.

It also calls for the need to encourage awareness within schools of the differing roles of career counsellors and guidance counsellors and the importance of providing access to both.

"Integrate a systematic approach across the school to nurture a broader awareness of career opportunities within society and particularly amongst Emiratis," the paper recommends.

"Another important factor that also needs be taken into account is the entry requirements for a particular course and the likely grades the student will be required to achieve. In making these choices, it is important to be realistic," the paper says.

It called on higher education institutions to more actively engage with employers and the wider community to ensure that programmes offered and graduate skills are relevant to the job market.

Coordination

It also highlights the need for schools and universities to work more effectively with each other, including encouragement of participation in open days, career fairs, university fairs, etc.

It urged the Dubai Government to use its resources to increase awareness about the courses offered, their employment potential and costs besides campuses.

"Over the last 10 years, Dubai has witnessed a significant growth in the number of institutions and the variety of higher education courses offered, especially at free zone-based institutions.

School leavers can now access a wide range of courses and qualifications that are recognised by

the private sector and government organisations," said Dr Abdullah Al Karam, director-general of KHDA.

"Our research and policy brief identifies the main factors affecting student choice. It additionally highlights the importance of providing accurate information and counselling to students and their families to help them make the right decision," he added.

The paper points out that private universities have seen a considerable increase in their Emirati enrolment in recent years, despite the fact that enrolment in federal institutions is free for them. The wide number of programme offered here tend to be concentrated within a few fields, mainly in business, law, religion, IT and engineering, while there are fewer opportunities to specialise in natural and physical sciences, mathematics, education, agriculture, transport and health care.

Statistics: Variety of programmes

Dubai's higher education landscape boasts 52 institutions offering a variety of programmes. These institutions include federal institutions, branch campuses of international universities which are located in the free zones and private UAE universities.

Federal institutions cater mainly to Emiratis, while the others cater mainly to the expatriate population.

Nearly 43,000 students enrolled last year in Dubai campuses. In all, there were 281 bachelor's programmes on offer with a further 151 programmes also available for post-graduate study. Bachelor's programmes accounted for 69 per cent of students.

Post-graduate programmes attracted 19 per cent of students.

The most popular fields of study were Business (40 per cent of students) and Society, Law and Religion (19 per cent of students).

Source: April 09, 2012/[Gulfnews](#)

Indian education's brand image needs to change

Business education in India is often a victim of poor perception outside the country despite the high quality of its students, according to Sharon Bamford, chief executive of the UK-based Association of MBAs, or AMBA, one of the three accrediting bodies globally. Bamford, who was in New Delhi last week, said in an interview that leading Indian business schools need to adopt global rigour, practices and accreditation to improve their image. Edited excerpts:

You are one of the three global accrediting bodies of business education. Where have you marked your presence and what's your status in India?

We were established in 1967 by MBAs for MBAs. Accreditation is part of our portfolio. We are now in 190 schools around the world.

In China, we have 12, in Latin America 29, Moscow alone has eight, France 17. So we have a diverse presence. In India, we now have four schools—MDI (Management Development Institute, in Gurgaon), SP Jain Institute of Management & Research (in Mumbai), and IIM-Lucknow and IIM-Kozhikode (Indian Institutes of Management). Two more are completing their paperwork. We don't allow B-schools to enter the process unless we think they can complete it.

In a growing economy like India how important is accreditation for B-schools?

Accreditation seems important to the (Indian) government. When we work with a B-school, it's not just about the school in India, it's about positioning them globally.

There are a number of reasons for international accreditation for business schools. First is quality itself and benchmarking against global standards. Second, it is important for students—they know it's a quality programme globally benchmarked and audited. We look at the finance of the school, the faculty, their publication, the experience of the students, the learning environment and, of course, the curriculum while evaluating.

More management students from India are in the global marketplace than anywhere else. In India, it could be a fabulous school and well-respected but that branding might not be anything in the global stage. If a student graduates from one of our accredited schools, it means the employer who might not know the school, (will) understand the quality (if it is) in the family of AMBA-accredited schools.

Will this help bring international students to such schools?

Indian schools which have accreditation can attract more foreign students to their classrooms. Many of the top schools have international partnerships anyway. The operating environment is going to be truly international.

I have travelled to the accredited institutes (in India), they look so confident. They take up local issues. IIM-Kozhikode has taken spirituality to develop leadership among students. Reverse innovation will help the business education. Exchange of students are now happening more and more, not just for a week but a semester. The next

thing will be attracting international students for full programmes.

Do you think management education in India is a victim of perception despite the high calibre of the students?

In terms of understanding the Indian education system, I would know that it is outstanding, the calibre of students is of top rate. For many people outside India, who would not know, they don't understand the institutions, the branding and positioning. Once you have an international accreditation, it helps in articulating that through rigour, order and through compliance. That brand image of Indian education needs to change. I have travelled and know the quality, calibre and vibrancy and growth of India. But a European employer, let's say, would not know.

Source: April 10, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

What ails India's b-school education

These days b-schools are getting proactive about gender and educational diversity in their classrooms. What do you think of this?

A large part of the focus of business management education is towards building business leaders of tomorrow. So we need to enhance management education with that vision in mind. Currently, management education is still operating with a 19th century outlook because of the widespread belief that women are not interested in entering the profession. My scepticism arises from the fact that if we take the statistics of undergraduation courses, almost half the batches comprise females. In such a scenario, on what basis can it be said that these women are not aspirational or not ambitious enough to want to become managers? Even the best b-schools of the country are running on average class divisions of 12-15% females in their batches. I feel it is extremely difficult to impart complete managerial values with such a ratio and I have not yet come across any dean or director of top b-schools who has addressed the reasons behind this in a convincing manner.

One of the prime reasons behind this phenomenon is that the b-school selection process is unnecessarily oriented towards mind-bending quant. B-schools today have pre-selected their students through their selection processes. It is extremely difficult for non-engineers and those who are unable to afford expensive CAT coaching classes to manage top percentiles. Through this criterion, b-schools seem to be making the statement that both men and women who come from arts, commerce, economics and other non-

engineering backgrounds are unsuitable to be business leaders. B-schools and students need to understand that this debate is not about not including engineers, but it is about excluding the others. I believe that engineers are extremely insightful and would make good business leaders but we also need to consider others from the talent pool that our country has to offer.

A class that does not have students from various disciplines studying together is going to be one with very limited perspectives. People bring views on the basis of their academic exposure. On the other hand, not having a good male-female ratio also restricts the scope of idea exchanges during classroom sessions and that is even felt when they enter the industry.

'Industry is now being put under the scanner about the limited number of females in their workforce' How much does diversity matter to you as an employer and to what extent?

If we talk about the industry, the major points of concern are how do we bring more diversity into the workforce as well as how do we make workplaces friendlier and more accessible to women. Even though there are a considerable number of females in non-management workforces, the number shrinks as soon as we track managerial jobs in any company.

The main reason behind this is the fact that the supply force for these jobs are the b-schools. If b-schools have female-unfriendly selection criteria, then even if companies try to implement policies that are favourable to women, we will not be able to increase our female workforce by a great degree.

Directors and governing boards of b-schools need to analyse the way in which they can tweak their selection criteria in order to provide more access to women in management classrooms. I would like to question the authorities at various b-schools that despite having every facility at their disposal, why are they unable to change the admission criteria?

The industry is now being put under the scanner about the limited number of females in their workforce. It is not correct to say that all the intelligent people in the world choose to go into the field of engineering. Today, it would be difficult for anybody to point out towards one particular industry and say that they are discriminatory in their recruitment policy. Thus, the onus is on the b-schools to provide the industry with a diverse group that would help the industry grow.

'Diversity-rich group is always more capable of comprehending issues' At the workplace, do you notice any difference between MBA graduates from

diverse classrooms and those from male and engineer-dominated classrooms?

First of all, it is not coincidental that an Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kozhikode, has managed to get a high percentage of female students in its classrooms. Geography plays a major role in this aspect. In addition to the overall favourable gender ratio in the state of Kerala, it is a known fact that women are more comfortable going to the south of the country, especially to Kerala, to pursue their education. This is one of the major reasons why some of the institutes are managing to get a good male-female ratio.

As to the question of difference in the quality of students from a diverse group, as opposed to a non-diverse group, it is extremely difficult to analyse this as of now. Till now, not many institutes offer the kind of diversity for us to recruit them and make such comparisons. However, I can tell you that having worked in both male-dominated and diversity-rich groups, I have found that the latter is always more capable of comprehending issues and being more flexible in looking at options. On the contrary, non-diverse groups have a certain ideology and they are unable to look at options beyond their own limited paradigm.

If a person is quant-oriented and a problem presents itself, this person will only look at the quant-type solutions to the issue. On the other hand, a non-quant person will analytically look at other aspects that would balance the quant part of the problem. In such a situation, the probability that the entire data is comprehended well and diverse decisive steps are made will be extremely high. This is the reason why at ICICI, we value not only gender diversity, but also ethnic, age, education qualification diversity.

Vernacular diversity is something we are trying to include in our organisation as well. There are lots of bright people in the country who despite having studied the English language are necessarily not very good in speaking it. Obviously, such people who come from semi-urban or rural places where English is not the prime medium of education, will not perform very well in group discussions and admission interviews.

I am not saying that English is not required, but only that the language can be learnt. However, they already have the most important qualifications which include intelligence and attitude.

The semi-urban and rural markets are constantly on the rise today. It will be extremely difficult for a person who has never lived in a village to understand the mindset of his or her customers in

these areas. Majority of the organisations do not have representation from people who understand these market sectors. If the diversity structure at the management level were to include a lot more people from the rural and semi-urban markets, we would be able to bring more relevant products that would assist these customers in a much better manner. So we should not get caught at just one level of diversity.

I would also like to question b-school claims that they are unable to increase their batch strength, which is another reason why they are not able to increase diversity in the institutes. I would like to share an example in this matter.

There used to be an extremely popular restaurant in Bangalore. They took pride in their small infrastructure and the fact that there was a long waiting queue outside their premises. Indian business schools are functioning in a similar manner in the sense that they claim that they cannot increase their class sizes in the fear of affecting the quality of students. This is equivalent to saying that we cannot scale up and maintain quality at the same time, which does not make much sense. We know that the highest ranked companies in the world bring both scale and quality.

In Harvard, Michigan or Wharton, there are on an average thousands of students graduating each year. In such a case, for Indian b-schools to say that despite having the infrastructure and teaching capability they are unable to increase their intake is not acceptable. One of the major reasons that I feel b-schools are apprehensive in accepting more students is the fact that their average placement salaries will go down. This will make them less attractive for the next generation.

'Even in places like Harvard, students are instrumental in searching for jobs themselves' What could b-schools do better in order to prepare students for improved adaptation and performance in their professional lives?

The first thing that b-schools need to do is try and shift away focus from the placements. In fact, it has been suggested that b-schools stop acting as placement agencies altogether. Even in places like Harvard, students are instrumental in searching for jobs themselves.

The same strategy needs to be applied by Indian b-schools as well. B-schools should be reverted to being educational centres. Another step would be to bring about a change in the selection criteria of the b-schools, which I have discussed on various platforms earlier. The catch here is to find those b-schools which are ready to do things differently from the standard procedures.

Unfortunately, the top b-schools in the country have not yet shown any aptitude to follow the unchartered path.

'It is not enough to be good with computers only' As an employer, what qualities do you look at in students during the recruitment process?

Speaking on behalf of ICICI, we believe that passion is non-negotiable. However, I clearly specify the difference between passion and an over-enthusiastic passion. Both form a completely different mettle of students.

When we go out, we know how to take the correct measure of people and passion is an important quality that we consider. Another important quality that we consider is the outlook of management students towards problem solving. They need to have the confidence which says that they have a smart mind and an open heart and they will be able to tackle any problems that are thrown their way.

We also like to hire those people who are good at engaging with other people. It is not enough to be good with computers only. You should be willing to work on a computer, but we prefer people who like to spend more time with people than with computers. Finally, we look for people who can balance their ability to work with numbers and also to ideate. We want people who are willing to ideate and not just spend time making spreadsheets.

'B-schools not focussing on developing leadership skills' Which of these qualities are b-schools in general imparting well and which are they not?

As of now, a large number of b-schools in the country are not focussing on developing leadership skills or the business leader perspective. The best and the brightest students are anyway getting into top b-schools of the country. We essentially look at the attitude of the students beyond how they have been moulded by the b-schools. In fact, one of my major worries with respect to b-schools is the fact that majority of them are excessively focussed towards academic excellence. The best example would be that you are a business school and you are still giving a paper-pencil test to measure the development of the person's managerial skills.

B-schools still grade people in a manner similar to undergraduate schools, that is on the basis of a memory reproduction. Today, b-schools are only an extension of undergraduate schools where people are graded for theoretical excellence. They need to create a curriculum and evaluation methodology that would help them create a manager-leader.

'It takes us two years to train the best and the brightest students...' How much does training of

MBA recruits help in making up for these deficiencies?

...even from the top b-schools, to be eligible to be called a manager.

It takes us that much time to make them unlearn some of the things they are taught at the b-schools and learn relevant things. So it is only two years after they graduate from b-schools that people become managers.

In the first year, some of them have problems in accepting the change, but during the second year they understand the relevance of change and adapt to their surroundings in the second year

Source: April 10, 2012/Rediff.com

Have MBA degree? You may still not be employable

During current times wherein B-school education is undergoing a tremendous change in India, over 3,50,000 AICTE (All [India Council for Technical Education](http://www.aicte.gov.in)) approved MBA seats have mushroomed in India alone. While some may perceive it as a positive move, the reality is, the quality of education offered at a major chunk of these institutes has been mediocre, say experts.

So, are Indian MBA graduates truly employable? Prof. Rajiv K Sinha, professor of marketing and Lonnie Ostrom Chair in Business, WP Carrey School of Business, [Arizona State University](http://www.asu.edu) feels that this depends on the school they graduate from.

"There are a few B-schools in India that do an excellent job of preparing their graduates, partly because they attract some of the best students in the country and partly due to the presence of a well-trained faculty. It is estimated that 100,000 students graduate from private institutions annually. Unfortunately, their knowledge and qualifications range from world-class to not-so-good," he explains.

Similarly, Shantanu Dhar, asst executive director HR, Dalmia Bharat Group expresses, "There are some institutions where students come out with a CEO mindset, wanting to be a CEO without really being prepared for the grind. And there are many schools that present students that are unprepared for the real world. For all of the above, corporates invest on an average, a year to groom them accordingly."

According to Sangeeta Pandey, director HR, [Akzo Nobel India](http://www.akzo-nobel.com), "At times, the students are too theoretical in their responses and lack practical acumen, which may hinder their growth in the real corporate world. The quality of students from Tier 3 and 4 campus leaves a lot to be desired as they

need more guidance and knowledge, both at functional and behavioural levels. Also, they don't look at the wider perspective and are at times, constrained by only 'silo-thinking' while making decisions."

In this case, what are the parameters or tools, which corporates can adopt to measure the quality and performance of MBA graduates? According to Prof. Sinha, the most critical thing is to look not only at graduates, but also the quality of the institution they are graduating from.

Pandey further shares, "Besides short-listing prospective candidates based on their profiles, we have a battery of tools including group discussions, psychometric tools, BEIs and specific structured interviews that help us enhance the process of selection. We also look at the cultural fit whilst making the final decision, so that the quality of selection is as per our business needs/model. These tools do help in assessing the quality of an [MBA degree](#)."

The quality of a large chunk of MBA passouts could be doubtful to a certain extent, but with the various ways through which the good B-schools are adapting to the ever-changing corporate scenario, the future certainly sees a light of positive hope. And hopefully, there will be a balance between quality and quantity.

Source: April 11, 2012/[Economic Times](#)

Public-private partnership model holds promise for educating poor

The country is yet to realize the power of public-private partnership (PPP) in education sector, particularly at the school level.

However, the adoption of the model in Rajasthan has demonstrated that much can be done in giving the underprivileged children an opportunity to participate in India's growth story.

Modern education that significantly enhances the employability prospects still remains out of reach for the poor.

But the state's admission of the reality with regard to the quality of education at the government schools and its willingness to adopt PPP model is holding out hope that rural school education can be drastically improved.

The partnership between the government of Rajasthan and Bharti Foundation has moved beyond providing free meals and uniforms.

"We want the children to become the agents of change for the future with a deep sense of commitment to their communities. The aim of providing free quality education is to bring about a

holistic development of these children and inculcating values to turn them into global citizens," said Rakesh Bharti Mittal, co-chairman, Bharti Foundation.

Bharti Foundation has adopted 49 government schools. While the government provides free mid-day meals and books, all other expenses are borne by the foundation.

Under the name Satya Bharti School, the foundation runs 78 schools in the state with 29 of them being its own located in various parts of the state.

The focus of the curriculum in these schools is not confined to the quality education given the fact that state faces challenges in curbing cases of female feticide, improving the ratio of girl child education and discouraging child marriage.

"This PPP initiative with the government of Rajasthan goes beyond providing free quality education. The thrust on bringing girl child within the fold of education has already started paying dividends. Girl students studying in these schools account for 51% of the total enrolment," said Sudipto Chowdhury, CEO, Airtel, Rajasthan circle.

Even the attendance in these government schools has seen a sharp increase. Computer education, games, drawing and other infrastructure facilities have encouraged parents to send their children regularly. Also an eclectic mix of curriculum that involves extra-curricular activities has been able to retain the interest of the children.

"In the last three years, the level of attendance has shot up by 50%," says a teacher of the school.

Currently the schools are operating in primary and mid-elementary segments. But the foundation is in talks with the state government to take over schools at the secondary education segment.

"We are planning to have around eight secondary schools and are in talks with the state government. We are also planning to provide vocational training to the students, enhancing their employability," said Mittal.

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

There's no debate, all the world's a stage for Hindi

Hundreds of students and academicians from some of the top educational institutes in the United States gathered at Yale University last Friday to witness a Hindi debate on 'Uchch Shiksha Deti Kam Aur Leti Zyada' (Higher Education Is Not Worth It). The participants were mostly Americans and non-Indians.

The universities that participated included Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, New York University,

Wesleyan University, Wellesley College, UT Austin, University of California Los Angeles, University of Pennsylvania and University of Texas.

"The fluency of the non-Indian students was amazing. They may not have used very formal, Sankritised Hindi, but their Hindi was quite good," said Seema Khurana, senior lecturer of South Asia Studies at Yale University.

The annual Yale Hindi debate competition began in 2009 with the efforts of Nikhil Sud, an undergraduate student. "That year, just 12 Yale students participated. Today, we have 11 universities of the US participating," said Khurana.

Nicholas Titelbaum of Yale University, one of the winners, who began learning Hindi just a few months ago, spoke against the motion. "Uchch shiksha leti kam aur deti bahut zyada hai," he said, adding that his grandfather once worked in a butcher's shop but later joined the navy and then went to college.

His grandmother, while raising five children, went to college and became a doctor. Thus, his family members went on from being butchers to doctors and engineers within just three generations - all because of higher education.

Other students who spoke for the motion gave the examples of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Dhirubhai Ambani, who - even though they didn't have any higher education degree - were extremely successful in life.

They also mentioned the burden of educational loans and the high rate of unemployment amongst college graduates, stating that higher education cannot guarantee a job.

On being asked whether an Indian university would be invited to take part in the debate, Khurana said: "Interesting question. I haven't had the chance to look into this. But right now, we are trying to see how best to include other places in the United States."

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

'Invest in research, technology for future of IITs'

Increased investment in research, higher monetary assistance and development of technology for industries are the three steps that will ensure a bright future for the Indian Institutes of Technology, says deputy director of IIT-Delhi M. Balakrishnan.

"If the institute has to progress it must focus on improving its quality and quantity of research, should get more investments and develop technology to be used by industries," Balakrishnan

told IANS on the sidelines of the IIT-Delhi Leadership conclave 2012 held here Sunday.

"The number of research scholars is steadily rising and so is the funding but it's technology development that is still in its nascent stage," he added.

According to Balakrishnan, industries in India need to have confidence in the IITs and support them by financially assisting them in developing new technology.

"Instead they go for the cheap option of importing that technology. Industries need to support us," he said.

"We have a great future and promising students as well as young entrepreneurs who have passed from our institute. We need the government as well as private funding and investment," he added.

Commending the government for setting up eight new IITs, Balakrishnan said that it was an indication that the government will fund more in education.

"Although these institutes will take longer time to develop compared to old IITs especially those situated away from metropolises, they will attract good faculty because of the IIT brand," he said.

However, IIT-Delhi Alumni Association president H.R. Vaish was of the view that new institutes could compromise the overall quality of education in the IITs.

"The government should first set up a national college; over the years if it delivers the goods... only then should it be made an IIT," Vaish told IANS.

Vaish claimed that the way the government was treating the IITs led one to believe that "they don't have a great future".

"At present, the future doesn't hold anything great for us. We are working towards improving things though," said Vaish.

According to him, the IITs can't afford to remain complacent with the changing times. The two biggest hurdles in the way are lack of funding and corrupt bureaucracy.

"Even the teachers at such prestigious institutes are not paid adequately. They are grooming the future leaders of this country and what are they getting in return?" he asked.

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

Gujarat innovates a new trail in Right to Education

One major initiative of the Indian government, in the field of education, was the Right to Education Act of 2009. This act has major problems, as has

been argued by numerous observers and experts in the field. This Act focuses on the interests of incumbent public sector education providers, instead of focusing on the interests of children and parents.

It is focused on inputs into the educational process, regardless of the outcomes which are coming out. It penalises private schools that have weaknesses on inputs, regardless of the fact that these schools often induce better learning outcomes when compared with public schools.

At the same time, the translation of the Act into benign or malign outcomes critically hinges on the Rules under the Act, which are notified by state governments. Thus, now that Parliament has chosen to enact the RTE Act, the critical frontier that matters is how state governments choose.

In recent weeks, Gujarat notified its Rules for the implementation of the Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009. It has introduced some of the most innovative ideas for recognition of existing private unaided schools.

The committee in charge of drafting the rules in Gujarat, that was headed by the former Chief Secretary Sudhir Mankad, has broken new ground in understanding the policy issues faced in education in India today.

Instead of focusing only on input requirements specified in the Act like classroom size, playground, and teacher-student ratio, the Gujarat RTE Rules put greater emphasis on learning outcomes of students in the recognition norms. Appendix 1 of the Gujarat Rules is the one which has a path-breaking formulation for recognition of a school: this will be a weighted average of four measures:

Student learning outcomes (absolute levels):
Weight 30 percent.

Using standardised tests, student learning levels focussing on learning (not just rote) will be measured through an independent assessment.

Student learning outcomes (improvement compared to the school's past performance):
Weight 40 percent.

This component is introduced to ensure that schools do not show a better result in (1) simply by not admitting weak students.

The effect of school performance looking good simply because of students coming from well-to-do backgrounds is also automatically addressed by this measure. Only in the first year, this measure will not be available and the weightage should be distributed among the other parameters.

Inputs (including facilities, teacher qualifications):
Weight 15 percent

Student non-academic outcomes (co-curricular and sports, personality and values) and parent feedback: weight 15 percent.

Student outcomes in non-academic areas as well as feedback from a random sample of parents should be used to determine this parameter. Standardised survey tools giving weightage to cultural activities, sports, art should be developed. The parent feedback should cover a random sample of at least 20 parents across classes and be compiled.

This is one of the first times in India's history that public policy has focused on children and parents, instead of focusing on the public sector producers of education services.

Furthermore, the Gujarat RTE Rules have taken a more nuanced and flexible approach in other areas too. For instance, both class size and teacher-student ratio have not been defined in absolute terms, but in relative terms.

The required classroom size is 300 sq feet but in case classrooms are smaller, then instead of rebuilding them, the rules allow for a way to accommodate that with a different teacher-student ratio. The formula is:

Teacher Student ratio = (Area of the classroom in sq feet-60)/8. This approach not only allows smaller classrooms to exist but also gives schools a more efficient way to manage physical infrastructure.

If a private school is unable to meet recognition norms, then the RTE Act de-recognises the school and forces it to close down. This sudden forced closure would create serious problems for the students and parents who would have to find a new school in the neighbourhood.

The Gujarat Rules allow for the state to take over the school, or transfer management to a third party, and create a genuine possibility for the school to continue and meet the norms. This, once again, shows the focus of the Gujarat Rules upon the interests of students and parents.

This approach is significantly better than that of the other states where recognition norms are based solely on input requirements and that are also rigid (like playground, classroom size and teacher-student ratio).

The Gujarat approach recognises the substantial contribution made by budget private schools in urban and semi-urban areas where land and buildings are very expensive. Actually many government schools themselves would not be able to meet the rigid input norms that RTE has mandated.

Source: April 11, 2012/[First Post](#)

How India learnt lessons from data on education

Programmes director of Pratham, a non-government organisation working to provide quality education to the underprivileged children of India, Dr Banerji even finds Lahore more beautiful than Paris.

“Given a choice between Paris and Lahore, I will always want to visit Lahore. We have so much in common and it is so easy to communicate,” she told Dawn in an interview.

She was in Lahore last week for a two-day international conference, Quality-Inequality Quandary – Transacting Learning Relevance and Teacher Education in South Asia. It was her third visit to Pakistan.

Dr Banerji pointed to the heritage which was common to Lahore and Delhi, and added that people in India’s south and Pakistan’s north might not have the same reciprocal feelings since they did not come in contact with each other – at least not frequently enough.

She said the brief chapter before 65 years should have been removed from people’s memory. Calling for raising the volume of people’s cross-border movement, she said, extensive people-to-people meetings would help remove misunderstandings.

She said she was happy the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) surveys in India had begun creating dents as different, positive things were happening at various levels. Several Indian district governments started developing elementary education annual plans that would eventually pave the way for state-level plans.

“ASER India and ASER Pakistan are separate but closely linked entities,” she said.

A little over two years after ASER’s arrival, the Indian government announced a two per cent budget for elementary education for learning enhancement in different districts.

“It was a big change ...an opportunity for the districts to utilise funds for education,” she said.

Her organisation decided to go big from the beginning and sought to assess learning outcomes in all districts across the country. The surveys were done by the volunteer who did get some funding for commuting etc.

ASER, Dr Banerji continued, does not want to impose itself on the decision-makers. “If someone does not find ASER data good enough, they can collect their own data. And if the people or the government is able to do so, that is very good.”

There is an example where the Gujarat government did not like ASER at all. Seeking to assess the students’ learning outcomes, the Gujarat government developed a programme which required every government official including senior officers to spend three days annually in schools and assess students’ learning outcomes. She said that each government officer as well as the chief minister himself spent one full day in one school. They spent all day asking children to read and do arithmetic. As a result, she said, the government had its original evaluation against the routine results.

She said the Gujarat government was now monitoring learning outcomes. “In one go, the Gujarat government inspected some 9,000 schools through its 3,000 officials. In a matter of few years every single one of the 50,000 schools in Gujarat would be inspected. I am not saying they launched this programme due to ASER’s presence. The whole environment is changing.”

Source: April 12, 2012/[The Dawn](#)

Look at family business in a professional, non-emotional way

In an evolving global business environment, quality executive management education is in demand both in developing and developed countries. Hischam El-Agamy, executive director of Lausanne, Switzerland-based IMD International, one of the top global business schools in executive education and family business, speaks in an interview on the importance of succession planning in family businesses and how executives can learn from entrepreneurial innovation in India. Edited excerpts: *Family business is a forte of IMD. How important is succession planning to family-run businesses?*

The three issues—succession planning, operating management and strategy—are related. There is a professor in Hong Kong University who studied 250 Asian companies. He observed that if succession is not resolved in a family business, then its impact can erode the share value by 60% five years before the succession happens and continue to affect three years after it. Efficient succession has to be done in the right time. Corporate governance is clear; family governance is mysterious—it’s a challenge, it has emotion in it. Succession planning should happen when there’s harmony in family. Unfortunately, we wait until there is crisis. In India, it’s more difficult than in the US or Europe. In a country like India, you need competence-mapping. It’s important in India to look at family business in a professional, non-emotional way.

Is this evolving as a specialized stream?

Education helps. We show cases and give frameworks as per the context. In emerging economies, an increase in the number of family businesses will require more education. We started family business programme in late 1970s, followed by Harvard, then it went to Europe. Now, consulting companies and banks are opening new segments on family business. A number of Indians are coming to our campus for such a course—current leaders and elder generation are coming with compact questions for a specific solution, while the young generation is coming to look at innovative ways of business.

Tell us about the executive MBA (E-MBA) discovery expedition to India; how has it been helpful?

We have two types of expeditions. One for executive MBA and one for full-time MBA. For E-MBA, we come to India, and for MBA, we go to South Africa. E-MBA has three expeditions other than face-to-face classes during its 14-month programme. In India, we try to understand their entrepreneurial capability and investment in social sector. Second one is on China—to know how to enter a new market—and third one is on Silicon Valley—to understand the technicality of venture capital. The question is why we will bring senior executives with 15 years of experience to India. What is fascinating in India is entrepreneurial innovation. Innovation happens in India because of certain urgency like needs, competition. The driver is different. It is important to learn these dynamics. When Indian companies go for innovation, they go for all verticals—luxury as well as bottom of the pyramid. This is an important learning for those who are in conventional corporate structure. We make our participants (senior executives) work for Indian companies to understand the business...get exposed to challenges. This learning is a win-win.

Where do you see the future of executive education?

These are the people who are facing constant challenge of the evolution in the business landscape. There was never more need than now; it will increase tomorrow after tomorrow because of business complexities. The executive education will change as focus shifts from shareholder value to stakeholder's value.

Source: April 12, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

Fake Degrees Prompt India Led by Infosys to Build an Ivy League

Commercial University Ltd. in New Delhi offers degrees in commerce, one of hundreds of private colleges trying to fill an education gap as India's

growth creates a middle class eager for its children to succeed.

The operation doesn't have a campus, nor are its degrees recognized by the government. Commercial University, based in a post office building between the capital and the sprawling streets of the old city, is one of more than a dozen institutions labeled as "fake" in an alert on the website of the University Grants Commission, India's college regulator.

Bogus degrees are a symptom of the crisis in India's higher education that prompted Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to promise 1,000 new universities and hire S. Ramadorai, former chief of Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., to upgrade the system. Failure to prepare students for India's new industries risks squandering the nation's biggest competitive advantage -- the youngest population among the world's top 10 economies -- and has forced companies led by Infosys Ltd. (INFO) to build their own colleges.

"There is a need to bridge the gap between what is required to do the job and where the education system leaves the students," said Srikantan "Tan" Moorthy, head of education and research at Infosys, the nation's second-biggest software company. "Bridging that gap, in our experience, takes quite some effort."

Singh, Moorthy and overseas universities that want to build campuses in India are running out of time. India needs to add 340 million skilled workers in the next decade if the country is going to lift economic growth to 10 percent, the prime minister said.

'Significant Gap'

"India can reap the demographic dividend of a young population provided the young citizens of the country are educated and possess the skills required for earning a decent livelihood," Singh said at a skill development conference in January. "There is a significant gap between the requirement and the supply which, unless checked, will constrain our economic growth."

The government raised spending on education by 24 percent last year to \$10.2 billion and plans to add 14 universities, 374 colleges and 20 software engineering institutes. Singh hired Ramadorai, former chief of Asia's largest software-services provider, to head a panel to advise on ways to improve skill development.

China, which produced a decade of more than 10 percent average growth to become the world's second-largest economy, had a literacy rate in 2000 of 91 percent for people older than 15, according to the World Bank. Only 63 percent of Indians that age were literate in 2006. The median age of India's

population is 25.1 years, compared with 34.5 years in China, according to data from the United Nations.

Elite Schools

India's higher-education challenge is typified by its top universities -- the seven Indian Institutes of Technology and six Indian Institutes of Management that were set up after independence to provide engineers and administrators. The list has been expanded since the beginning of last decade with seven more IIMs being added and eight new IITs.

These institutes get as many as 50 applicants for each place, compared with 17 at Harvard, even though none are ranked in the world's top 300 universities by the London-based Times Education Supplement.

Together, the IITs produce only about 9,600 graduates a year -- fewer than Moscow State University -- and many students leave to work abroad. Alumni include Ajit Jain, a potential successor to Warren Buffett at Berkshire Hathaway in Omaha, Nebraska, who went to IIT Kharagpur; and Pepsico Inc. Chief Executive Officer Indra Nooyi who earned an MBA at IIM Calcutta.

Low Enrollment

India has one of the lowest gross enrollment ratios for college of just 13 percent, half the global average and below the 23 percent in China, according to KPMG. India's government said it hopes to achieve 30 percent by 2020. The ratio measures the number of students enrolling in college after finishing school.

The deficit has encouraged a proliferation of schools claiming to offer higher education, some of which don't provide a recognized degree, prompting the University Grants Commission to start its alert service. Delhi's Commercial University, one of those singled out by the commission, said on its website it issues degrees under its own name and students can "legally describe themselves" as graduates even though it doesn't have official recognition. A company official who wouldn't give his name declined to comment when contacted by phone.

Even those who make it through accredited universities are often not ready for employment, according to educators at Infosys (INFO) (INFO) and ICICI Bank Ltd. (ICICIBC), the country's second-biggest lender. K. Ramkumar, executive director at ICICI (ICICBC) said most university curricula and teaching methods are out of date.

'Mug the Paper'

"It is not application-based teaching, it is purely memory based," he said. "You mug the paper and answer 20 questions and get the marks. The trouble is, when they come to ICICI or any other company, they aren't able to recall any of that knowledge."

Infosys has taken matters into its own hands with its own 350-acre (140-hectare) campus on the edge of Mysore, India's ancient silk-weaving center. With its green lawns, marble-floored atrium and sweeping Doric-collonaded facade, it looks like someone dropped an ivy-league college into the middle of the dusty cotton and maize fields of Karnataka state.

Two hours' drive from India's software capital of Bangalore, Infosys's Global Education Centre, or GEC, is a \$330 million response to the education deficit, putting about 20,000 graduate recruits through the 23-week residential course each year to get them up to speed.

Car Ban

Students in crisp shirts and suits gather at the one of seven food courts that can seat more than 3,500 people, or take a campus bicycle from the nearby rack. Cars are banned from most parts of the campus, the only other transport is a fleet of electric golf carts.

Some head to the dorms, a chain of two-story buildings that spells the company name in low-rise letters; or the recreation center, with squash courts, bowling alley, swimming pool, and aerobics studio. The laundromat, supermarket and medical center are more Caltech than Karnataka.

Nearby, a geodesic dome houses three cinemas that screen movies at the weekend. Inside, hundreds of new hires are filling out salary forms, a reminder that this is a business, not a philanthropic venture. Infosys spends about \$6,000 per student, equivalent to about \$120 million or roughly 8 percent of its \$1.5 billion profit in the financial year ended March 2011.

Steve Jobs

The aspirations of the project are illustrated by the classroom names in the glass and concrete education center -- Robert Noyce, John Pierpont Morgan, Steve Jobs.

In one room, hunched over a terminal, 22-year-old Preeti Thakur is trying to figure out how to deal with a client request for more information options in a software package, applying skills she learnt in her morning class. It's a world away from her life in Baddi, a small industrial town in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh in northern India.

"When I entered this campus, it was a dream come true," she said as colleagues around her rush to

meet a deadline. "The educators are world class. In college it was mostly theoretical. Here there is a lot of emphasis on practical learning."

Infosys is trying to instill the same application-based learning in 450 state-run colleges through a program called Campus Connect.

Like Infosys, ICICI responded to the shortage of qualified graduates by running courses at four institutes including the ICICI Manipal Academy for Banking and Insurance based near Mangalore in Karnataka.

Boot Campus

"The classes that we conduct are very similar to working in our bank," Ramkumar said. "We start at about 8 a.m. and we go to sleep by 11 p.m. Work ethics, value and organization's culture are drilled into people. I am proud to say that the structure is modeled on how armed forces recruit their officers like the Indian Military Academy, Westpoint and Sandhurst."

Around 13 million students were enrolled in higher education in India in 2008, the third-highest number after the U.S. and China, according to a report in December by advisory company KPMG.

Singh plans to double the enrolment ratio in the next eight years by adding as many as 1,000 more universities. The government accepted recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission to boost higher education spending and periodically revise the curricula.

"They have been promising to do it but it is already too late -- we are in a crisis," said T.V. Mohandas Pai, director of Manipal Universal Learning, a private university and a former director of human resources at Bangalore-based Infosys. "The government's mindset in education is one of control. The students are not gaining adequate skills because investment is not there and the curriculum is very dated."

Talent Crunch

In a February survey of more than 1,000 Indian recruiters by Naukri.com, a job search website, 61 percent said they face a talent crunch while hiring. India does not allow private colleges to earn a profit. The fee structure is regulated and there are more than three government bodies that set the rules.

Narayanan Ramaswamy, head of education for KPMG in India, said the country needs to streamline the rules and attract foreign institutes to improve competition.

At present, foreign universities are banned from offering degrees in India and legislation to allow them to set up operations is pending in parliament.

Some including Kellogg School of Management and Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, have partnered with Indian colleges who issue a local degree at the end of the course.

Wharton Way

"If there is a Wharton or others who come in and prove that their teaching is good, then we will see discerning Indian students heading to such institutes," Ramaswamy said. "By not having any quality institutes here, you are only promoting mediocrity."

The lack of skilled workers in India is a major growth constraint for 51 percent of businesses, according to a report released in January by Grant Thornton International Ltd., a global consulting and accounting company. That's compared with an average of 38 percent in Asia-Pacific excluding Japan.

Factory workers in India are almost four times less productive than in Thailand and five times less productive than in China, according to a report released last month by McKinsey & Co.

"There is basic minimum that is expected and even that is not happening in many cases," said Ramaswamy. "If an engineer cannot articulate his logic properly, why should I hire him? Nearly 50 percent of students we are looking at are not worth recruiting."

Source: April 12, 2012/[Business week](#)

The problem with Indian universities

Universities in other countries pride themselves by the quality of their faculties

The University Grants Commission has pointed out in a recent report that a majority of the 556 universities in the country do not enroll enough students on their sprawling campuses. It has suggested that student intake should be stepped up.

Is that a good idea? University administrators often trot out an objection to any plan to increase student intake. They fear that the number of students per faculty member will increase, hurting the quality of education as well as the reputation of their university. This is in stark contrast the way reputed universities position themselves in other countries. The quality of research is what matters. Universities take pride in the quality of their faculty and distinguish themselves on the basis of number of, for example, Nobel Prize winners on campus.

Research is what sets a university apart. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings published by British magazine Times Higher Education (THE) gives weightage of 55% to

research indicators while the teaching environment is given weightage of 30%; of this, teaching reputation comprises 15%, which depends on faculty and not students. It should not come as a surprise that not a single Indian university features among the world's top 100 universities ranked by Times Higher Education.

In another similar ranking system, QS World University Rankings, which uses a methodology different from Times Higher Education, ranks Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi at 218, while the University of Delhi gets ranked at 398 for the year 2011. This is despite the fact that it gives the weightage of 20% to faculty student-ratio, which illustrates the importance of other parameters like research which our universities lack.

In a 2011 report "Taking IITs to Excellence and Greater Relevance" submitted by a committee headed by Anil Kakodkar, set up by the ministry of human resources to suggest a roadmap for IITs, rightly points out that a country of India's size would require a significant emphasis on large-scale research at the highest levels of excellence and that IITs have not grown at a pace commensurate with the expansion of engineering education in the country.

Lack of infrastructure and autonomy is seen to be an impediment to bolster innovation in campuses, which can be easily solved by increasing student intake. Most universities are primarily funded by the government and hence subjected to government regulation and audit. For instance, in case of IITs, about 82% of all operational and capital expenditure comes from the government, with the fee component amounting to small percent of total expenses.

A larger student intake can increase the fee component, which can decrease dependence on government to meet their needs of capacity building and infrastructure that can be shared by students.

N.S. Ramaswamy, National Research Professor in Management and founder director of IIM Bangalore, had suggested that universities should have two shifts, so that the same physical infrastructure can be used twice over. He had pointed out that institutions in India work for only 180 to 200 days a year, which can be stretched to 300 days or more, and to start classes at 6 am. And allow them to go on till 10 pm.

If the proposal to increase student intake is accepted, faculty can focus on research activities by following the model of the Indian Institute of Managements (IIMs), which save faculty time from

drifting into evaluation and preparation of course material, by delegating these tasks to research and teaching assistants.

Source: April 12, 2012/[Live Mint](#)

Learning the Right Way

Education is a collaborative exercise and it is a matter of great concern to me to see that we are not looking at education as a collaborative effort," observed [Kapil Sibal](#), HRD minister, government of India at the second 'ICC Higher Education Conclave 2012' (Industry Academia Partnership and Pathways).

Organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) on April 2 at the Taj Bengal, Sibal was the chief guest at the summit, attended by academicians and industrialists, along with Dilip H M Chenoy, MD and CEO, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and professor H A Ranganath, director, NAAC.

Skill and creative development was the focus of the conclave as was outlined in the welcome address delivered by Shrivardhan Goenka, president, ICC. In his address to the assembled audience, Sibal advocated for a holistic approach towards education. "Apart from [the National Commission of Higher Education and Research \(NCHR\)](#) bill and NADA, there are 14 other bills pending in the parliament including the Foreign Education Providers Bill and Educational Malpractices Bill. Policy framework becomes paralysed because political processes do not allow it, yet no member of the academic community has raised questions," pointed out Sibal.

By 2020, 100 million additional people will be part of the global workforce from India which will rise to one-third by 2030. Sibal pointed out that decentralisation of structures, administrative reforms, embracing technology and participation by all the stakeholders were key concerns.

"The university system is controlled by academic and executive councils which are full of people with vested interests who want to maintain the status quo," commented the minister. Structural reforms in the administrative machinery of educational institutions, mobility from one course to another and multidisciplinary teaching are required.

Dilip Chenoy advocated for proactive participation from the industry and the private sector while he called for "flexibility and responsiveness" from the academic community. Ranganath highlighted "expansion, excellence, equity, empowerment and evolution" as the challenges that the higher education system needed to address.

The conference was attended by Dr P N Ghosh, vice chancellor, Jadavpur University, M K Banerjee, COO, ARSS Infrastructure Projects Ltd, professor Asish K Bhattacharya, director, IMI-Kolkata, professor B B Paira, director, Heritage Institute of Technology among others.

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

Indian B-schools on a high-growth mode

Communication technologies provide quality education to masses

Premium B-school education won't be the coveted privilege of a fortunate few alone anymore. Management education institutions are on a high-growth mode to widen their horizons. Improvement in communication technologies is helping B-schools provide quality education at affordable prices to the masses.

"The whole business education market in India is worth about Rs 5,000 crore," says Swaminathan K, founder and chief executive officer of myBskool.com. "It is equally split between the traditional in-class and distance education models. The latter includes V-SAT-based education, which is fast gaining steam in the country."

Almost all premium B-schools are delivering executive programmes using V-SAT. Telepresence and HD video conferencing are other modes of content delivery. Students can go to designated study centres and take live lectures from the faculty of the schools. Assessments are also done online. The biggest advantage is that candidates become alumni of the respective organisations and have access to study materials even after the completion of the course, says professor Anindya Sen of IIM-Calcutta. He is the director of several long-distance programmes (LDP) conducted by the schools. Campus visits are part of the programmes to give students a feel of premier educational institutions.

Most of the LDPs are tailored to the needs of working professionals. Classes are conducted during evenings and weekends. An added advantage is the affordability. While the executive in-campus programme would cost about Rs 4.5 lakh per student, the remote delivery model reduces it to about Rs 1.5 lakh.

"Quality content need not be the coveted possession of only a few," says professor Xavier, director of IIM-Ranchi. "With further development in these technologies it can come down to even a few thousand rupees, without diluting the standard of education. We have a budget of Rs 500 crore to complete the Ranchi campus. With another Rs 200 crore, we will be able to introduce these delivery

models and try to extend them to all parts of the country," he adds.

The classroom-based higher education model is capex heavy, as it requires various infrastructure and staff. Distance education is asset-light and has a wider reach, with local partners operating as selling agents as well as conducting examinations, says Sujana Hajra, analyst at Anand Rathi Financial Services. The growth can be attributed primarily to these advances in technologies, he says.

Apart from the V-SAT model, B-schools are also setting up satellite centres to expand their reach. IIM Kozhikode is planning to set up a satellite campus in Kochi by October primarily focused on executive education. The proposed campus at Infopark intends to start with full-time and part-time programmes targeted at middle and senior level executives.

The Indian School of Business (ISB), on the other hand, is extending the model beyond the country's boundaries. It has signed a pact with the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Karachi to provide executive education in Pakistan.

Deepak Chandra, deputy dean of ISB, says: "While ISB would focus on the design and delivery of the programmes, IBA will be responsible for their marketing and promotion. ISB's faculty would conduct the programmes. The first one is slated to commence in June, 2012."

Source: April 15, 2012/[My Digital fc](#)

RESOURCE

For some adolescent girls in India, a struggle to stay in school

When 11-year-old Durga Jadav awoke to find that she'd begun to menstruate, she wondered if she'd return to school.

"I like school," she said. "Unlike some girls, who only go because their parents make them." The Annual Survey of Education Report, or ASER, published by the non-profit organization Pratham in January, shows that girls aged 11 to 14 years old are most likely to drop out of school in India. The "monthly," as Ms. Jadav refers to her menstrual cycle, is one reason why.

The Jadavs are Mati Wadars. Mati means soil, and people of this impoverished low caste have traditionally dug and leveled soil. Girls are married off young, and may have as many as three children before they turn 21.

One reason they get married early is their poor access to housing, which leaves girls vulnerable to predatory men as they go about their daily life. A

lack of employment opportunities has forced them out of their villages and into urban areas. But if in the village they were made to live apart from their neighbors of higher castes, they have also been marginalized in cities.

The Jadavs live on a pavement under a bridge that spans a busy highway in suburban Mumbai. There are nine of them and a dog called Rani. Their shelter is made out of cement sacks held up by sticks purloined from construction sites. At night, the shelter is given over to the oldest married son, his wife, and three children. Everyone else sleeps in the open. To protect themselves from rats, the family swaddles itself in blankets. They also keep a bamboo pole handy. Despite precautions, their lives remain precarious. A neighbor's baby was killed instantly when a drunk driver crashed into their shelter five years ago. A teenager Durga knew was abducted and raped. And in 2009 some people who live in the apartment building behind them decided that they were "dirty" and should move. "They poured kerosene over our belongings one morning," recalls Durpada Jadav, Durga's mother. "We lost our home, utensils, clothes. I saw my wedding sari burn to ashes."

Given the reality of Durga's life, Pratham's figures shouldn't come as a surprise. But the results of the 2011 Census had expectations up. According to the Census, 74.04 percent of Indians are now literate, up by 9.21 percentage points from 2001. Women's literacy is at 65.46 percent, up by 11.79 points.

But these numbers represent a population of 1.2 billion people, of which half are under 25. Given India's size, and its outsized global ambitions, raising the numbers is a big challenge for the government.

In April 2010, the government implemented the Right to Education Act to address this problem. It promises a free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14. The law was preceded by several other government programs, including a free lunch scheme that had already put more than 90 percent of Indian children into classrooms.

Durga studies for free at a local government school. To ensure that her family doesn't incur any costs for her education, she is given 27 essential items every year including a uniform, hair ribbon, backpack and umbrella.

The government's initiatives to get children into school have been well received. But they do not address the underlying causes of why girls from very poor families drop out of school.

If Durga is indeed married off, it will not be because her parents think it's good for her. Durpada told me that she wants Durga to study

further. "I can't even sign my name," she says. "And I've spent my life on the footpath. I don't want her to end up like me. I know a man who educated his daughter. She got a job in a factory. If she can do it, so can my Durga."

But Durpada says that living as they do - eating, sleeping, even bathing in full public view - prevents them from protecting Durga. If she got into an undesirable relationship, with a man of a different caste for example, their community would shun her. If her parents supported her, they, too, would be ostracized. Caste may be confining and restricting, but it is their only identity. Their fellow caste members, they believe, are their only hope for survival in a society that has condemned them to inter-generational poverty and humiliation. Marrying Durga off would indicate that she was out of bounds.

There are other obstacles. Durga is now considered nearly adult - too young to be hired for construction labor, working as her mother and sister-in-law do, but old enough to stay home and look after her nieces during the day.

The money addresses the primary reason Durga may never return to school. Whatever its future promise, education does not currently put food in her mouth. The free lunch scheme gives children in government schools a cooked meal at midday. But between one lunch and the next, Durga often has so little to eat that by the time she makes it to school the next morning, she's lightheaded and listless. As her schoolteachers drone on, Durga dozes off. While the other children play catch in the corridors Durga sits at her desk eyes fluttering.

Her class teacher Dominic Gonsalves isn't complaining. "At least she comes to school," he says. "Most children like her turn up on the first day, collect their free goodies, and never return."

When there's nothing to eat at home, Durga goes around the neighborhood asking better-off neighbors for leftovers from their meals. If she's lucky, she receives a couple of chapattis and a spoonful of dal. On a really rough day, the Jadavs swallow tablespoons of atta, or wheat flour, mixed with water, and go to bed early.

It would help her family, Durga knows, if she, too, could work and earn money. She knows exactly how, since so many of her friends do so. She could beg at a traffic light or at one of the three temples within walking distance of her shelter. She could collect trash and sell it to the recycler her friends call "Mr White" for his fair skin.

But, at least so far, her parents haven't asked her to work.

Because her parents stayed silent, Durga's fears were not immediately realized, and she did not return to school after her first menstruation. But not for long. According to community tradition, after a girl completes her second menstruation, she must take time to celebrate. She is dressed like a bride and escorted to the temple. After prayers, friends drop in, and the mood is festive.

"People will bring ladoos," Durga says, referring to the round wheat-based Indian sweets, her eyes glistening. "And many other foods as well."

Source: April 01, 2012/ [Times Higher Education](#)

All India study on higher education

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has embarked on an initiative to collate comprehensive data on higher education which will help in framing academic policies for the future. Simultaneously, the Union human resource ministry has constituted a task force to conduct an all India survey on higher education.

The UGC has issued a proforma to all universities and colleges in the country asking for details of the examination results in recent years, number of foreign students enrolled in their institutions and figures relating to the doctorate degrees and MPhil degrees awarded to research scholars during 2008-09 in different subjects of study.

Besides, the UGC is also updating its directory of professors.

The HRD ministry's task force would look at key academic data which will help in planning for growth and development, and to achieve the target of 30% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in the eligible age group.

The mandate for the task force includes exploring the mechanism of conducting an all-India survey on higher education in India, identifying the implementation agency to conduct the survey, preparing the modalities to conduct the survey and subsequently monitoring its implementation. After compiling the data and analysing it, the task force would give its recommendations to the ministry.

According to a HRD ministry notification, the task force will comprise the additional secretary of the ministry, UGC secretary, AICTE member secretary and the vice-chancellor of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA).

"The task force shall submit its preliminary recommendations to the ministry to operationalise the survey within two months," the HRD ministry notification said.

A few months ago, the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education (TANSCH) had constituted a two-member expert committee to undertake a survey to ascertain the GER in higher educational institutions in the state.

The expert committee is working on the survey

Source: April 01, 2012/ [Bengal strips](#)

Indian Preschool Market Trends and Its Challenges

Indian preschool market is poised to grow at a tremendous pace as the market is under-penetrated. Higher disposable income among the middle class in India and the importance they attach to education will lead to further development of the pre-school market.

The report begins with an introduction to the Indian education market. Data suggests that the focus in India has been on primary education. It also provides the market size and growth of the Indian education sector. In the market overview section, the classification of Indian education system is highlighted and the current and estimated market size of the Indian pre-school (organized sector) is included with the market segmentation. The business model prevalent in the pre-school market has been depicted. Porter's analysis helps to understand the dynamics in the preschool market in India.

Drivers identified include huge untapped market which gives ample opportunity for pre-schools to grow. Increase in disposable income acts as a driver for the pre-school market. Substantial improvement in the quality of pre-schools has led to further development of the market. Preschools are doubling up as they provide day care facilities as well. The middle class segment in India has always given impetus to education. Thus, pre-school market is expected to grow at a healthy rate in the future. Challenges identified include the various operational challenges including unavailability of quality teachers, limited target population as they cater only to a small target market in the vicinity. High rental costs also diminish the profitability of the pre-school. Other prominent challenge faced by the organized sector is overwhelming presence of the unorganized sector that does not follow any set standards towards imparting quality education.

Trends identified include corporate investments which have allowed for the expansion of various pre-schools all over India as well as given them the opportunity to scale up their infrastructural facilities. Corporate houses are interested too as there are no specific rules which guide the market. Other trends are that preschools are collaborating

with various builders to bring down the cost of operations. They are also upgrading themselves to K-12 schools in order to get a captivated flow of students.

The competition section begins with a bubble chart which provides the relative positions of the players based on their revenue, net profit and market capitalization/asset value. The major players in the market have been profiled which includes a financial summary for each of the players. Key ratios and key contacts are also listed. The last section offers strategic recommendations for the players in the pre-school market. [REPORT](#)

Source: April 04, 2012/[SBWire](#)

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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