



Announcements

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

Apeejay Stya University announces admission for the session 2012

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

Apeejay Stya University announces Founder's Scholarship

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

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

Get Involved

Fellowship opportunities

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

Workshops/Guest Lectures

Regular workshops and lectures on a variety of subjects.

Scholarships

Need-based financial aid to deserving student

Faculty Sponsorships

By seeding a named faculty seat or fellowship

Internships/Mentoring

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

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

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

Partnership

Dear Partners,

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

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

Editor

[Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh](#)

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ASPECT**'RTE extended reach of primary education; absenteeism still high'**

Post- independence the need for quality education in the country struck my father. Education, which was global in its dimension, inculcated scientific temper and, yet, was founded on Indian culture and human values. This is what we sought to create. Wherein, there opportunities for every child's personality to be actualised. In those days, particularly in northern India, there was a lack of schools. That is how the first Apeejay School came up in Jalandhar and we then took it forward with like-minded people. The idea was to keep preserving and cementing the Indian culture and the finer arts like design, painting, dance, etc., and at the same time give an opportunity to children to pursue these avenues as a profession.

How was the Apeejay University set up?

Our idea was to set up India's first liberal arts university, in terms of teaching and learning. We wanted to adopt a holistic approach. We allow students to change their stream if after some time of starting a course they realise that their interests were somewhere else. As each degree has its own requirement, it may mean that the student needs to take some additional courses, in some cases. We have an international semester and grade system. The degree may take longer but we allow students to take a decision about their career whenever they want. This is important because knowledge is seamless. We want to make our students industry-ready.

Over the last one year— especially in Delhi— a huge debate has started with regard to the autonomy of schools and the external or governmental controls pertaining to major policy decisions of schools. What's your take on that?

First of all, we have our own quality control systems in place. As far as Apeejay is concerned, we do not need an external control agency to do a quality control exercise. We are in the education sector not as a business model but as a way of giving back to society. We have certain processes that we have put into place — both in writing and otherwise — which are more or less common to all schools and they are not at variants with what any educational directorate or anybody else would have done. The only unfortunate part is that the government has a

lot of work left to do. If you look at the aspirations of the RTE, some of which are, if I may use the word, outsourced to the private sector. This is a testimony to the fact that the government puts trust in private institutions. Figures of school dropouts are alarming even though there's good enrolment at the entry level. It's a great aspiration but it needs to be properly executed, and at the current rate, it may take the government many years to implement it.

Would you agree with other private educational institutions that the onus of implementing the RTE should be with the government?

The problem is don't club people who have altruistic goals with everyone in the field with these policies by which you try to control education. We try to have a diverse classroom and we try to accommodate children from all backgrounds on our own. Things need not be imposed by force in a place where you are self- supported. There are plenty of people who can afford to pay. Fine, let's fund the education of the economically weaker sections but we should be able to charge for it from those who are willing to pay a little more.

What sort of government support have you seen since the RTE was implemented?

A sum of Rs 544 was received for books and other stationary for every child. Recently, a letter was sent asking schools to specify their per-child expenditure. There are many questions. How are you going to meet these expenditures? By cutting teacher's salaries? Or by lowering standards or compromising with the learning environment?

Do you think it's fair to compare government-school expenditure to private-school expenditure per child?

It's a strange way of doing things. The government is saying that they are including operational expense per student, but land, building and renewal costs are not included in this. Secondly, what are you basing your per-child expenditure on? They should be calculating real per-student expenditure. The issue is not the students. There will be some students who may not be able to cope with the curriculum, irrespective of the social strata. The issue is processes being forced upon us and our autonomy.

How would you assess the performance of Right to Education Act in the last two years?

Since the implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009, on the one hand, there has been improvement in the extension of primary education, both in regard to enrolment and in reduction of dropout rates, but on the other hand, there is a significant gap between the Gross Enrolment Ratio and actual attendance of children in schools.

The absolute numbers of children who are out of school remains large. Union human resource development (HRD) minister, admits that still 8.1 million children in the age group 6 to 14 are out of school.

Despite some improvements in access and retention, there is a greater challenge of improving the quality of school education. The learning outcome for a majority of children continues to be an area of serious concern. Several studies suggest that nearly half the children in Grade 5 are unable to read a Grade 2 text and 64 per cent of them can't manage simple division sums.

There's a shortage of 508,000 teachers country-wide, other figure say it is 1.4 million.

Source: April 30, 2012/[Indian Express](#)

NEWS

Spirit of India

At a time when we are living in a global village, education is soon becoming the primary connecting point. While knowledge may have transcended geographical boundaries, it has also taught nations to learn from each other through best practices both within and outside the classroom.

It is this spirit of learning that recently brought Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, wife of the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, to India.

Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), a private non-profit organisation founded in 1995, Sheikha Moza feels that education models evolve from within the needs of specific communities and countries. "That is why I am here, to learn from your experiences ," she says.

A sociology graduate, what fascinated her during her visit to India, is the conviction with which the Indian youth is ready to volunteer and serve the country. "When I asked the young people what inspired them to give up their corporate lives and teach in low-income schools, they said that nothing was as rewarding to see as the transformation of a pupil into an individual equipped with knowledge."

Despite the hurdles that the Right to Education (RTE) Act has been encountering in the last two years, in terms of its implementation , Sheikha Moza feels that the country's spirit and focus towards becoming a knowledge economy will certainly help in achieving the targets.

In 2009, World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) was founded under the patronage of Sheikha Moza. WISE is an initiative of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

She points out, "In the last three years, the annual event has grown, drawing leaders and decision-makers from governments, businesses, civil society , schools and universities, international institutions, and other creative communities across the globe. WISE is based on the practical awareness that challenges in education are no longer bound by countries' political boundaries and, therefore, its mandate is international."

A member of the UN Millennium Development Goals Advocacy Group (with a special emphasis on Goal 2 - universal primary education), Sheikha Moza further mentions that the challenges in primary education, globally, lie in offering quality education and finding good teachers. "However, the brighter side to it is that there is a momentum across the world and while earlier it was only about 'education,' today the challenge is to offer quality education through a range of innovations ."

But, she reiterates, innovation in education is not just about technology but about new and realistic ideas that can help us explore new ways of teaching and exploring fresh methodologies and curriculum, within the existing education system of each community.

Her visit to India, she feels, has been an eye-opening experience. "Once I am back in Qatar I would certainly want to share the infectious enthusiasm and positive attitude that I witnessed here - along with the emotional connect that the Indian youth share with the bigger objectives of the country," Sheikha Moza concludes.

Source: April 16, 2012/[Times of India](#)

Soon, AICTE to launch job portal, academic website

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) will soon launch a first of its kind academic networking site, along with an in-house job portal and a repository of doctorate papers to check duplication and cheating.

The academic networking site proposes to interconnect 7.5 million students enrolled across AICTE-approved institutions linked through email IDs. The yet to be christened networking site proposes to rope in faculty and industry stakeholders on to its database.

"The idea is to encourage academic networking and facilitate peer learning. That faculty will be accessible on this network, and help with course material, share charts, diagrams, data and projects that can aid learning, will make this an altogether knowledge

building mechanism," said the chairman of AICTE, S S Mantha.

The AICTE is also readying Project Factory, a repository aimed at capturing abstracts of all post graduate projects in an online bank. These abstracts of research work will be available to industry stakeholders and research labs so that those interested can easily contact the student concerned and take it forward.

"It will also help us check large-scale cheating and cut-copy-paste jobs that are seen in a number of research papers. A search engine on Project Factory will be able to quickly throw up abstracts of research works of interest to anyone," Mantha added.

The AICTE e-governance project envisages an employment portal that proposes to store every student's semester-wise results online and link it with his CV. This CV will automatically be forwarded to industry HRD heads whenever there is a vacancy suited to the student.

This central database will link up with an industry database of 8,000 stakeholders and help facilitate the placement process.

On Thursday, the AICTE launched Live@edu — a hosted communication and collaboration service based on cloud computing — with Microsoft. Live@edu is a cloud suite that will offer email with a 10GM inbox, Microsoft Office Web applications, 25 GB of additional file storage, document sharing, video chat, mobile email and instant messaging to AICTE's over seven million students and five lakh faculty members.

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

India-UK Roundtable

A roundtable was jointly organised by ministry of HRD and Ukieri recently to bring together key stakeholders working on the agenda of Innovation in India and the UK to discuss opportunities for collaboration and partnership through Ukieri. The roundtable was structured as a forum to share experiences and focus on specific steps that universities and government in India and UK could take in fostering innovations, specifically focusing on collaborations under Ukieri.

The round table looked at establishing a working group of Indian and UK stakeholders around Innovation in higher education as envisaged in the 4India UK Education Forum. The group will continually explore opportunities to take this bilateral Innovation agenda forward. In skills development, ministers from India and UK in

the last India UK Education Forum 2011 recognised the need to work further to address more areas on skill development programmes.

Both sides agreed to develop new initiatives to integrate vocational training into the academic curriculum with real work environment embedded into modular competency-based courses.

Source: April 23, 2012/[Times of India](#)

US helping India to establish community colleges

The United States is working with India to flesh out an initiative to set up hundreds of community colleges in India on the American pattern, according to state department spokesperson Victoria Nuland.

"Well, obviously, we support this initiative," she told reporters Tuesday when asked about the visit of education ministers from several Indian states to explore the possibility of opening such publicly funded two-year institutions that primarily attract students from the local community.

The state department, Nulanad said, has "been working with the Indian side to flesh out the initiative" that was agreed between President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, through its education bureau.

Asked if the Indian degrees are accepted in the United States, she said that was on a case-by-case issue depending upon where they graduate from and where they're looking to get accredited from.

"So obviously, if there's a sister university relationship, sometimes those accreditations can be recognized, but it just depends on what they want to do," Nuland said. "I don't think there's a blanket way of looking at that."

The United States had also not changed its policy for the issue of student visas after the closure of a couple of sham universities affected hundreds Indian students, but the US institutions get greater scrutiny, she said.

"I think what we are doing is making sure that the sponsoring organizations truly are what they say they are in the United States; that if they say that they are bringing students over to educate them, that they intend to educate them, not put them to work, et cetera.

Source: April 25, 2012/[IANS/Two circle net](#)

No change in visa policy for Indian students: US

The US has said that there is no change in its policy towards issuing visas to Indian students.

"I don't think we've changed our policy with regard to the way we interview applicants," state department spokesperson Victoria Nuland told reporters at her daily news conference.

"I think what we are doing is making sure that the sponsoring organisations truly are what they say they are in the United States; that if they say that they are bringing students over to educate them, that they intend to educate them, not put them to work, et cetera," she said.

Nuland said the US supports the recent initiative of opening community colleges in India on the pattern of those here.

Last week, education ministers of four States - Punjab, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir, visited several US cities to have a first hand experience of the community colleges here.

"Well, obviously, we support this initiative. We have been working with the Indian side to flesh out the initiative that was agreed between the President and the prime minister through our Education Bureau here. And obviously, we are responsible for the visa issuance for the various folks studying in the United States," Nuland said.

Source: April 25, 2012/[Times on India](#)

India passes law making education for disabled compulsory

The upper house of the Indian parliament passed a bill to make education of the disabled compulsory and provide those with severe disability the option of being taught at home.

"It is a historic piece of legislation and will have a huge impact on quality education to children between classes 1 and 8 in the 6-14 age group," India's Union education Minister Kapil Sibal said after moving the legislation to vote.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2010, includes in the ambit of the already existing Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, disabled children who will now also have the right to free and compulsory education either at home (for those with severe disability) or in the vicinity for the rest.

Sibal said that the government would rope in the help of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as parents and educationists in its bid to implement the bill.

Disabled children can now have the chance to study alongside other children (inclusive education) or can opt for special education also provided by the government.

India has a huge population of disabled children who are often kept without education because of ignorant parents as well as a society that ostracizes them.

Disabled children are either treated as if they are possessed by demons or in some cases they are worshiped as incarnations of the gods in many parts of rural India.

It is only off late that education for the disabled has begun and that too only through government funded schools. The latest amendment to the bill hopes to change that.

Source: April 25, 2012/[bikyamsar](#)

200 universities across India in next 5 yrs: Sibal

Higher education in the country is set to get a boost with the HRD ministry finalising plans worth Rs. 80,000 crore in order to improve access to colleges and universities.

The UPA government has embarked upon an ambitious plan to double the gross enrollment ratio (GER), from present around 17% to 30% by the year 2020. For this, there would be a need of several new universities and colleges across the country.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal on Wednesday told Lok Sabha that 200 new universities and a degree college in each district of India will be opened in the next five years. "We have asked for Rs. 20,000 crore for opening new universities in the 12th plan," he said.

In addition to new institutions, many of the existing colleges will be upgraded either into universities or autonomous colleges having powers to award degrees.

The budget for revitalising the higher education will be Rs. 80,000 crore, the biggest ever allocation for higher education.

A large amount of this money will be awarded to state governments to improve higher education in rural areas. This, by increasing the Central government share in higher education funding to the states.

As of now, the Centre shares just 35% of the cost of starting a new higher education institution. In the 12th plan (2012-17), Sibal said, the government proposes to increase the Central share to 65% and 90% for the north-eastern states.

This, according to the ministry, will give an incentive to the state governments to submit proposals for starting new higher education institutes. Many state governments have been reluctant to seek funds from the Centre because they had to assure 65% funds to start the project.

The HRD ministry believes that its new national vocational education framework that allows bachelors degree in vocational education streams will help in increasing the gross enrollment ratio. The seven level framework allows enrollment at class IX level with an easy exit and re-entry module.

On school education in the 12 plan, the HRD ministry has set a 100% retention rate at the primary level of school education.

According to school data for the year 2010, the retention rate is about 74% at the primary level. It will mean opening of new schools in rural areas and better access to schools for girls and other socially deprived sections such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Source: April 25, 2012/[Hindustan Times](#)

Higher Education for Poor Students

The Central Government is implementing Means-cum-Merit Scholarship to meritorious students. Similarly the University Grants Commission (UGC) is also providing scholarships and fellowships to SC, ST, Minorities and other meritorious candidates. The Central Government has launched a new Central Scheme to provide full interest subsidy during the period of moratorium on educational loans for students belonging to economically weaker sections (with parental family income from all sources up to Rs. 4.5 lakh annually) from Scheduled Banks under the Educational Loan Scheme of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) for pursuing courses of studies in professional/technical streams from recognized institutions in India. The scheme is effective from the academic year 2009-2010. The Scheme is based solely on income criteria and not social background. The details of the Scheme are available on this Ministry's website at www.education.nic.in. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) implements the scheme on "Tuition Fee Waiver scheme for Women, Economically Backward and Physically Handicapped Meritorious Students" under which, tuition fee waiver is provided to women, economically backward and physically handicapped meritorious students pursuing degree/diploma level technical education. Details of the scheme are available at AICTE website.

Under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, every child in the age group of 6-14 years is provided eight years of elementary education. The Act requires all private schools to reserve 25% of seats to children from poor families (to be reimbursed by the State). The Central Government is also implementing National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has reported that it is implementing Merit Scholarship Scheme for Single Girls Students for 10th pass students. The UGC has introduced the scheme of PG Indira Gandhi

Scholarship for Single Girl Child which seeks to promote girls education through scholarships to such girls who happen to be the only child in their family. During XI Plan, UGC has strengthened the Women's Studies Centres by establishing them as Statutory Departments in the University system to promote and expand women's studies in teaching, research and field action. The UGC has also introduced a scheme for Construction of Women's Hostels to provide hostel facilities to women and incentivise them to pursue higher education.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Dr. D.Purandeswari, in written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

Source: April 25, 2012/[PIB](#)

Undergraduate retention

Let them know they're not alone

Creating "a culture of belonging" within universities is the key to improving student retention, a study has indicated. The recommendation was made in a report on the What Works? student retention and success programme, which assessed retention schemes at 22 higher education institutions between 2008 and 2011. Funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, a charity whose focuses include education and learning, the programme found that up to 42 per cent of students had considered dropping out of higher education at some point, although only 8 per cent of them left study in their first year. Academic problems, concerns over future careers and feelings of isolation were key considerations for those who were unsure about higher education, the report found. Interventions in the academic sphere were effective in cutting dropout rates by up to 10 percentage points, it said. Fostering student engagement with their studies and the wider university through supportive peer relations, as well as support from staff, was crucial, it concluded.

UK-India research partnership

Funding fillip for the future of IT

A £10 million boost for the largest-ever India-UK ICT research collaboration, which employs 200 scientists in both countries, was unveiled by universities and science minister David Willetts. The announcement followed a meeting in London with Vilasrao Deshmukh, the Indian science and technology minister. The investment will support the second phase of research into next generation telecommunications networks - state-of-the-art platforms and applications that will carry voice, video and data in the internet of the future. This is a key part of the work of the India-UK Advanced Technology Centre, a collaborative programme funded by the UK's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, India's

Department of Science and Technology and industrial partners in both countries. Mr Willetts said that the funding would help to "bring together leading universities and institutes from both countries to develop technological solutions to a range of important issues, from rural health to disaster response".

Engineering

'Radical' students welcome

Innovation must be at the centre of UK universities' engineering curricula, according to a report from the Royal Academy of Engineering. *Educating Engineers to Drive the Innovation Economy* recommends two strategies for equipping students to achieve step changes: by encouraging them to address real-life issues such as energy, water security and the ageing population; and by encouraging them to exploit technological breakthroughs (such as hydrogen fuel cells or new applications for microwaves). The report calls for the Westminster and devolved governments to continue to offer additional support to engineering as a strategically important subject. David Grant, vice-president of the Royal Academy of Engineering and vice-chancellor of Cardiff University, said that to "transform the UK economy we need more radical innovation - the kind of change that creates a new 'state of the art'. Much of this capability rests on the way our future innovators are being taught."

ONLINE NOW

Last week's story about the selection of academics for redundancy at Queen Mary, University of London - partly on the basis of metrics on their research performance - prompted online discussion of how the research excellence framework will change life in universities. Carl said: "The logic across the sector seems to be moving away from teaching and research being linked. Government is only willing to pay for the very best research, which is difficult if not impossible to sustain alongside mass higher education. No doubt in future teaching will come to be more highly valued, but much of it is likely to be done by different people than those being entered and expected to perform at the upper reaches of the REF."

Source: April 26, 2012/[Times higher Education UK](#)

143 technical institutes seek to shut shop: Govt.

Close to 150 technical institutes across the country have applied to AICTE seeking permission to shut shop because of poor

response to their management and engineering programmes, the government has said.

According to the All India Council of Technical Education, they have received applications from as many as 143 institutes from 14 states to close down their programmes, a phenomenon which could largely be attributed to mushrooming of technical institutes across the country.

The council, for example, as received applications from 56 institutes from Andhra Pradesh for closure, while two institutes from Tamil Nadu and five from Karnataka have applied for closing down their professional courses.

These three states, according to statistics, are considered a sought-after destination for students seeking admission to technical programmes.

"The request for closure of programmes is a pointer towards a factor where supply of seats in technical programme far outnumbers the demands and also to the fact that institutes need to deliver quality or perish," HRD ministry officials said.

Recent data suggest there are over 3,500 management schools and over 4,000 engineering colleges in the country. According to AICTE, they have also received applications from five institutes in Madhya Pradesh, four from Chhattisgarh, two from West Bengal and one from Bihar for closure of their programmes.

The body has received 18 applications from Rajasthan, 17 from Uttar Pradesh and 13 from Gujarat, reflecting the fact that these big states have also had their share of troubles in running these courses.

Source: April 29, 2012/[NDTV](#)

Rajya Sabha passes to key education bills

The Rajya Sabha on Monday passed two key bills to enable students of Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research get their degrees and give 8 new IITs their status through an Act of Parliament.

The Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2011, already passed by the Lok Sabha, seeks to set up eight new Indian Institutes of Technology in Bhubaneswar, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, Indore, Jodhpur, Mandi, Patna and Ropar and integrate the Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University, within the ambit of the Act.

All these institutions shall be declared institutions of national importance as per amended Act.

The National Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010, also passed by the Lok Sabha, declares certain institutions of technology as institutions of national importance and seeks to add five Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (established in Kolkata, Pune, Mohali, Bhopal and

Thiruvananthapuram) as institutions of national importance.

It also specifies the members of Board of Governors of each institute and establish a Council for all Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research.

Introducing the Bills in the Rajya Sabha, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said any fear about inclusion of BHU under the ambit of the Act was unfounded and said, "If there is any misgiving, one would be ready and revisit in the manner that members consider it appropriate."

Sibal said 20 NITs were covered under the Act and with amendments not being passed, students were waiting to get their degrees.

"Children are waiting and crying for their degrees...One year has passed since they have passed out," Sibal said and pointed out that they were yet to receive their degrees.

"We should not be held responsible for the delay in degrees to students, who have worked hard and are waiting for this," he said.

He said the government has included almost all recommendations of the Standing Committee in this regard.

"Today in the 21st century, we must move towards setting up centres of excellence...Until we do that, I don't think we can compete with the world...The new PhDs in India are still abysmally low," he said, adding, "We must move away from government support."

Sibal said, "I have freed strings attached with funding of institutions and made them more autonomous...The inclusive agenda of UPA government is showing tremendous results."

BJP members opposed upgrading Banaras Hindu University's (BHU) Institute of technology into IIT saying it will dilute its status among student community.

Chandan Mitra (BJP) said, "No attempt should be made to submerge the IT department of BHU. We are happy that you are upgrading other eight new institutes. The BHU is a different issue...The culture and heritage must be maintained," he said.

Mitra objected to the clause in the bill that gives special status to vice-chancellor of BHU of being chairperson of the IIT Board of Governors for three years.

Karan Singh (Cong) and chancellor of BHU said, "My humble request to BJP is that we must pass this bill. Otherwise we will be disappointing students who have not taken their degrees for

last two years" and are awaiting upgradation of the institute.

Seeking reservation on the IIT Board, Narendra Kumar Kashyap (BSP) asked if the government has any scheme to provide representation to SCs, STs and minorities.

KN Balagopal (CPI-M) said, "Merely including names of institutes in the Act will not serve the purpose. The government has to spend on higher education."

NK Singh (JD-U) mentioned about vacant posts in IITs and government spending on higher education.

Vasanthi Stanley (DMK) said, "It is unfortunate that students have passed out but have not yet taken their degrees. The Bills were passed in Lok Sabha last year, but it is yet to see the light of the day."

Source: April 30, 2012/PTI/[Zee News](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

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.

"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".

"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".

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 IITs.

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

Government's initiative for setting up eight new IITs, is 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."

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.

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."

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?"

Source: April 16, 2012/[Times of India](http://timesofindia.com)

What about the right to provide education?

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, known simply as the RTE, came a century after Gopal Krishna Gokhale made an impassioned plea to the Imperial Legislative Council for introducing free and compulsory primary education in India.

He said, 'The state should accept in this country the same responsibility in regard to mass education that the government of most civilised countries are already discharging and that a well-considered scheme should be drawn up and adhered to till it is carried out. The well being of millions upon millions of children who are waiting to be brought under the influence education depends upon it.'

Nine decades after this speech, the Right to Education became a fundamental right, and 100 years later, the Indian government delivered the Act that allowed for Universal Public Education. The Act mandated that education not only be provided by government schools, but also that 25% of all seats in every school in India be reserved for children from economically weak sections. Needless to say, private schools had an objection and challenged the Act.

Last week the Supreme Court upheld the law, but exempted unaided minority schools from the ambit of the law.

Naturally, many are fuming about the restriction of economic choice of private schools and an assault on the right to do business, others are aghast that their children will be studying with the children of their servants, and there is outrage that minority appeasement is being

followed by exempting unaided minority schools from following this law.

The first thing to remember is that education, especially school education in India, is not a business. It is not supposed to be run on the principles that govern a business — namely profit. Private schools across the country are run by a myriad of charitable public trusts.

The trusts receive land from the government at low or no cost and are supposed to, by law, reserve seats for economically weak classes, much the same as hospitals that are built on land granted by the government. Neither do. If a SC ruling is needed to ensure that these 'charitable trusts' are forced to honour the letter and spirit of their contracts, then so be it.

For those having kittens at the prospect of their children studying with servants' children, they will get over it. It was probably the same reaction people had when the British Raj mandated that Indians of all castes had access to schools paid for by the government, or that white families had in the Southern American States when the government mandated the end of segregation in schools. The coming together of children from all backgrounds is going to do them all good. The children will possibly take to it a lot better than their parents.

The second, equally important thing to remember is that minority does not mean religious minority. It can mean any minority — religious, linguistic or indeed a sect. Many quality schools in cities fall under this category. The SC has exempted, in addition to religious schools run by unaided trusts, some of the best schools from being part of the RTE. And this exemption is discrimination.

This needs to be challenged because the law of the land applies to all, and there is no such thing as unaided. Trusts are given a wide range of tax exemptions on their activities and it can be argued that these constitute aid by the tax payer. It also needs to be repealed because you will have a slew of educational trusts applying for minority status, defeating the purpose of the law.

If you look beyond the cities, across states, private schools have begun providing education. This means schools run by trusts, and usually those trusts run by politicians. They were granted this to enable the state to provide better education for children. In many cases these trusts have taken over the infrastructure of existing government schools with the promise of providing better quality education. Should these not be required to provide free education to the economically disadvantaged?

Finally, the problem is not with either the RTE or the SC ruling. The problem is with governmental hypocrisy that decrees profit in education to be a 'sin'.

Maybe, parents and schools should lobby the Supreme Court for allowing businesses to run schools on the principles that govern good business. Not allowing businesses to run schools and perpetuating this sham of 'charitable trusts' will stunt RTE, for the right to receive education will be best fulfilled when there is a corresponding right to provide education.

Source: April 16, 2012/[DNA India](#)

Great education debate: will it create a revolution?

The beginning of a revolution in education or a cloud on the autonomy of private institutions and a financial burden on the middle class?

The Supreme Court judgment asking private schools to provide 25 percent seats to economically weaker sections (EWS) as per the Right To Education (RTE) act that guarantees education to every school going child in the country has split opinion right down the middle.

While private schools are frankly unhappy, education activists say the April 12 ruling is a great step towards equal opportunities for all. Parents are apprehensive about how it will work out and many wonder if this will lead to social friction in the classrooms and school buses.

"There is nothing wrong in giving education to the underprivileged, but then the government should reimburse the entire tuition fee or else it will become a financial burden on us," Madhulika Singh, principal of Delhi's Tagore International School, told IANS.

Some schools in Kolkata believe it would be better if they are not included in the list of government 'aided' institutions and are ready to bear the extra financial burden rather than take government aid to subsidise poor students that they will have to take under the Right to Education act.

Damodar Prasad Goyal, president of the Society for Unaided Private Schools, says it is more about the autonomy of schools than reservation.

"We are not opposed to 25 percent reservation for EWS students, but it is our fundamental right to have the autonomy to admit students... the government cannot nationalise 25 percent seats," Goyal told IANS.

While Goyal was unclear about whether they would seek a review of the ruling by the two-

judge bench of Chief Justice S.H. Kapadia and Justice Swatanter Kumar, the Federation of Indian Public Schools, which comprises nearly 300 schools from New Delhi, said it would seek a rethink by a larger bench.

"We will comply with the Supreme Court orders, but we want a review of the decision by the full court," the Federation's R.P. Malik said.

Activists are equally certain that this is the best thing to have happened.

"It is a great victory for underprivileged children of our country and will ensure their right to education. The verdict has validated the stand that education is a basic constitutional right of every child whether it is in private or government institutions," RTE forum convenor Ambarish Rai told IANS.

Anjela Taneja, education coordinator with Oxfam India, cited the example of the 1956 US Supreme Court judgment that ended the system of separate schools for African Americans and the whites.

"Barack Obama is one of the first generation that benefited from this... We often look west for examples, and this is a suitable example," Taneja told IANS. "Perhaps this will give an opportunity for 'Bharat' and 'India' to meet."

Some schools and parents are concerned about how seamless this integration will be and what impact it could have on children.

"I think it's about acceptance of a society that simultaneously exists around you. Whether children from economically weaker sections and kids from well-to-do families sit together in the same class or not, there has to be a sense of mutual respect and acceptance for each other," Vishakha Tyagi, parent of an eight-year-old in south Delhi's Laxman Public school, told IANS.

At the other end of the income spectrum, autorickshaw driver Mahesh Kumar is equally worried.

"To get admission in a private school is not the only thing. I am worried about how my child will cope up with the way of life of children at these schools," said Mahesh, whose child studies in a government school.

Advocate Ashok Agarwal countered by saying: "It is a question of mentality and intention." He also rubbished arguments of financial burden given by private schools.

"It's a bogus argument... it will not be any great economic burden on the schools and in addition to that, the government will also be giving them money for it. Where is the burden?" he asked.

"This is the beginning of a revolution..." Agarwal told IANS.

Some schools have begun the process of sensitising parents.

Ritika Ganguly, whose family has children studying in Delhi's Springdales School, Dhaula Kuan, said: "Even before the judgement came, the junior school principal at the parent-teacher meet strongly told parents not to complain and sensitise their children on the importance of interacting with those from diverse backgrounds."

Fortunately, children seem to be taking the move in the right spirit.

"We are happy with what has come out. Why should someone face bias on grounds of class when education is a right for all," said Swati Kaul, a student of Apeejay School in Sheikh Sarai.

Source: April 16, 2012/[The Day after](#)

Lost in transition

The Supreme Court ruling sanctioning the legality of the Right to Education has also mandated every private school to ensure at least 25% enrolment from the economically weaker sections. The caveat is that the fees will be subsidised by the government and the target will be reached progressively, in the coming eight years.

Soon after, the human resource development minister appealed "with folded hands" to pass 14 bills that have been pending before Parliament since UPA 2 assumed office. The basic thrust of both these developments is to legalise the further privatisation and commercialisation of education. The government is willing to pay up to Rs.19,000 per annum per student from the weaker sections to private schools.

While the elite schools may be unhappy, budget private schools would make a windfall profit. Already, according to the Annual Status of Education Report, private schools enrolment has sharply grown from 18.7% in 2006 to 25.6% in 2011. Studies across the states have shown that the per pupil expenditure in such schools is vastly below that of the government schools, while they charge as fees, anything between five to 12 times more.

The Universal Right to Education, international experience shows, can never be achieved, without a network of State-run 'neighbourhood schools'. This has laid the foundation in all developed countries. Our Bill also does not provide for children below six years, with the government refusing to attach aanganwadis to

primary schools. Many of the pending bills on higher education seek to legalise this approach of the government subsidising private education players. Take the case of Andhra Pradesh, which has 705 engineering colleges with the capacity of 3,04,200 students.

However, only 2,08,936 qualified after the entrance examination, leaving an excess capacity of 75,836. There are only 29 such government colleges with a mere 5,276 seats, the rest are private. With the government subsidising the fees of SC/ST/OBC students, AP has spent Rs. 3,621 crore in the last fiscal alone, compared with the budget of only Rs. 1,087 crore for technical education. If all eligible students are to be covered, then Rs.7,500 crore is required.

This is for one state alone. Consider that the initial requirement to start a government college is only Rs. 50 lakh. Instead of starting government colleges, such high subsidies to private colleges, apart from providing them with land and loans, only means the creation of new avenues for profit-maximisation. In addition, the government continues to drag its feet on legislating social control over such private business enterprises with regard to fee structure, syllabus, teachers and staff salaries etc. The salaries of teachers in unaided, budget private schools are, at least, four to seven times lower.

This is precisely the thrust of the neo-liberal reforms that seek to prise open newer avenues for higher private profits at the cost of social good. The economic gain from the export and import of higher education is an essential element in the General Agreement on Trade in Services. According to the Planning Commission, 88% of funds required for the approved expansion of higher education in the 11th Five Year Plan (FYP) were to be generated through the infamous public-private partnership (PPP) route.

The Approach Paper to the 12th FYP, states: "Private initiatives in higher education, including viable and innovative PPP models, will, therefore, be actively promoted. The current 'not-for-profit' prescription in education sector, should be re-examined in a pragmatic manner." Private participation in enlarging the coverage of mid-day meal schemes, fully funded by the government, is being encouraged and a major part of the expansion of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan will take place through PPP.

Professor Tilak of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration has detailed the measures the government is contemplating for legalising such large-scale privatisation and commercialisation (Economic and Political Weekly, March 31, 2012). He concludes that higher education in India has moved "from a system embedded in

welfare statism... to a system based on a neo-liberal market philosophy. Sadly, the transition seems to be complete and dangerously irreversible."

Today, there are 73 private universities and nearly 100 deemed universities compared to none a decade ago. Private higher education today accounts for about four-fifths of enrolment in professional education and one-third overall. Contrast this with the US where less than one-fourth are enrolled in private institutions.

Prof Tilak says: "A 30-40% enrolment ratio seems to be the critical threshold level for a country such as India to become an advanced nation." In 2009-10, the government's gross enrolment ratio was only 15%. Even this low percentage gives all of us a reason to be proud that in every effort at expanding the frontiers of knowledge the world over, Indian youth are playing an important role. The second language in Silicon Valley is an Indian language. Imagine, if this enrolment percentage were to, at least, double, the potential of India to lead the global civilisational advance would be unquestionable.

It is time to recollect the Report of the 1948 Commission on University Education headed by Dr S Radhakrishnan, which said: "As we claim to be a civilised people, we must regard the higher education of the rising generation as one of our principal concerns... Many of these proposals will mean increased expenditure, but this increase, we are convinced is an investment for the democratic future of a free people."

Instead of investing in the future by improving State-run education, qualitatively and quantitatively, UPA 2 is eager to subsidise and promote unregulated commercial shops.

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

India needs private universities

There are few terminologies used in the higher education domain that are taboo for academicians and the public in general, and also, for policymakers in India. One such idea is education delivered by educational institutions that work on the principal of making a "profit". The United States has been experimenting with multiple structures for educating American youth that include not-for-profit public universities, not-for-profit private universities and for-profit private universities. A report from a commission appointed by the US secretary of education, almost five years ago, says, "The entire financial aid system — including federal, state, institutional, and private programmes — is

confusing, complex, inefficient, duplicative and frequently does not direct aid to students who truly need it. Need-based financial aid is not keeping pace with rising tuition." For-profit universities in the US have been spreading like wildfire in the past few years, thanks to the growth in internet access, aggressive marketing and government subsidised student loans. Some of these "universities" are big, such as the University of Phoenix (part of Apollo Group), with over 400,000 students, and Kaplan University, one of the biggest for-profit universities. The US government has recently figured out that students at these universities are failing to repay their government subsidised loans at alarming rates, and it's planning to impose stricter rules on these loans. The for-profit universities have been under criticism for many other reasons; the quality of education, and virtually, for the absence of academic standards. They accept anyone who can pay, and they seem to care primarily about the bottom line. They also haven't addressed the fact that many online students are probably cheating to pass their courses, which aren't very demanding in the first place. As a result, degrees from these universities are not highly regarded by employers, who are right to view them with suspicion. Thus, these universities have built their profits on the back of the federal government's generous student loan programme. Almost a quarter of federal loan dollars go to their students, despite their woeful default rates. However, for-profit universities continue to operate in the US.

In a very recent article in Harvard Business School's January-February 2012 issue, Parag Khanna and Karan Kemka, make a strong case for these universities, particularly in developing nations, saying that growth and wealth can be created by for-profit universities. They argue that "emerging economies do not require the sort of human capital that traditional western universities produce; instead of generalists, they need skilled graduates relevant to their developing industries. For-profit universities first and foremost offer courses that enable students to fill shortages in the market. They are the best recourse for emerging markets to build a skilled labour force, create more jobs, broaden consumer base, and ultimately sustain economic growth". A big pressure game is being played both by for and not-for-profit universities and as a consequence, the US government has postponed "action on a proposal to regulate for-profit colleges and trade schools, granting the (education) industry a reprieve of a few months".

The Indian higher education scenario also is witnessing an interesting challenge. We created, in addition to a public university system, 130 deemed-to-be-universities (DUs), and also, 102 state private universities (SPUs). Both these types of universities, in

a legal sense, have adopted the trust-cum-society/Section 25 industries structure with a not-for profit motto. However, they are pseudo-for-profit entities extracting money from students by a very clever and innovative operational structure. What is interesting is that a majority of DUs have taken advantage of the government by getting subsidised land, water and power. The public university structure takes, and would continue to take, a major load of students. They are facing problems of reduced financial aid from the government and lack of academic, financial and governance freedom. It is unfortunate that reforms in public universities at both the central and state governmental levels are still taking a long time. These reforms also have links and implications for DUs and SPUs. But, our major challenge is to bring more private investments into the higher education domain. It is here that we need to look at the for-profit university idea for India's needs and social-mixed-financial capacities. We should accept the concept of an educational company with clear and well-defined rules, regulations and operational structures. They should be made responsible for financial management and operational structure as any other private industry with the right to distribute surplus to shareholders or private investors. The only additional aspects that should become an integral part of the 'Educational Company Act' are checks and balances on quality, adherence to fair profit as defined by Gandhiji and greater transparency and accountability in operations. Indeed, we should bring all DUs and SPUs under the umbrella of the Educational Company Act. It would automatically curb all the malpractices in both these type of universities. Our gross enrolment ratio at present is around 17 today. We have to triple it over the coming 10 years. The government must, in addition to its own plan for investing more in education, think of an "out-of-box" approach for addressing our larger challenges that are emerging in a knowledge-linked economy.

Source: April 17, 2012/ [My Digitalfc](#)

Don't burden the poor undergrad

Higher education is the responsibility of the state. It cannot dilute this obligation by asking commercial banks to offer student loans.

Educational loans formed the only new proposal for education made in the Budget 2012-13 speech of Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee. The Minister promised to set up a Credit Guarantee Fund, "to ensure better flow of credit

to deserving students." The role and functions of the Fund are to yet to be clearly defined. Student loans are currently operated by commercial banks — public and private — as any other loan programme. The government has laid a few bare conditions in this context, and in 2009-10, a scheme of interest subsidy on loans was announced by the government for students of economically weaker sections.

Increased allocation

Under the scheme, the government would subsidise the interest on loans borrowed from the schedule banks for the period of studies, which would be treated as a period of moratorium. The implementation of this scheme can be expected to be the main function of the proposed Fund, in addition to overseeing the overall implementation of the scheme of educational loans. There is, however, no budget allocation made for setting up the Fund. Allocation for educational loan interest subsidy scheme has been raised considerably from Rs.640 crore in 2011-12 to Rs.800 crore. The actual expenditure on the same scheme in 2010-11 was only Rs.203.3 crore.

Through the subsidy, the government wants to encourage students among weaker sections to go for higher education — technical and professional education. Student loans are gradually and increasingly becoming popular, with the number of loan accounts with commercial banks being 22.8 lakh in March 2011, with an outstanding amount of Rs.42,808 crore, but they are not necessarily popular among students of weaker sections. It is important to note that the government does not spend anything on educational loans, except for the interest subsidy. It does not have to spend huge amounts to promote equity in higher education either, as it believes that interest subsidy on loans itself is sufficient for this.

The Economic Survey (2011-12) makes the intention of the government behind the loans clear, when it states, "over the years, the divergent trajectories of costs and revenues due to rapidly increasing per student costs and increasing tertiary level participation has[ve] created immense pressures on the exchequer.

Moreover, subsidies are inequitable in the sense that irrespective of one's parents' wealth, all individuals in a state subsidized institution get the same level of subsidy. Therefore, there are views that argue for reducing government support for higher education and replacing it with better commercial student loans schemes" (emphasis added).

The government's two-fold intentions are clear: (a) to reduce government support to higher education, and (b) to replace it with student loans. Rather it intends to change the whole method of financing of higher education in the country!

Ironically, the government recognises that many countries in the world provide vast levels of subsidies for higher education. The government is also aware of the rationale. In the same paragraph preceding the above lines, the Economic Survey, stated, "Education being an important component of economic development and a driving force for economic growth, governments in India and across the world are subsidizing higher education."

In support of extending commercial loans for students, the government makes a reference in the Economic Survey to a paper prepared at the Indian Statistical Institute (probably "Education Financing Policy: Income Contingent Loans and Educational Poverty Traps," by Seher Gupta, Tridip Ray, Mausumi Das and Shoumitro Chatterjee). It will not be out of context to note that the said paper — or the extracts given in a Box in the Survey— argues for income-contingent loan schemes as against standard mortgage type loan schemes; it does not plead in favour of loan schemes against public subsidisation of higher education; rather the scholars argue in favour of a type of educational loans (income-contingent loans) against another type (standard mortgage loans). This is not new; in fact, several experts who worked on student loans argued for the same. However, few strongly prefer loans to public subsidies.

The arguments in favour of public subsidies in higher education are very strong, and so is the case against loans. Public subsidies in higher education are favoured on the following grounds: higher education is a public good, producing an immense magnitude of social, economic, political, cultural and technological externalities; higher education is a merit good, consumption of which needs to be encouraged; it is a critical investment both from individual and social points of view; it is one of the best instruments of promoting social and economic mobility and thereby equity in society; it is both equity and efficiency-enhancing at the same time; there are economies of scale in the production of higher education; and, above all, it is a human right, as stated by UNESCO long ago in 1948 in the Charter of Human Rights. These and other fundamental characteristic features of higher education provide a strong case for public subsidisation of higher education.

Inherent weaknesses

On the other side, the inherent weaknesses of student loan schemes as well as the practical nuisance involved in them are also widely known. Despite several supplementary

measures, student loans, in comparison to public funding, are, like high tuition levels, highly regressive, adversely affecting the demand for higher education of the weaker sections; with the burden of loans on their shoulders, students could face severe psychological pressures, affecting their educational performance during studies and labour market performance after studies; and with loans not being available equally across all disciplines but going more towards employment oriented courses, the other disciplines of study might slowly perish, affecting the very structure of the higher education edifice.

Unlike in a few countries, and in the past in India when the national loan scholarship scheme was in operation, it is not the government, but commercial banks which run student loan programmes nowadays. Banks, being banks, have their own principles of business. Obviously, they would consider the repayment capacity of the student as the main principle before advancing a loan. Hence many deserving poor students who cannot provide collateral may be denied loans. This is so, despite several regulations issued by the government and/or the Reserve Bank of India. Banks do not necessarily have any consideration for promoting academic excellence or for helping the poor. Moreover, educational loans have become a very powerful instrument for promoting private education.

Change in attitudes

Above all, student loans change the attitudes of students and of society as a whole towards the very nature of higher education. Public financing of higher education recognises that higher education is a public good and it is the sacred responsibility of the state to provide it to its citizens. Methods like student fee dilute the state responsibility. Student loans assume that higher education is the responsibility, not of the state, nor of the families, but of the student himself, as if education is completely an individual private good, as it is mainly the student who takes the loan and it is the student who will be repaying it. Parents are at best guarantors of the loans. This shift in responsibility from state to parents and then to students will have dangerous implications not only for the development of higher education, but also for the very social fabric and national development.

While many countries heavily subsidise higher education and rely on student loans only partially on a very limited scale, the government of India intends to use this method to altogether replace public funding of higher education.

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

Education must be above political agenda: Kapil Sibal

With a slew of critical education bills remaining pending for parliament approval, a visibly irked Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal on Wednesday said "political interests" were overshadowing national interest in Parliament.

"All will happen if there is political will the interest in empowerment of India is overshadowed by the interest of political parties to be in power," Sibal said while addressing a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

A number of education bills, including one to regulate foreign universities setting campus, a bill for formation of a overarching National Commission of Higher Education and Research (NCHER) and one to control educational malpractices, are pending before parliament.

More than 14 draft legislations are pending, most of them after being cleared by a standing committee.

"It took me one year to make the bill, for two years it is pending in parliament. This is after it has been approved by the standing committee which has members from all political parties and 80 to 90% of the suggestions of the standing committee have been accepted," Sibal said.

"Education and health must be agenda above political agenda," he said.

The HRD minister said that in order to cater the demand of higher education, it was necessary to pass the bills which will make way for involving foreign education providers and also keep check on the quality.

He also stressed on the need to the involve private sector, adding that there was need both to create numbers and ensure quality.

"Right to Education will increase the number of students demanding college education, how will we meet the demand," he said.

The gross enrollment ratio (GER) at university level -- indicating number of students going from school to college -- is presently 17%. The government aims to take it up to 30% by 2030.

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

Students growing, but where's teacher?

As India expands access to education and notches up over 90 per cent enrolment in elementary schools with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and mid-day meal schemes, the need for qualified teachers has grown correspondingly and the manpower crunch is being felt like never before.

So acute is the problem that the Human Resource Development Ministry has devised a first-of-its-kind national mission solely dedicated to teachers and teaching. It seeks to attract teachers in all possible ways: on contract or as adjunct faculty, part-time teachers, visiting faculty, or assistant teachers.

At primary level, recent government studies have revealed that, in addition to the 5.23 lakh vacancies, another 5.1 lakh teachers are needed to meet the pupil-teacher ratio specified under the Right to Education Act. Of the teachers already on the job, 7.74 lakh are largely untrained or without the needed qualifications.

At secondary level, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan requires that 1.79 lakh new teachers be appointed with special focus on teachers for English, mathematics and science.

And there aren't enough seats at teacher training institutes or teacher educators to meet the shortfall. At current levels, the total intake requirement at such institutes is 40,000 for elementary and secondary teachers' courses, but the actual capacity is 28,957. In 2010, when Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and the Northeast together needed 9.8 lakh teachers, their 171 institutes could take in no more than 4,615.

Institutes of higher education too are short of teachers. In the 24 older Central universities, 35 per cent faculty positions are lying vacant. Of the 77 state universities, 19 have 50 per cent or more vacant posts while 14 others are at least 40 per cent short. In technical education institutes, it is estimated that the faculty deficit is over a lakh. University Grants Commission data shows that over 65 per cent positions at the Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Chhattisgarh, and 58 per cent at the University of Allahabad are lying vacant.

The student-teacher ratio as per UGC norms should be around 13.5, but it is actually around 20.9. Government estimates show the number of teachers at higher education level needs to rise 54 per cent, by close to 3.83 lakh. And student enrolment is only growing, at an average 6 per cent per year.

The National Mission on Teachers & Teaching proposes to address issues from quality of teaching to recruitment policies, continuous training, teacher absenteeism, technology-enabled teaching, and vertical and lateral linkages from schools to universities.

The mission aims to correct the skewed pupil-teacher ratio through policy measures, including allowing scope for faculty mobility with incentives, and setting up schools of education that will coordinate between varsities, schools and teacher education institutes.

The states are being urged to develop institutional capacity to offer M Ed programmes in state universities, open schools of education in select universities, hold summer and winter schools to enable a faculty recharge and coordinate with the national mission to help develop e-content.

Miles to go

- 5.23 lakh - vacancies at primary school
- 5.1 lakh - additional primary teachers needed to meet RTE specification
- 7.74 lakh - of the existing teachers are not qualified enough
- 1.79 lakh - secondary teachers needed for English, mathematics and science under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
- 40,000 - is the required intake at institutes for elementary and secondary teacher courses
- 29,000 - (a little less) is actual capacity
- 35% - vacancies at 24 older Central universities
- 50% - or more vacancies in 19 of 77 state universities

Source: April 19, 2012/ [Indian Express](#)

Private sector has to play a big role in education, says Sibal

The private sector has no choice but to play a bigger role in improving the status of higher education in the country. This was stated by Minister for Human Resource Development Mr Kapil Sibal on the occasion of Confederation of Indian Industry's Annual General Meeting and National Conference. To increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education there was massive requirement of funds and the government was in no position to provide that, said the minister.

The agenda of reforms set by the government was stuck because of absence of discourse on key issues. Crucial bills such as the Foreign Education Providers Bill, National Commission for Higher Education and Research Bill and the Malpractices Bill were stuck in Parliament because there was no debate on them, said the minister. Calling upon parties to rise above politics on the crucial agenda of education, he exhorted them to provide all possible support to the government and ensure speedy passage of these bills.

Underlining the importance of state governments in shaping the education scenario of the country,

Mr Sibal called upon them to pay more attention to this sector and focus on the quality of approvals they were giving.

Addressing a session titled India of the Future: Imperatives of Education and Skills, Mr Sibal expressed his concern at the absence of public discourse on the positives of Right to Education. "All we hear in media is concern over the 25 per cent quota for underprivileged children and how it is going to affect the quality of private schools," rued the minister adding that 80-90 per cent education at the elementary level was provided by the government.

Majority of the private schools in tier II and tier III cities are going to benefit from the Rs 1,200-per-child-compensation set by the government for admitting underprivileged children, said the minister. He called for a wider debate and discourse on the details of the legislation and how it was going to change the face of the country in years to come.

On the issue of joint entrance examinations (JEE) of the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), the minister said that it was to ensure fair opportunity to girl students in IITs that the government was working on giving 40 per cent weightage to class XII examinations. While girls fare better than boys in class XII, very few are able to get admission in IITs. This is because boys are sent by parents to coaching institutes away from homes, even neglecting the class XII exams.

Source: April 19, 2012/ [India Education Diary](#)

US ready to help India in education sector

The United States is ready to help India in the education sector in a variety of ways, a top Obama Administration official has said.

"I've met repeatedly with my counterpart, the education minister from India. He's a remarkable man. We think we have challenges... I've said repeatedly, whatever we can do to be helpful we want to do that," Education Secretary Arne Duncan said at a White House news conference yesterday.

Duncan was responding to questions on the visit of four Indian States Education Ministers to visit the community colleges in the country.

"Whatever we can do to partner with the leaders from India, we want to do that. It's a very, very ambitious goal, and we want to see them achieve that," he said.

"I really believe a rising tide lifts all boats, and the more we have an educated workforce here in America, the more we have an educated workforce in India, the more we have that next generation of both employees and consumers, that's great for the world," Duncan said.

"So we want to partner together. We have, I think, still the best system of higher education in the world. We have amazing, amazing community colleges," he said.

"I was at there over the past two days in Wisconsin and Iowa. And whatever best practices we can share, whatever we can do to help India as they go on this very ambitious growth pattern, growth trajectory, we want to do that," said the Education Secretary.

Source: April 19, 2012/ [Indian Express](#)

Let a hundred children blossom

A classroom reflecting life's diversity will benefit children of all strata while enriching teaching experience.

Now that the Supreme Court has validated the Right to Education (RTE), its success will depend on teachers. When I said this to a friend who teaches in a primary school, she said, "you are being unfair." I was startled to hear this response because what I had said was common sense. When I pointed this out to her, she said, "Common sense isn't enough to implement RTE — you need professional insight, so you need policies that allow teachers to develop insight and use it." She is right. For well over a century, India has treated its teachers like messengers who need not know or understand the message themselves. They occupy the lowest rung in the ladder of authority and status in the system of education. The younger the age-group they teach, the lower their own status and salary. That is why the nursery teacher has no status at all, and no university-level training course, which might explain why certain practices are good and others are bad, exists for nursery professionals.

A drill

Primary level teaching is similarly regarded as a drill devoid of intellectual effort. Delhi University stood alone when it started offering a four-year course called Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) in the 1990s. Though this course has produced outstanding teachers, the Delhi government still denies them the status of trained graduate teachers. In its recent verdict, the Supreme Court characterised education "as a process involving many actors," starting the list with "the one who provides education," namely, the teacher. The list then goes on to include the owners of institutions, parents, the child, society, and the state. This clarity of analysis runs through the entire verdict which should become a compulsory reading for administrators

and teachers alike if RTE is to reach its ambitious goals.

Most ambitious among its objectives is the social engineering it proposes by guaranteeing at least 25 per cent share of enrolment in unaided fee-charging schools to children whose parents cannot afford the fee. This provision formed the focus of the petition the Supreme Court has now disposed of with its majority verdict. The petitioners had challenged the provision arguing that reserving 25 per cent seats, that too without the freedom to screen, implies an unwarranted curtailing of the autonomy of unaided private institutions. The analysis used by the Court to reject this argument is both complex and sharp. It shows why the right to run a private school is not absolute. The Court's logic is that Article 21A has come into being because certain Directive Principles, particularly Article 45, required the state to provide 'for' free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. The preposition 'for' is important, says the verdict, because it is in response to the Directive Principles that the new law has established the manner in which the state has decided to follow the Principles. The chosen manner covers both state and private schools. The verdict also reminds us that RTE has been woven into the Right to Life, on the ground that a life worth living must have dignity and that is what education promises to impart. Thirdly, the right encoded in the new law concerns children, and not institutions. Finally, RTE also covers quality as an aspect of education, not something external to it. The state has now fully admitted being a custodian of all children, so it has a right to withdraw recognition from institutions that fail to provide education in the manner stipulated by law. The provision for mixing children of different socio-economic backgrounds now defines what education is.

Upset and startled

This is as clear as it can be. Yet, one can understand why private schools are upset and startled. One simple reason is habit. Unaided schools have been used to thinking that they can isolate their children from the poverty, roughness and the pain of daily life that surrounds prosperous Indians. The belief that learning needs withdrawal from the jungle of life belongs to an old, very old tradition. In the history of pedagogic theory, this view was challenged more than a century ago. In Europe and America, experience was recognised as the best teacher at the beginning of the 20th century, and experience meant direct exposure to the reality and diversity of the human condition. Mixed schooling was bitterly debated before it took root, and in the U.S., it had to await the pressure generated by the civil rights movement. Indian private schools, including the elite among them, are startled

that they are coming under a law they did not help to formulate.

Mixed classroom

These schools have been used to seeing themselves as leaders. Their teachers are accustomed to working with a select group of children whose home environment already gives them the skills they need at school. Now, these teachers will have to cope with a mixed classroom. They will have to learn and practise new pedagogies capable of maintaining high standards in the face of India's socio-cultural diversity and economic disparity. The crucial lesson they have to learn now is that the inclusion of children belonging to the poorer sections and marginalised groups is not just good for them, but also for the remaining 75 per cent. This is so because classroom life will now be experientially and linguistically richer. It will be easier to illustrate complex issues with examples drawn from children's own lives. In the syllabi and textbooks developed in the wake of the National Curriculum Framework (2005), all subjects — and not just the social sciences — require understanding from multiple, often contradictory, perspectives. Peer group learning is as important as what the teacher teaches.

Indeed, the teacher's job is to nurture a classroom culture which enables children to take positive interest in differences of opinion, perceptions and life-style, in order to infuse life and meaning into knowledge.

However, the owners of unaided institutions are going to perceive their critical challenge in finances. They want to know where the funds for the free seats are going to come from. RTE stipulates that the state will subsidise the cost of reserved seats by paying to private schools an amount representing the state's per child expenditure in its own schools. Owners of high fee-charging schools argue that this amount is just not sufficient to cover the expenses that the school incurs for maintaining its quality. This argument contradicts the popular theory, espoused by private schools themselves, that state-run schools are of poor quality because their teachers are unaccountable. By describing the state's compensation for free seats as inadequate, the unaided private schools are conceding the point that the quality of education in state schools is hampered by paucity of funds. In order to substantiate their claim to greater efficiency, private schools must now show better outcomes with the same amount of funds per child that the state spends in its own schools.

Indeed, this may provide to private schools an opportunity to set their own priorities in order. Over the last few decades, a culture of extravagance has engulfed many of India's elite private schools. Many private schools now uninhibitedly flaunt their five-star luxuries, ranging from expensive furniture and marble floors to air conditioning and CCTVs. When you visit one of these schools, you wonder whether you are in a hotel. Their plea for sympathy over the inadequacy of state subsidy for 25 per cent free seats is a bit cloying.

It will be nice if they shift their anxiety to the challenges that RTE throws at everyone concerned with children's education — teachers, trainers, parents, state and society. For teachers, the critical issue is to absorb the new curricular and pedagogic perspective which focuses on learning in place of marks. RTE asks for continuous and comprehensive evaluation, and a ban on corporal punishment and private tuition. These are tall demands and our systemic preparation to meet them has barely begun. Search for short cuts has ominously surfaced in matters like the selection of distance education for teacher training and dependence on NGOs for monitoring. The state and the university system cannot any more neglect the task of regulating teacher training institutes, most of which are now in the private sector.

The RTE Act has assigned the monitoring of implementation to the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). Currently, this fragile agency has hardly any institutional capacity to look after the millions of children whose right to education and dignity has been recognised for the first time in the nation's history. Help from NGOs can hardly substitute a workforce of academic and legal specialists that NCPCR and its State units across the country require. Let us note that the Supreme Court's verdict puts the onus for the execution of RTE on the entire society and the apparatus of the state.

Source: April 20, 2012/ [The Hindu](#)

India becoming popular as education destination

India is growing in popularity as a destination for American students, U.S. Consul General in Chennai Jennifer McIntyre has said.

She was delivering the inaugural address at the 'Building partnerships: role of Indian institutions in supporting the Fulbright-Nehru programme' workshop organised by the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) here on Friday.

Ms. McIntyre said India had become the largest Fulbright scholar exchange partner worldwide.

The foundation not only administers the Fulbright-Nehru programme, but also serves as a link between

Indian students and U.S. educational institutions. "The U.S. and India are not looking at a single model to increase educational exchanges, but rather multiple ways through government, business, university, and people-to-people linkages. And the Fulbright programme has been doing just this — making educational connections at the people-to-people level — for over 60 years," she said.

Talking to The Hindu on the sidelines of the workshop, Sanjeev Varghese Thomas, Professor, Department of Neurology, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences, shared his Fulbright-Nehru Visiting Lecturer experience. "I got a first-hand experience of teaching in an American university. This experience taught me how to fit in and understand the American culture," he said.

Source: April 21, 2012/ [The Hindu](#)

Delhi yet to take final view on education law

Officials in Delhi today said the human resource development ministry was yet to take a final view on whether some provisions of the Right to Education (RTE) Act applied to unaided minority schools.

Quoting from a Supreme Court order, HRD minister Kapil Sibal had written to state education ministers on Tuesday that the act would not apply to unaided minority institutions. But while drafting the letter, intended to chart the course for implementing the RTE Act, the ministry did not appear to have taken into consideration all its implications.

"The ministry is in the process of studying the judgment as to what provisions of the RTE Act would apply and what provisions would not apply to unaided minority institutions," a senior ministry official said in Delhi today.

The letter — written after the apex court had ruled that unaided minority schools need not reserve one-fourth of their seats for the underprivileged — had left no room for ambiguity.

"The Supreme Court has held that the RTE Act and, in particular, Section 12(1)(c) and 18(3) infringes the fundamental freedom guaranteed to unaided minority schools under Article 31 (of the Constitution), and consequently the said Act shall not apply to such schools," it said.

Never known for ceding academic control easily, officials in Delhi today said the ministry was yet to finalise its views.

In Calcutta, school education secretary Bikram Sen denied having received the letter.

The RTE Act makes education compulsory for all children aged between six and 14. However, some of its provisions like automatic promotion till Class VIII and a ban on any form of physical and mental "harassment" have raised concerns in many reputable schools.

J.C. Kurian, a former member of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, said that going by the April 12 Supreme Court judgment, unaided minority schools were free to decide whether they would implement the other provisions of the RTE or not.

In Calcutta, heads of several schools iterated today that the exemption had only offered them the freedom to reconsider some of the provisions of the act that they felt could harm a section of students.

"The exemption from the RTE Act does not mean that unaided schools have been given the liberty to practise whatever that is not there in the act at random," said Terence Ireland, the principal of St James' School. "We want to make sure no school takes advantage of the exemption. We need to work out a formula so that we are able to maintain the high academic standards of our institutions in conformity with the provisions of the act though it is not binding on us to follow the act."

Welland Gouldsmith principal Gilian Rose Mary Hart referred to the need for new teaching techniques: "Even when the act was not there the number of failures till Class VIII was negligible. But now we want to ensure that all the children in every class are ready to go up to the next class. For this we need to train our teachers extensively. If necessary we would have to adopt new teaching techniques."

Hart was among the 40-odd minority school heads who met at Pratt Memorial yesterday. After the meeting, Hart had cited how any effort to discipline students was being "misunderstood" since the act came into effect.

The schools feel sensitising teachers to the objectives of the act could go a long way in helping the schools evolve a new governing policy even if the act is not binding on them. "We are against any physical harm to a child or any form of harassment but it is our duty to ensure the child grows up as a disciplined adult. Even those who framed the act will not mind that," a teacher said.

The Association of Heads of Anglo-Indian Schools is convinced that the Supreme Court has given unaided schools the liberty to frame their own policies.

It has decided that the individual schools will first go into a huddle with their founder bodies and identify

the areas of possible change. The association will then meet to discuss "a uniform model of governance".

"For example, we need to devise ways to discipline children without hurting them. We also need to develop a system by which we can ensure that each student between Classes I and VIII is made ready to be promoted to the next class," said one principal.

Most of the unaided minority schools in Calcutta are affiliated to the Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations. If the law allows them to devise their own policies, the council is unlikely to complain. According to the council's rules, affiliate schools are free to follow their own policies till Class VIII.

Source: April 21, 2012/ [The Telegraph](#)

Government hopeful of passing important education bills

With the budget session of parliament set to resume Tuesday, Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal and education officials are keeping their fingers crossed for a slew of critical but pending education bills that, among others, seeks to establish a body to oversee and standardise higher education in the country and include children with disabilities under the Right to Education.

"There are a number of bills which need to be passed urgently; we hope some will be through in the second half of the budget session. But if parliament is stalled, the bills will be left in the doldrums - as has been the trend," a senior HRD ministry official told IANS on condition of anonymity.

Sibal has in the past week been stressing the need for passing the bills. Blaming the opposition for delays in educational reforms, he has on more than one occasion emphasised that education should not be marred by politics.

"It took me one year to make the bills, but they have been pending in parliament for two years, even though they have been approved by the standing committee, which has representatives from all parties," Sibal said at a recent event.

Here are some of the pending education bills:

1. Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill: It aims to regulate the entry and operation of foreign educational institutions seeking to impart higher education. Every foreign educational institution intending to operate in India has to be notified as a foreign educational provider by the central government on the recommendation of the registrar

(secretary of the University Grants Commission). The bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in May 2010, and then referred to a parliamentary standing committee. The committee gave its report in May 2011.

2. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill: This amendment bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in April 2010, and then referred to a standing committee. It will amend the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 or RTE to expand the definition of "children belonging to disadvantaged group" to include children with disabilities.

3. The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill: Seeking to protect the interests of students, this bill aims to check malpractices in technical and medical educational institutions. It specifies guidelines under which unfair practices such as charging capitation fees, demanding donations and questionable admission processes could be treated as civil or criminal offences.

4. National Commission of Higher Education and Research (NCHER) Bill: It seeks to establish an overarching body which will replace existing structures like the UGC and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

5. Educational Tribunal Bill: It seeks to set up national and state level tribunals. Disputes related to higher educational institutions and students or the faculty and institutions and statutory authorities shall be adjudicated by these tribunals. It was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 2010.

6. The National Academic Depository Bill, 2011: The bill seeks to establish a national database of academic awards in electronic format, which can be verified and authenticated. The central government shall appoint a depository as the National Academic Depository to establish and maintain the national database.

Source: April 21, 2012/[IANS/The Telegraph](#)

Need to focus on vocational education, skills training

I think small and medium enterprises as well as innovative ones can help in creating more jobs and should be encouraged. In France, we encourage people to create their own jobs and enterprises — self-enterprises — and that's been quite a success. — Mr Gilles de Robien, French nominee for ILO top job

Mr Gilles de Robien, Ambassador for Social Cohesion and former Cabinet Minister, is France's candidate for the position of Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). He is among nine candidates in the fray — from Benin, Britain, Colombia, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Niger, Senegal and Sweden — for which voting will be held on May 28.

India has three votes in the ILO governing body, which has 28 Government representatives and 14 each from the employers and workers side. Mr Robien, who was here last week to solicit India's support, spoke to Business Line about the challenges before the almost 100 year-old tripartite UN body. Excerpts:

What is the purpose of your visit?

The purpose is to ask India, its employers and employees to support my candidacy. There are 183 member countries, and India has an important role to play in the governing body. I met the Labour Minister, Mr Y.K Modi (employer) and Mr N.M Adyanthya (trade union) and presented my vision for ILO.

Given the rising economic crisis in Europe, what do you see as the biggest challenge for ILO?

There are many challenges. But one thing is clear. The countries that fared better in weathering the impact of the crisis were those where social protection systems were developed.

For example?

France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands are some. There is a high level of social protection in these countries, although they follow different systems. The big challenge for ILO now is to support countries and help them to grow along with social protection. We feel that any worker who enjoys social protection and guaranteed pensions plays an important role in terms of quality of work.

But, what is the way out for businesses in this situation, as they say they are being forced to lay-off? How can new jobs be created?

Each country has its own system and its particular context. But there are many interesting experiences that could inspire us. There is need to focus on education, vocational education and skills training.

Regarding development of enterprises, I think small and medium enterprises as well as innovative ones can help in creating more jobs and should be encouraged. In France, we encourage people to create their own jobs and enterprises – self-enterprises – and that's been quite a success.

What is your view on gender disparity in pay, even in the corporate sector?

This is an important focus area within the ILO... Issues such as equal pay for equal work are of great concern, including in developed countries such as France. The progress is very slow on pay gap. Opportunities for women are not equal, including in the political system. Parliaments are

male-dominated even in Europe...In fact, India has managed this better than France, at least in Parliament.

Technology is supposed to reduce work time, why then are working hours going up globally?

I don't think there is any link between technological progress and working time. In fact, technology has many advantages, such as you can work from home. It is giving rise to new forms of labour. But, on another note, I think working time is going up because of use of computers and phones 24X7...you never get rid of your work even when you are at home. But these things should be negotiable within an enterprise and with proper social dialogue

Source: April 21, 2012/ [The Hindu Business Line](#)

Indians still do not have enough creative freedom

Professor Sanjay Gupta, head of the research department of NIIT university, Neemrana explained the fact that although there is progress there is still not enough freedom given to the creative aspect of education in India. "Research is on the backfoot and the focus is on placements," he said adding that this is due to the lack of research institutions and funding.

Gupta who was in the city to present a session on 'Careers in Engineering' at the NIIT IFBI imperia in Sector 34, talked about the need for the education system to become more research oriented. He said that with new knowledge coming in everyday and the vast use of computers in every field has changed way different disciplines react to each other. Today different subjects like computers and medicine under biotechnology and many other subjects.

"We are still hesitating to dare into new fields, but there is progress. The addition of Biotechnology into undergraduate courses shows this progress." he remarked.

Source: April 21, 2012/ [Indian Express](#)

Don't make education a business, says CBSE head

Privatisation of education has defeated the purpose of imparting it as a service to society, said Vineet Joshi, CBSE chairman on Saturday.

"Private sector has come forward and participated in carrying forward growth in education. But some institutions seem to be pushing their limits by trying to convert education into a revenue generating business.

You cannot have products and market strategies in the education sector," said Joshi at the Indian Education Congress 2012 conference.

Joshi added that Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) receives close to 20,000

applications from schools for affiliation but only 8,000-odd private schools manage to get it because of the race to privatise the sector.

However, Pawan Agarwal, advisor on Higher Education at Planning Commission, said that though franchising in education is considered a "bad word" in India, it is essential. "If we dissect the word franchise it means standardising. We need greater autonomy within a framework of accountability where private and public institutions work together," he said.

Agarwal added that faith in educational institutions will erode if private players do not co-operate with the government. "Rising cost of higher and secondary education is not letting students make full use of educational loans and scholarships given by the government. There has to be more co-operation between the two entities," he said.

On the other hand, Suman Jyoti Khaitan, vice president, PHD Chambers said even the government runs on a revenue-based education model.

"Government schools lack adequate facilities and hence private institutions are important. The government should act as a facilitator in providing quality education and promoting public private partnership," he said.

"There is a shortage of skills in our country as degrees are being given minus quality education," the chairman added. According to experts, holistic approach towards teaching is essential in both government and private institutions to empower the uneducated population in India.

"We need to measure the quality of education by the outcome i.e. jobs. Also, government should encourage private players and more competition. It should levy more taxes on them so that the tax money can be used to provide better facilities in government schools and institutions," said Karan Khemka, partner, the Parthenon Group.

Source: April 28, 2012/ [Deccan Herald](#)

Universities have lost focus on research activities: AICTE chief

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) chairman SS Mantha on Saturday lamented that universities have become exam conducting centres and lost their focus on research activities. "The universities have lost focus and harps successfully conducting examinations involving over five lakh students like an

achievement," he said while apologizing to the present and former vice chancellors who were seated on the dais.

His critical remarks came while speaking in an international conference organized by Central India Group of Institutions where a galaxy of dignitaries and educationists were present. They included - Nagpur University vice chancellor Vilas Sapkal, former VC SN Pathan, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Technical University VC Raju Mankar (Former LIT director), and AICC secretary Anees Ahmed.

The AICTE chief further stated that lot of interdisciplinary research can happen in traditional universities as they have courses like arts, science and commerce under one roof. "In fact these universities are best places to promote research and VCs have big roles to play," he remarked.

A VJTI, Mumbai, graduate, Mantha lamented that students are no longer attracted to basic sciences and as a result seats lie vacant in many leading institutions. "India's education sector is witnessing skewed growth and in future we will not get good researchers in basic or applied sciences. If you don't promote basic sciences, there will be no basic research," he said, adding that thrust must be given on fundamental research and later on inter/multidisciplinary research.

"People talk about creation of smaller universities as officials of big ones like Mumbai and Pune don't see eye-to-eye. But I believe a lot more should happen on the research field within universities," Mantha, added.

The AICTE chief who was credited with bringing radical changes in the engineering education system said research was a philosophy which didn't come automatically. "It's something that needs to be practised over the years. Additionally, it needs lot of funds along with infrastructure and facilities. The renowned research institutions in the US and UK were established about 150 years back and they all started from fundamental research."

Expressing concern over India's Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), he stated that currently it was negligible as compared to developed countries. "There are calls for not granting new colleges. But if large number of students who take a drop from class X or XII decide to study further, all the existing colleges would fall short for accommodating them. Unfortunately, the financial problem is barring these students from pursuing further education and industry must come forward to help them," Mantha hoped.

Deliberating on all-India common engineering test, he said it was a good move and would save a lot of precious money and time of the students like CMAT which they introduced from this year. "The IITs also welcomed the move but their only issue was taking

board's 40% marks into consideration during admission. But such issues are being sorted out," he informed.

Mantha speak

- In 2008-09, 221 million appeared for Std X exam and 11 million cleared it
- 50% of them dropped as only 16 million appeared for Std XII and 8 million passed
- Of them 4.5 lakh went to basic sciences, 5 lakh in commerce and 10 lakh in arts
- 13 lakh went for distance learning mode while 6 lakh opted for vocational education
- But alarmingly, majority of candidates took a drop after Std X or XII

Source: April 28, 2012/ [Times of India](#)

Government's Sibal zeroes in on Comptroller and Auditor General in fresh battle over finances

The stage is set for another showdown between Union minister Kapil Sibal and the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

This time, too, a figure furnished by the country's accounting watchdog is the bone of contention.

Earlier, in his capacity as the telecom minister, Sibal had questioned the CAG on its estimation of the 'notional' loss in the allotment of 2G spectrum

The minister now seems ready to fight a fresh battle with the national auditor on his original turf - the ministry of human resource development (HRD).

In a report on the accounts of the Central government, tabled in Parliament on April 24, the CAG said the department of higher education under the HRD ministry could not account for a staggering sum of `1.16 lakh crore in 2009-10.

The sum was released as grants-in-aid to different institutions and organisations. Sibal's ministry, on the other hand, has called this figure utterly erroneous because the department could not have disbursed grants exceeding its own budget allocation for that year, which stood at well under `16,000 crore. In the year prior to that (2008-09), over `11,000 crore was allocated for higher education in the Union Budget.

The difference between the CAG and the ministry figures, HRD officials claimed, had arisen because the actual sum was erroneously reproduced in crore when it should have been in lakh.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How does the HRD ministry keep tabs on how its grants-in-aid are spent?

The ministry does this through utilisation certificates or UCs. A UC is nothing but a simple document that has to be submitted to the ministry within a year by the concerned institution or organisation to inform the government of how they have spent the money disbursed to them.

If the UC is not submitted then the government doesn't know what really happened to that specific grant

Why is the HRD ministry upset over the CAG report on the accounts of the department of higher education?

According to the ministry, the CAG has committed a gross error of reproducing the value of the outstanding UCs in crore when actually it should have been in lakh. As a consequence, the value of pending UCs amounting to `1,16,792.17lakh in 2009-10 has been inflated to `1,16,792.17 crore

An upset Sibal let his displeasure be known: 'I wish those who state that the HRD (ministry) has not reconciled `1.91 lakh crore spent by it (between 1977 and 2010) had scrutinised the accounts of the ministry and sought our comments. Had they done so, they would have discovered that the alleged figure is not `1.91 lakh crore but `1,917 crore over the last 35 years,' he said speaking to Mail Today exclusively on Sunday.

Though Sibal wasn't willing to comment further on the issue because Parliament is still in session, inside sources revealed that the HRD ministry could confront the CAG on this damaging accusation in either the standing committee or Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC), wherever the report is tabled.

So, while the ministry accounts - which Mail Today has accessed - reflected the unaccounted amount in 2009-10 as `1,16,792.17 lakh (or roughly `1,167 crore), the table in Appendix V-E referring to paragraph 5.18 of the CAG report showed the figure to be `1,16,792.17 crore (`1.16 lakh crore). And in the paragraph providing an overview of the situation, the CAG report observed that the department of higher education did not know how `1,91,708.52 crore (or `1.91 lakh crore) had been spent between 1977-78 and 2009-10.

'The department of higher education hasn't had a budget provision of more than `20,000 crore since 2008. Let alone the money being accounted for or not, how is it that we managed to dole out grants of over 1 lakh crore in one year in the first place?' a ministry official not authorised to speak to the media asked.

According to Surjit S. Bhalla, the chairman of a market advisory firm who has been critical of the CAG report

on coal block allocations, the supreme auditing authority should consider getting more competent people on board.

If the CAG report has such an anomaly, it's absolutely inexcusable. This is as low as you can get as far as auditing errors are concerned. The government should consider getting more competent people into the CAG. Moreover, there should be some checks on the regulating authorities so that they don't assume the power or licence to kill,' he pointed out.

The debate over the possible discrepancy in the CAG figures could unfortunately divert attention from the fact that the government, even according to its own records, was clueless on how public money running into thousands of crores had been spent on higher education.

For the uninitiated, the HRD ministry keeps tabs on how its grants are spent through utilisation certificates. These certificates have to be submitted to the ministry within a year by the institutions or organisations concerned to inform the government how they have spent the money allotted to them.

The non-submission of certificates signifies that not only is the Union government unaware of how the money has been used, it is in the dark about the learning outcome - whether or not the amount has actually been disbursed for intended purposes such as scholarships.

Significantly, the ministry does not release fresh grants to the institutions whose utilisation certificates for past grants are pending.

'Unaccounted money does not necessarily mean that the amount has been misappropriated.

In my opinion, this is basically a result of bad governance where fund disbursal agencies of the ministry such as the UGC and the AICTE have been lax in enforcing financial discipline on universities and institutions that have received public money,' Central Advisory Board for Education member Vinod Raina said. The CABE is the apex body that advises the central government on education.

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME STORY – *WHAT THE CAG REPORT STATES*

The department of higher education under the HRD ministry had 150 outstanding utilisation certificates worth ` 1,16,792.17 crore (or roughly ` 1.16 lakh crore) in 2009-10

From 1977-78 up to March 2010, 2,022 utilisation certificates worth ` 1,91,708.52 crore (or ` 1.91 lakh crore) were pending.

WHAT THE HRD MINISTRY CLAIMS

The department of higher education had 150 outstanding utilisation certificates (UCs) worth ` 1,16,792.17 lakh (or roughly ` 1,167 crore) in 2009-10. CAG has wrongly reproduced the value in crore

From 1977-78 to March 2010, 2,022 utilisation certificates worth ` 1,91,708.52 lakh (or 1,917 crore) were pending. CAG has wrongly reproduced the value in crore

Source: April 30, 2012/ [Mail online India](#)

Pulse of Indian economy

From foreign direct investment (FDI) to a demographic dividend, globally India has been the talking point in view of its rapidly growing economy. However, the Global ratings agency Standard & Poor's revised outlook on India's long-term sovereign rating to 'negative' from 'stable' could adversely affect the way foreign investors view India.

At a time when such issues are raising questions, Arindam Chaudhuri, director of IIPM Think Tank, an India-centric research body, delivered a lecture on the future of Indian economy and FDI at the Harvard Business School (HBS) recently.

Currently on an American business schools tour, Chaudhuri started with an opening lecture at UC Davis, Graduate School of Management, University of California, followed by his lecture at HBS. In the last leg of his tour, he will speak at University of Denver (Daniels College of Business) and University of North Carolina (Kenan-Flagler Business School).

Speaking at HBS, Chaudhuri presented a comparative study between the Indian and Chinese economy. Applauding the Chinese success story, he busted the myth that India and China were comparable at all. While he reiterated that India's democratic framework will give the country its edge, he also emphasised on the role of the private sector in contributing towards the Indian economy.

The talk was followed by an interactive session where Chaudhuri talked about a range of strategies to survive in a globalised world. Urging Indian students at Harvard to look beyond profit and work towards a world free of poverty, he urged that they come back to India after completing their studies and contribute in the areas of education and healthcare.

Source: April 30, 2012/ [Times of India](#)

Despite Waves, Indian Right to Education Act Remains on Track

On April 12, 2012, India's Supreme Court ruled in favor of the constitutional validity of the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009, which went into effect in April 2010. Several private schools petitioned the RTE

Act, concerned about their autonomy and the financial burden the Act places on them.

Created to guarantee all children receive an elementary school education, the Act mandates all schools in India, even private unaided schools, must dedicate 25 percent of seats to underprivileged students ages six through 14. Only private minority schools are excepted. The law also makes education free and mandatory for children between the ages of six and 14.

The government will reimburse private schools for the cost of educating each student admitted under the RTE Act in an amount not to exceed outlay per pupil in public schools. Whether or not the government will also reimburse extracurricular activity costs remains uncertain. Either way, reimbursements will not cover the total cost. The government spends about US \$60 or 3,000 rupees for every elementary school student.

The court said, "A child... denied the right to... education is not only deprived of his right to live with dignity, he is also deprived of his right to freedom of speech and expression enshrined in ... the Constitution." An estimated 17 million children are part of India's work force, each child working about 21 hours weekly. Approximately 8 million children, mostly girls, fail to complete primary school.

Despite some implementation issues, the RTE Act is hailed as a historic step in India's approach to education, placing responsibility on the government to ensure all children attend school. While the Act is monumental, critics, like this one, call for the government to improve public schools, which comprise about 80% of India's educational system.

Source: April 30, 2012/[open equal free](#)

Skills is the future

With a young population and government's focus on skills development, India has the potential to become a leader in vocational education.

As Indian employers compete with the best in the world, they will increasingly demand the best-trained personnel.

In the medium term, India's surplus labour will coincide with labour shortages in many parts of the world, giving it a chance to provide the 'workforce of the world.' But the country can do this only if its trained personnel meet the quality standards demanded internationally. Thus, acquisition of skills is the future of the Indian job market and its global economic clout.

POLICY PUSH

In the Union Budget 2012-13 the government has doubled its allocation of funds for skills development under the National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) to Rs 1,000 crore, raising the corpus of the fund to Rs 2,500 crore.

The launch of the credit guarantee fund and exempting vocational training institutions from service tax are steps taken to help make skills training affordable.

SECTORAL FOCUS

The National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) has identified over 21 key sectors (including the unorganised sector) that will be of particular importance. Of these, manufacturing, textile, construction, automotive, retail and healthcare are key. It will also have to ensure that it provides the 'green' skills needed to make the transition to greater sustainability so that India can ensure that it can meet modern economic demands.

In the short-term, training skills are most needed so that quality training is available at the scale required to meet the country's ambitions.

The NSDC as part of its mandate is also facilitating setting up of sector approaches in the form of 31 Sector Skills Council (SSCs). Ten SSCs in the automotive, retail, security, healthcare, IT/ITES, gems and jewellery verticals, among others, have already been approved.

GRASSROOTS-LEVEL

Vocational education must begin from the early stages. It must be introduced in schools such that it coheres with academic options rather than competing with them. Learners should be given 'taster' opportunities accompanied by professional career advice and guidance. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is already developing plans along these lines.

SOFT SKILLS

Learning technical skills is not enough. Soft skills that make people employable are as critical.

The apprenticeship model is particularly effective at developing these skills alongside technical skills; but for those on non-apprenticeship courses it is important to understand the attributes that will enable one to get a job and progress faster within the workplace.

Vocational education can only have its full economic impact if it produces people with skills that can get them well-paid, fulfilling work as per industry requirements.

PARTNERSHIP MODELS

The sector skills councils will be a key mechanism to ensure that the training system meets the

fundamental requirement of training as per industry requirements.

There are, however, more ways in which the industry can work with training providers in support of shared aims - by offering more apprenticeships, by working with training providers on curriculum development, or by offering secondments to training personnel to ensure they are familiar with the latest tools, techniques and technology in use in their sector.

Recent years have seen improvements in this area with a number of ITIs been adopted by private companies in the PPP (public private partnership) mode and a significant upgradation programme introduced by the ITIs.

Employers, particularly large ones, are also playing an active role in setting up domain-based higher education initiatives. However, there is an urgent need to facilitate more involvement by SMEs who make up the majority of India's employers.

INFORMAL SECTOR

This highlights another issue in India, which is the size of the informal sector in the labour market. While formal training and apprenticeships may be better equipped to serve the formal system, there is a need to develop models that can deliver for small organisations as well as support people to become self-employed.

This will include support for on-the-job training, like that outlined in the recent budget, which proposes to provide a weighted deduction of 150% of the expenditure incurred on skills development in manufacturing.

India can also look at making its apprenticeship scheme work better for small employers by making skilled labour productive more quickly and bringing down the cost for employers.

The challenge is to bring down the length of training while raising the quality so that the return on investment for employers is better guaranteed. There are a number of international models of informal sector apprenticeships that can be studied in this regard.

Skill development is the essential ingredient to future economic growth in India as the country transforms into a diversified and internationally competitive economy.

Source: April 30, 2012/[Times of India](#)

RESOURCE

Here is what an ideal regulator of management education should be like

Instead of stifling b-schools with autocratic punitive powers, an AICTE-like regulator should instead be aiding them with faculty development, upgradation and internationalization.

Two decades of economic liberalisation have proved that the dismantling the 'license-quota-permit raj' and infusing healthy competition into the Indian industry has been good for the health of the economy. Despite upheavals in the global economy and, particularly, the worldwide recession of 2007-09, the Indian economy has continued to grow at a high rate without major turbulences.

Against the backdrop of profound changes in the industry and in the Indian economy, our social sector, which includes education and health, has not undergone any major transformations. Our social indicators have always put India in the company of very poor countries of Asia and Africa.

Higher education in India has expanded rapidly during the last few decades, but our current Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) remains way below the global average. In absolute terms, India can boast of having the second largest youth population in the world between the age group of 18 years to 24 years which attends college — 14.6 million. This is the second highest in the world, after China. But it is ironical that in the ranking of the world's best Universities and Colleges, India fares rather unsatisfactorily.

Higher education in India has been regulated by 13 regulatory bodies which including the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). UGC came into existence in 1956 and AICTE in 1987 via acts of Parliament. AICTE regulates more than 11,000 technical institutions in the areas of engineering, management, pharmacy, architecture, hotel and catering management, applied arts, town planning and computer applications, etc.

AICTE regulations are very comprehensive but often not in-sync with changing times. Most norms and standards prescribed by AICTE are static, input-oriented and related to physical facilities, faculty, etc. The norms for approval of new institutions and programmes under AICTE's domain were framed in the 1990s when there were very few technical institutions, and mostly located in southern India and Maharashtra.

During the last few years, AICTE has received flak from all quarters for its inability to regulate technical institutions in a proper manner. There is a plethora of complaints from students, parents, teachers, recruiters, media, parliamentarians and society in general, about the failure of AICTE to ensure quality, access and equity in technical institutions.

Where did AICTE go wrong?

AICTE was envisioned to play the role of a catalyst regulatory body catering to the burgeoning manpower needs of the Indian economy in the post-liberalisation era. Instead of fulfilling this role, it has become a medium for the nexus of corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen helping each other in making quick money through setting up more and more technical institutions(including management colleges). All norms of infrastructure, faculty and curriculum have been flouted. Institutions have been allowed to be set up in difficult and remote locations, far away from the industry. AICTE has given licenses to set up thousands of engineering colleges and management institutions without any relevance to the actual manpower needs of industry.

Business education under AICTE's control has grown mostly as a channel to make fast profits rather than as a serious attempt to groom managers suitable for the Indian and global economy. The exponential growth of b-schools happened during 1995-2011 and resulted in the increased supply of MBAs or PGDMs, far in excess of actual industry demand.

Growth of b-schools in India during 1995-2011		
Period	No of b-schools added	Average Annual Addition
1950-80 (30 yrs)	118	4
1980-1995 (15 yrs)	304	20
1995-2000 (5 yrs)	322	64
2000-2006 (6 yrs)	1017	169
2006-2011 (5 yrs)	3900	556

AICTE allowed a mindless expansion of b-schools during 2006-11, a period under which both the global and Indian economies witnessed severe recession and a slump in demand for MBAs. It is owing to the faulty working of AICTE that we are now on the verge of a 'b-school bubble burst'. It has already begun and according to a Times of India report, 65 b-schools are facing closure. It has also been reported that three lakh seats of engineering and management courses could not be filled up during 2011-12.

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) has noted the failure of AICTE in its regulatory role and suggested disbanding of both AICTE and UGC. The NKC Report (2007-09) states that "NKC advocates good governance rather than the prevalent system of prior control being exercised by AICTE in this sphere. The current regulatory regime focuses on punitive action rather than nurturing institutions'.

The role of AICTE has also been criticised by industry bodies for its failure to develop technical education in tune with changes in the industry, society and the global economy. FICCI, in its report on the Regulatory Framework for Technical Education, has said 'AICTE has not been able to manage the multiple functions bestowed upon it as per its statutory mandate'. FICCI has recommended that AICTE be dissolved and a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) be set up with an objective of minimum regulatory interference and flexible norms for the functioning of institutes.

What should be the ideal role of the Regulator?

Nobody knows the future of AICTE since the ministry of human resource development (MHRD) has been trying to merge it with the proposed NCHER. Much will depend on the dynamics of the Indian parliament when the NCHER Bill is introduced by MHRD. However, we need an effective regulator for higher education which includes management education also. In the ideal environment, a regulator will not be expected to behave like an autocrat enjoying unchecked punitive powers in hand.

A good regulator of b-schools should be a professional agency working with a positive mindset, equipped with trained professionals who are in touch the latest in management education and are also connected to Indian and global business via industry bodies and professional associations. It should be managed by eminent management academicians and industry professionals. They should develop a vision and mission for Indian b-schools based on a comprehensive survey of global business education. The regulator should establish relationships with Ivy League b-schools and international accreditation bodies like AACSB, EFMD and AMBA.

What should be the mandate for such a regulator? Should it confine itself to development and nurturing or it should also wield punitive powers against those b-schools which do not fulfill their promises made to the regulator, students and recruiters? Should the regulator provide a broad framework of business education and then leave it to the b-schools to work within that framework with scope for a lot of freedom, experimentation and innovation? There are different models of b-schools regulations across the world. Should we emulate the models of developed nations



where independent accreditation agencies ultimately decide what is right and what is wrong for management education?

For next 10 years, whosoever is the regulator of Indian b-schools, can play the role akin to a gardner who does everything starting from seeding, planting, watering and pruning — allowing every plant, metaphorically speaking, to grow and every flower to blossom to their truest potential. The AICTE, NCHER or any other agency designated for the regulation of b-schools can develop a new model of governance of institutions which is in sync with the current Indian and global realities.

Since almost all b-schools face shortage of good faculty, the regulator can establish 20 Faculty Development Centers (FDCs) for undertaking a variety of activities in providing continuous education to faculty of b-schools. These FDCs can be set up in twenty biggest clusters of management education, say Delhi, Pune, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, Noida, Indore, Jaipur, Lucknow, Kolkata, Raipur, Bhubaneswar, Trivandrum, Guwahati, etc. Each FDC can be attached to a reputed and well-established b-school whose faculty will offer training and PhD programmes to the faculty of b-schools in the neighbouring areas. These FDCs can produce 200 PhDs and train 10,000 faculty members every year. Within the next 10 years, as many as 2,000 young faculty can be groomed to qualify for PhD degree by these FDCs.

To meet the challenges of globalisation, Indian b-schools have to adopt to the latest technology and become internationalised. Both these imperatives are difficult, time-consuming and require huge fund supplies.

Individually, many b-schools may not be able to invest hefty investment on high-cost technology and international accreditation.

But the ideal regulator can play a very constructive role in helping Indian b-schools to attract students from Asia, Africa and even from Europe and America. The Ministry of External Affairs and the MHRD can join hands to use our embassies for promoting Indian b-schools in these markets. Of course, we will have to work hard in augmenting infrastructure of top 100 b-schools where foreign students can live and study comfortably. India has all ingredients to become hub of higher education in management, engineering and medical sciences. If Singapore, UAE and Malaysia can become hubs for higher education, India can also attract

lakhs of international students in management and other discipline.

Source: April 16, 2012/pagalguy.com

270 million Indians are illiterate: Report

About 270 million people aged 15 years and older still remain illiterate in India, despite the country making major progress in cutting down the number of school drop-outs over the years, according to report.

According to the Opportunity for Action report by the International Youth Foundation (IYF), there are an estimated 270 million Indians aged 15 and older who are illiterate, while young women aged 15 to 24 are twice as likely as young men their age to be illiterate.

And among the working youth, approximately one in four is illiterate, and fewer than one in five completes secondary education, said the Microsoft Corp commissioned report.

The education deficit, according to the report, is not filled by technical or vocational education and training (TVET), as only six per cent of urban youth and three per cent of rural youth attend TVET at the secondary level.

Attendance rates for girls have declined since 1999, and currently fewer than 25 per cent of girls in India attend vocational training.

On the positive side, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have promising applications for education delivery in the country, although such initiatives must be tailored to regional differences, and teacher training in the use of ICTs is crucial to a programme's success, it said.

On a global basis, the unemployment rate for youth is currently 12.7 per cent, or more than double the six per cent global average for unemployment as a whole.

The report documented that nearly 75 million young people globally, 9.9 per cent of which are in South Asia, are unemployed. Less than half (44 per cent) of them enroll in the equivalent of India's senior secondary school and even fewer graduate.

Source: April 17, 2012/Economic Times

Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation (ASERF) is guided by the vision of eminent educationist, industrialist and philanthropist Dr. Stya Paul's vision of value based holistic education for a responsive and responsible citizenship with a finely ingrained attitude of service before self. It is supported by Apeejay Stya Group, a leading Industrial & Investment House of India with interests in diverse fields. It will attempt to shoulder the efforts in serving the broader issues of Access, Quality, Equity & Relevance of Education and gear up to face the challenges of the new world order using collaborative and multidisciplinary approach. The foundation will become the repository of information on education and conduct research in new educational methodologies while collaborating with premier educational institutions globally.



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