APEEJAY STYA EDUCATION RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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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*

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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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Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation
Apeejay Stya House
14 Commercial Complex, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, Part – II, New Delhi - 110048
Tel. No. (91 – 11) 29228296 / 97 / 98. Fax o. (91 – 11) 29223326
E-mail: aserf@apeejay.edu **Website:** www.aserf.org.in

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ASPECT

Higher education in India

Over the next five years India will establish 200 new universities and 40 new high-level institutes. Nine additional IITs will also be established, bringing the total number of IITs to 16. This was stated by Indian human resource development minister Kapil Sibal in the Lok Sabha recently. A sum of Rs800 billion, the biggest-ever allocation, is being set aside in the 12th five-year-plan of India (2012-2017) to propel it into a strong knowledge-based economy.

India has presently 17 percent of its youth between the ages of 17 of 23 enrolled in the higher education sector (as opposed to Pakistan's 7.6 percent). It plans to increase this enrolment to 30 percent of the same age group by the year 2030 (Chetan Chauhan, The Hindustan Times, April 25). India decided to replace its University Grants Commission with a stronger federally funded organisation, National Commission of Higher Education and Research. This was approved by the Indian Cabinet in December 2011.

The recent steps taken by India are the result of a detailed presentation made to the Indian prime minister in July 2006 by Prof C N R Rao about the threat posed by the remarkable transformation underway in higher education in Pakistan. In an article entitled "Pak threat to Indian science," Neha Mehta wrote: "Pakistan may soon join China in giving India serious competition in science." (The Hindustan Times on July 23, 2006.)

This presentation to the Indian prime minister set in motion a whole set of reforms in the higher education sector in India with a sharp increase in the salary structures of academics and a manifold increase in the budget for higher education. India had been giving the highest priority to higher education, science and technology for decades. The first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, had already laid the foundations of modern India in the 1950s and 1960s. The prime minister of India himself headed what he considered to be the most important ministry in India – science and technology.

The progress made by the higher education sector in Pakistan in the last decade is reflected from the increase in enrolment from 276,000 students in 2003 to 803,000 in 2011, increase in number of universities and degree-awarding institutes from 59 in the year 2000 to 137 by 2011, and an increase in international research publications from only 636 in 2000 to 6,200 in 2011. The PhD output too underwent an explosive growth. During the 55-year period from 1947 to 2002, only 3,281 PhDs had been granted by all our universities (a shocking average of about 3-4 PhDs per university per year)! During the subsequent eight-year period from 2003 to 2010, this number was exceeded and 3,658 PhDs were granted. There was maximum emphasis on quality, as all PhD theses were evaluated by at least two top experts in technologically advanced countries before approval.

The silent revolution that occurred in the higher education sector in Pakistan was lauded by neutral international experts and agencies and numerous reports published on it. In a book published by the Royal Society (London) entitled A New Golden Age the example of Pakistan was cited as the best model to be followed by other developing countries. Nature, the world's leading science journal, published four editorials and several articles on the transformation that was occurring in Pakistan and advised the new government in 2008 not to go back to the "stone age" that existed prior to the reforms introduced after 2002 in higher education.

The chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Education announced it as "Pakistan's golden period in higher education" and called for my reappointment after I had resigned in protest against the suspension of scholarships of HEC scholars sent abroad. I was conferred a high civil award by the Austrian government and the TWAS (Italy) Prize for institution building for leading these changes.

After the remarkable progress achieved in Pakistan in the higher education during 2003-2008, we have been systematically trying to destroy the one sector that had raised a gleam of hope among the masses. First, the development budget of the higher education sector was slashed by about 50 percent in 2009. Then, the scholarships of the several thousand Pakistani students studying in foreign universities were withheld, forcing them to go literally begging for funds on the streets of countries where they had gone to brighten their future. This was followed by the status of the executive director of the HEC of a federal secretary being withdrawn, thereby preventing the HEC from holding Departmental Development Working Party (DDWP) meetings and approving projects for Pakistani universities. The projects to establish foreign engineering universities in major cities of Pakistan were closed down. This would have saved Rs50 billion annually and provided Pakistani students with the opportunity of getting quality education with foreign degrees without going abroad.

The HEC had found that 51 of our "honourable" parliamentarians had forged degrees and those of

another 250 parliamentarians were suspect. In any other country such persons would have had to go to jail for cheating and forgery. However the Election Commission, instead of declaring their elections null and void, became a party to the game, in clear defiance of the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Why the Supreme Court has chosen to look the other way in this matter of enormous national importance is beyond understanding. A group of these "honourable" parliamentarians with forged degrees plotted to shred the HEC into pieces, and under their pressure a government notification was issued on 30th November 2010 shredding the HEC into pieces.

On my appeal to the Supreme Court of Pakistan this was overturned and the Supreme Court declared the move as unconstitutional. The greedy and evil designs continue. Another Bill moved in parliament recently is directed to take away the Rs44 billion budget of the HEC from the 17-member commission and give the funds to a secretary in the federal government to distribute. This will open the doors to corruption. At present the powers to allocate funds are vested with a 17-member commission that included four provincial secretaries, two federal secretaries, vice chancellors and eminent citizens.

So, while India progresses in leaps and bounds to strengthen its higher education, science and technology sectors, Pakistan sinks deeper into a quagmire created by incompetent and crooked parliamentarians. Following the spectacular successes of the HEC in Pakistan, India is in the process of closing down its UGC, to establish the National Commission of Higher Education and Research on the pattern of the HEC. Pakistan is however systematically destroying its HEC.

Clearly it is not India that is our enemy – we ourselves are!

Source: May 05, 2012/The News

NEWS

2 key education Bills passed by RS as Sibal tones down

With HRD minister Kapil Sibal at his conciliatory best to disarm the Opposition's indignation against his legislative agenda, 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 eight new IITs their status through an Act of Parliament.

A relieved and ``humbled'' Sibal expressed his ``gratitude'' to all the ``distinguished'' MPs for ``their valuable comments'' at the end, after earlier mounting an Opposition outreach programme to ensure his long-pending education bills get the Parliament nod.

While Chandan Mitra of BJP held Sibal had not been able to allay fears that the upgrade of Banaras Hindu University's (BHU) Institute of Technology into a full-fledged IIT would not diminish or ``subsume'' the university's unique culture and heritage, he too applauded the minister's ``marked transformation''.

``He (Sibal) was at his persuasive best today...we saw him in a different avatar than we normally see him,'' said Mitra. Promptly added Ravi Shankar Prasad from the BJP benches, ``And, we want that avatar to continue in the future as well.''

The Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2011, already passed by Lok Sabha, seeks to set up eight new IITs at Bhubaneswar, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, Indore, Jodhpur, Mandi, Patna and Ropar and integrate BHU-IT, within the ambit of the Act. All these institutions shall be declared institutes of national importance as per the amended Act.

The National Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010, also passed by the Lok Sabha, declares certain institutions of technology as institutes 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.

Sibal said any fear about inclusion of BHU under the ambit of the Act was unfounded. ``If there is any misgiving, one would be ready and revisit in the manner that members consider it appropriate,'' he added.

Source: May 01, 2012/Times of India

Doubling higher education enrolment to meet target will cost R9.5 lakh cr by 2020

India's target of doubling the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education by 2020 will come at a price of R9.5 lakh crore and require an additional 10,510 technical institutions, 15,530 colleges and 521 universities. GER is the number of actual students as a share of all potential students.

The human resource development (HRD) ministry has set a goal of doubling GER to 30% by 2020 from the current 15%. The ratio was approximately 12% in 2008-09 — only a fourth of the average GER in developed countries (54.6%), even worse than developing countries in transition, which have 36.5%.

"The investment required in higher education is more than R 9 lakh crore if we want to achieve 30% GER. This includes the cost of setting up more institutes, infrastructure and salaries," said a ministry official. These are the estimates of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration.

At present, India's higher education system has 544 universities including 42 central, 261 state, 73 private and 130 deemed ones, and close to 31,320 colleges. Currently, 14.6 million students are enrolled in higher education. An additional capacity of about 25 million seats will be required over the next decade to meet the increased demand.

According to Ernst & Young, in the last decade, the number of universities in the country grew at a CAGR of 7.5% as against the 4.7% growth observed from 1951-2001. The number of colleges have grown at a CAGR of 11% in 2001-2011 as against 6.1% during 1951-2001.

The GER in the 18-24 age group is about 13% and it is a summation of individual GERs in various disciplines like arts, science, commerce, engineering, polytechnics, distance education, vocational education and medicine.

The 11th Five-Year Plan had set a target of taking higher education GER to 15% by 2011-12 and the University Grants Commission (UGC) had said that to achieve this target, a significant increase in allocation to higher education, close to the targeted 1% of the GDP on higher education, would be required.

The funds requirement includes faculty costs as well.

A recent task force of the HRD ministry said the lecturer-to-student ratio in the country is 1:20.9, against 1:13.5 recommended by the University Grants Commission at 1:12 for postgraduate students and 1:15 for undergraduates. The shortage of faculty stands at 3 lakh at present.

Source: May 02, 2012/Indian Express

RTE, right now, is really too much, say pvt schools

Even as the state government has been insistent upon implementing the Right to Education (RTE) Act from this academic year itself, private schools say that is not possible owing to certain nitty-gritties.

Representatives of private schools held a meeting on Tuesday to discuss the implementation of the act. After deliberations, they concluded that it was impossible to implement the act this year. Sudi Suresh, secretary of Karnataka State Private School Management Federation, said all schools had finished their admission process and the order regarding implementing the act came only after that. He asserted that the practical constraint was too big an issue to overcome in such a short time.

Representatives of Karanataka Unaided Minorities Schools' Management Association, Association of ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) Schools, and Management of Independent CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) Schools' Association also attended the meeting. After a day-long meeting, the representatives held a press conference, wherein their voiced their grievances regarding the RTE rules.

Suresh said they would present a memorandum to primary and secondary education minister Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri and secretary of education Kumar Naik on Wednesday, seeking a meeting with them on Wednesday itself to discuss their issues. He said the sooner the rules were clarified, the better it would be meeting now.

The associations that took part in the meeting said they wanted a meeting with the education minister at the earliest so that clarification may emerge regarding the act and its implementation. One of the members pointed out that schools did not have the luxury of time to prepare for the act, adding that the problem lied in the fact that the state government made rules without consulting the stakeholders.

A member of the association of ICSE schools said they were not against the RTE per se, but they wanted that it be introduced in phases. The member said that instead of asking schools to reserve 25% of seats in one go, the quota should have been introduced in phases, starting with 10% seats. He said had that been done, the schools would not have faced much problem regarding implementation of the act.

The representative further pointed out another concern: what if a student produces a certificate, claiming to be from a minority community? He asked how the schools could tell if the certificate is authentic

Source: May 02, 2012/DNA Indian

CM nod for Tata initiative to set up IIIT in State

After establishing three central institutions in Jharkhand in recent years, under the Ministry of Human Resources Development's (MHRD) ambitious projects for imparting quality higher education in remote areas, the fourth project of Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) has remained in limbo since two years.

The Union Cabinet took a decision on December 7, 2010 to establish 20 IIITs across the country on a Private-Public partnership and Jharkhand's share of setting up one such institute is still awaiting final clearance over availability of hassle-free land.

In a bid to establish an information technology institute in the State and impart quality technical education, corporate giant Tata Group has come forward to take a leading step in this direction. Earlier in March this year, during his visit to Jharkhand with his successor Cyrus Mistry, Ratan Tata had put up a proposal to the CM to build a knowledge centre and develop the IIIT under its purview.

The State presently with three central institutions - Central University of Jharkhand, Indian Institute of Management and National University of Study and Research in Law, has felt the need of a central-level institute for Information Technology.

To upgrade the quality and level of higher education in the State, the Tata Group is keen to take an initiative to start the proposed Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) to be set up in Jharkhand.

Although, the State Government has sanctioned a 110 acres area next to the land for the proposed site of IIM-Ranchi, in Kanke Mauja Nagri, there have been protests by the local people over the transfer of land to the Government.

Initially, the MHRD had mentioned that the IIIT will only be functional in the State if the respective State Government allots 50-100 acres of land for free for the establishment of the institution. The capital cost of each of the IIIT is estimated around Rs 128 crore, which will be partially borne by the Central Government, State Government and industrial firms on a 50:35:15 ratio.

The State Government has found its prospective industrial firm in Tata Group for bearing the 15 per cent share of the total estimated cost, but is still stuck on the availability of a protest-free and clear land.

Chief Minister Arjun Munda in a meeting with HM Nerurkar, MD of Tata Steel on Tuesday has given his nod to to set up Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) in the State. He emphasised on the need for the steel major to ensure civic amenities like water, electricity, medicine, education across its working areas. Principal Secretary to CM, DK Tiwary was also present on the occasion.

During the course of discussions, Nerurkar apprised the CM about the ongoing welfare activities of the company. He said that that the company is dedicated towards growth of the State and will ensure implementing its social obligations.

The new initiative of setting up an information technology institute by the Tata Group is indicative of the fact that the project, set under a deadline of nine years, may become a reality soon.

In the proposal for setting up IIIT, the Centre has assured `10 crore to each IIIT for expenditures during the first four years after its establishment. MHRD will also bear the annual funds, while the success of the IIIT will depend upon the industrial firm associated with the institute.

Source: May 08, 2012/Daily Pioneer

India Calls for Greater Support From Corporations to Expand Its Higher-Education System

India's ambitious plans to expand its higher-education sector over the next five years requires extensive corporate support, with businesses contributing at least half of the $7.5-billion needed, says a new report, according to The Indian Express. The recommendation came from a government-sponsored committee led by N.R. Narayana Murthy, the founder of Infosys, to explore the role of private players in education.

In addition to increased contributions from companies, the report recommends the government give land free for 999 years to a private entities to set up educational institutions, academic facilities, and technology parks. "The existing higher-education system in India lags in comparison to global standards and is inadequate to meet the demand. There is a need to engage the corporate sector to invest in existing institutions and set up new ones," Mr. Murthy said.

Source: May 09, 2012/Chronicle

Staff crunch, temporary campuses mar new IITs

The government's attempt to bolster professional education institutes has turned a cropper, with the new Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISERs) hit by an acute shortage of faculty and are still functioning from temporary campuses. A parliamentary panel report has asked the HRD ministry to ensure that these gaps are met so that the premium institutes can function more effectively.

The standing committee on HRD has expressed concern over the shortage of faculty that is as high as 60% in some IITs. The sanctioned posts in the new IITs are about 90, but none of the new institutes have been able to fill up their posts. While

IIT-Hyderabad had the support of 74 faculty members, institutes in Patna (55), Bhubaneswar (50), Indore (38) and Mandi (35) had below-par strength. IIT-Jodhpur was worst off, with only 32 members in its faculty.

"The committee is of the view that only qualified and experienced faculty can make the functioning of any institution, specially premier institutions like IIT meaningful and effective," the report said.

It also expressed concern over the running of new IITs from temporary campuses despite being set up between 2008 and 2010. In the case of new IITs, either the location of the permanent campus was being finalized or land allotted or construction work was to start.

In the case of IITs in Bhubaneswar and Mandi, for instance, the foundation stones were laid in February, 2009, but they continued to function from temporary campuses. The report said that it was clear that it would take some time before IITs begin to function from "well-structured and well-equipped campuses."

Five IISERs (in Pune, Kolkata, Mohali, Bhopal and Thiruvanthapuram) also continue to function from temporary campuses. Pulling up the ministry, the parliamentary panel said that "These institutions were envisaged to carry out research in frontier areas of science and to provide quality science education at undergraduate and postgraduate level." IISERs are expected to have state-of-the-art buildings, fully equipped labs and rich library but these facilities are still not available for students.

The report noted 10 new NITs also suffered similar fate, with four functioning out of their respective mentor NITs and six running from temporary campuses.

The committee also observed that several legislations related to higher education continued to be delayed.

Source: May 10, 2012/Times of India

Panel advocates speedy passage of bills

Voicing concern over the delay in passage of key legislations on Higher Education, a Parliamentary panel has observed that they should not be delayed any further.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development noted that the Bills were yet to come before Parliament for consideration and passing, though considerable time has lapsed since the Parliamentary scrutiny of the proposed legislations.

‘‘Enactment of all these legislations will bring about major transformation in the higher education sector and thus restructure and reorient our higher education system to meet the requirements of a knowledge economy in a globalised world,’’ said the standing committee on HRD, in its report presented in the Parliament.

Referring to the Bills relating to Prohibition of Educational Malpractice, Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutes, Entry and Operation of Foreign Education Providers, the one on establishing a tribunal for adjudication of disputes involving educational institutions and setting up of a National Academic Depository, it said, “The committee is of the firm view that passing of these legislative proposals need not be delayed any further.”

The panel felt unhappy over the slow pace of progress in establishment of new IIT campuses. It also expressed concern over running of all new IITs from temporary campuses, though they were set up in 2008-09 and 2009-10. The committee suggested that a team comprising HRD Ministry officials, IIT management representatives and government officials be ‘mandated’ to pursue construction works.

Source: May 10, 2012/Express Buzz

AICTE permits dual degree for private engineering colleges

The All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has allowed private engineering colleges to run dual degree programme for bachelor of engineering and master of technology courses. This will help the students save time and money.

Private engineering colleges will have to apply on-line from May 10 to 20 to begin the dual degree programme in their institutes.

When contacted, spokesperson of Madhya Pradesh Association of Professional and Technical Institutes, BS Yadav confirmed that AICTE has started the dual degree programme in the private colleges from next academic session.

On being asked about the benefits of conducting dual degree programme, Yadav said it would help students complete the graduation and masters courses in five and half years. “Students have the opportunity of completing the both degrees in five years followed by a five months industry internship.

Earlier, in the absence of industry internship for students, this used to be a six-year course,” Yadav said.

At present students spend around Rs 2 lakh on BE degree and around 1.25 lakh on M.Tech degree. “After the dual course students would be able to save almost Rs 1 lakh,” Yadav said.

The dual degree programme will be available for the students completing third semester of their bachelor degree. Counseling will be organized in July, later this year. (TOI)

Source: May 10, 2012/Times of India

Higher education outlay under-utilized during 11th Plan

Despite a serious lack of capacity in higher education and insufficient trained people to fuel growth, India used only a portion of the funds allocated for the sector in the five years ended March, a parliamentary panel has found.

The country aims to spend Rs.4.13 trillion on higher education during the 12th Plan period (2012-17), about four times more than the Rs.84,943 crore allotted during the preceding five years, according to the panel's report, but the substantial under-utilization can mar its intention.

"Not only the allocation at the BE (budget estimate) stage was below the projected outlay, but it had to be brought down further at the RE (revised estimate) stage with utilization status at the year remaining even lower," the parliamentary standing committee on human resource development said in its report, tabled in Parliament on Wednesday.

The panel said annual spending on higher education in the previous plan period was in some instances as low as 10%.

Distance learning, scholarship and ICT (information, communication and technology) was allocated Rs.624 crore for 2007-08 but only Rs.67.66 crore was spent. In 2011-12, the sector was allocated Rs.1,043 crore but used only Rs.346 crore.

The technical education segment spent only about Rs.1,066 crore of the Rs.3,240 crore allocated to it for 2007-08.

The university and higher education segment spent Rs.4,514.86 crore against a budgetary allocation of Rs.6,002 crore in 2011-12. During the entire 11th plan period, this segment spent only about Rs.17,656 crore of the planned outlay of Rs.47,444 crore.

This, when India's gross enrolment ratio (GER) at 20% is below the global average of 26% and far behind that of some developed countries. GER is a measure of the number of young people in the 18-23 age group pursuing higher education in any country. Brazil's GER is 34% and the US's enrolment ratio is 83%.

The government has drawn a scheme to improve the skills of 500 million people by 2022, aiming to bridge the education-employability mismatch and provide enough foot soldiers to Indian industries and help grow the economy. India wants to improve its GER to 30% in a decade.

At a skill council meeting on 19 January, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said India will need about 260 million skilled people by 2018. Skill training in India is a $20-billion business annually, according to a July report by Kotak Securities Ltd. Around 475 million people will need training by fiscal 2022, it said.

"This makes it clear beyond doubt that there are no fund constraints so far as allocation for higher education sector is concerned. What is required is well-constructed and co-ordinated approach for optimum and judicious utilization of allocated funds," said the parliamentary panel, which is headed by Congress leader and Rajya Sabha legislator Oscar Fernandes. Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi is a member.

The committee said state governments "have to play very critical role in this regard". It also advised the Union government to "sensitize the concerned authorities for successful implementation of various centrally sponsored schemes".

A human resource development (HRD) ministry official said the ministry was aware of the problem and wants all states "to come on board for making higher education a more impactful" sector. "Since the states play a key role in implementing schemes, they should be active in spending allocated funds," the official said, requesting not to be named. "We will take this up during the (state) education ministers meet next month."

Commenting on the Planning Commission's 12th Plan approach paper, which states that about 18% of all government education spending, or 1.2% of the gross domestic product, be spent on higher education, the panel said the funding should be raised to 25% of all government education spending. "Higher education being an important sector for the development of the nation the committee feels that focused attention in terms of resources and funds should be made available for development and quality research and innovation," the panel said in its report.

Source: May 11, 2012/Live mint

Educational institutions set to follow ICAI norms

Higher education institutes in the country will soon have to report their financial information in a

standard and uniform format set by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

As per the format, the institutes will now have to disclose their balance sheet and the income and expenditure account. The new system is a shift from the present cash basis of accounting to accrual-based system.

While the balance sheet will include sources and applications of funds along with liabilities and assets, the income and expenditure statement would reflect the academic receipts, grants and donations. With education being a not for profit activity, the ministry of human resource development (MHRD) wants to enforce these standards in order to check how much profit the educational institutes are making.

"We want the institutes to keep their accounts and want to know if they actually are not-for-profit which they should be. The new accounting standards will be mandatory for all and we hope to implement it this year. Going ahead, we might introduce the accounting format for schools also," said an MHRD official.

The move assumes significance as in the recent years, government aid to educational institutions particularly in the form of concessions and incentives has risen besides increased fees charged from the students and increased donations by certain donor agencies.

"We already disclose our finances, which are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. The new accounting standards are very recent and we are still studying the new paradigm as depreciation will have to be included," said IIT Kanpur director SG.

The present system of accounting and financial reporting followed by educational institutions does not meet the accountability concerns of the donors, including government and other stakeholders such as members, governing board, management staff, volunteers and general public as educational institutions in India follow not only diverse accounting practices but also different basis of accounting.

As per the new system, funds received by educational institutions may be divided into restricted funds, unrestricted funds which includes corpus fund, designated funds and general fund.

"The new accounting standards will make it easier to understand and follow the balance sheets and make the entire system more transparent. Also, we are following the old system of accounting which need to be improved," said Shekhar Chaudhuri, director, IIM Calcutta.

However, institutes feel that the new accounting norms would only add to their administrative load.

"It would be better to reduce the involvement of human element and use some modern technological solution for accounting to do financial accounting accurately," said an IIT professor.

Source: May 11, 2012/Indian Express

Indian schools introducing iPads as educational tools

Shivakumar, principal of Delhi Public School, Surat, was fascinated by the educational apps on the App Store which matched his school's curriculum. And soon he started encouraging his teachers to use iPads for research.

"While teaching the parts of the body, we use an app where the visual body is displayed. Curious students were allowed to tear down the ribs with this app, see what each rib is made up of and rearrange them back. This form of teaching has a greater impact on students who understand the concepts better than those who learn their subjects by rote," he says.

Beginning this academic year, many schools across India will be formally including iPads as an educational tool for students. It has already started in a phased manner in schools like Delhi Public School, Surat, where over 600 students from kindergarten to Class 2 have started working on iPads.

In many others, like the Canadian International School, Bangalore, all the students from classes 8 to 12 have been asked to bring their own iPads when they start the academic year. And at schools under the Universal Educational Group, over 20,000 students have already been given access to iPads.

Using iPads as an educational tool is not new. But the scale of adoption will be going up this academic year, mainly because of the efforts of tech-savvy school principals. "All 200 teachers at his school were provided individual iPads which they connect to TV sets provided in individual classrooms," says Shivakumar.

For students who wanted to do practical worksheets, an iPad lab was opened where they could spend some time. Worksheets based on specific topics are downloaded from the App Store and given to students to solve, says Shivakumar.

"For instance, if algebra is taught, a number of fun games related to it are downloaded and students work on it during their spare time," he says.

To take the concept home, the school encouraged parents to be part of their 'iPads at home' programme wherein they were asked to assist

children with their project work and studies by using iPads at home. "Of the 1,200 students in the primary classes, 600 parents use iPads to help their children in their studies," he says.

Those parents who don't have iPads can use the traditional worksheets to help their children. While it is still an optional tool at Delhi Public School, Surat, at others like the Universal Educational Group, iPads have already become part of the curriculum. A 60-member tech team is initiating the group's 20,000 students spread across different schools in Maharashtra and the UAE on iPad use.

Each child at these schools is given access for 20 minutes a day to use iPads. "While students from nursery to class 2 are taught with the help of iPod Touch, all students from Class 3 are given access to iPads," says Jesus SM Lall, Chairman & CEO, Universal Education Group.

"We had piloted the project in 2009 and it has been implemented full scale," he says. "We give them limited access to iPads because we don't want to replace the traditional style of teaching," says Lall. The group's technology team and teachers have compiled an entire library of apps under various subject categories to be used by each class. "This includes everything from alphabet to pictures to stories to rhymes," says Lall.

Another tech-savvy principal, Avnita Bir of RN Podar School (affiliated to the CBSE board), Mumbai, is now allowing her students to bring iPads to school if they want to. She finds it of particular help to CBSE students who, unlike other educational boards, have to score marks based on a continuous assessment pattern. "Students have to thoroughly understand the concept, if they have to answer the questions," she explains.

A pilot study on the use of iPads was conducted at her school for class 7. What interested her was the fact that the class created his/her own personalised content when they were given a topic to work on with the help of iPads. "While teaching history, for instance, we ask the students to create cartoon strips or create a short video clip using their iPads on the subject they are learning," says Bir.

"Very often, no two projects created by students are the same. Different aspects on the same subject are brought out. The end result is that the class creates its own learning content," she explains. Breathing life into content with the help of iPads has been the main focus of schools like the Canadian International School, Bangalore, where all the 200 to 250 students from classes 8-12 will start this academic year with iPads.

"Textbooks are static. This is the reason why we encourage students to take photographs of flowers and trees in the neighbourhood when we teach them aspects of plant life," says Melanie Kells, Dean of Studies, Canadian International School, Bangalore.

"Once this is done, we ask them to upload these photographs on iPads and annotate the content. They are encouraged to do project work on iPads and then take printouts for the final submission," she says.

"Teachers have been using this in a big way," she says. "They design the content to be taught with the iPads." "Students are able to create their own personalized content and are able to thoroughly understand the concepts," she says. Talking about the security issues involved, as students may tend to use the Net for the wrong reasons, Ms Kells says: "Measures are built within the iPads which identify certain words and immediately block them. In the primary classes, the students are given access to iPads only under a teacher's supervision."

Source: May 11, 2012/Times of India

Cabinet Clears key Bills on Higher Education

The Centre on Thursday cleared two key Bills on higher education for introduction in the Parliament. The meeting of the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, approved the official amendments to the National Accreditation Regulation Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill-2012 and cleared the Universities for Research and Innovation Bill-2012 for introduction in the Parliament.

The National Accreditation Regulation Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill seeks to provide for mandatory assessment of the human and physical infrastructure of higher educational institutions before they commence academic operation.

The Bill was introduced in the Parliament in May 2010 and was referred to the standing committee on HRD. The official amendments include assessment of infrastructure and faculty to be mandatory before any higher educational institution starts the process of admissions, accreditation of the academic quality of programmes or course to be mandatory after six years of existence of the institution and inclusion of one member each from the SC, ST, minorities and increased number of women members in the authority.

The Universities for Research and Innovation Bill-2012 provides for establishment and incorporation of universities for research and innovation, which

would be aimed at making India a global knowledge hub.

Source: May 11, 2012/Express Buzz

India bursting with 20 growths in Cambridge qualifications and aggressive expansion in higher education

The long-standing tradition of Class 12 Indian board exams to graduate from Indian high schools is changing – especially for many students targeting study abroad.

This year, the number of Indian student entries for Cambridge IGCSE and International A Level qualifications rose to over 27,000. That's 20% more than in 2011.

Cambridge IGCSE (commonly known as O Levels) is one of the world's most popular international qualifications for students between the age of 14 and 16 years, while Cambridge International A Levels are typically used by 16 to 19 year olds as a final stepping stone to university. Today, more than 9,000 schools in 160 countries take part in the programmes.

Regional breakdown of Cambridge IGCSE growth in India from 2011-2012

Region	% growth
Madhya Pradesh	248
Rajasthan	144
Punjab	112
Uttar Pradesh	100
Andhra Pradesh	57
Karnataka	28
Tamil Nadu	23
Haryana	17
NCR	16

Regional breakdown of Cambridge International A Level growth in India fROm 2011 -2012

Region	% growth
Gujarat	50
Kerala	30
Karnataka	24
West Bengal	23
Madhya Pradesh	15
Maharashtra	13

A recent post from Overseas, Overwhelmed points out that recruiters who have been coming to India for a decade will notice the significant change. O and A Levels were once unheard of in almost all secondary education circles. Today they are catching a wave of attention, especially among parents in the upper economic classes of Indian society.

There are already almost 300 Cambridge schools in India, with the most popular core subjects being math, physics and chemistry (engineering is the programme of choice for wealthy Indian families sending children to university abroad). Indian states with the largest growth since 2011 include a surge in interest for Cambridge IGCSE in Madhya Pradesh (247%), Rajasthan (145%) and Punjab (112%). Meanwhile, Cambridge International A Level numbers grew by 50% in Gujarat, 30% in Kerala and 24% in Karnataka.

"The increasing number of students taking our qualifications in India shows that schools are aware of the value of this approach and the importance of an international education in the global economy," said Andrew Sortwell, regional manager for South Asia, University of Cambridge International Examinations.

India's aggressive expansion plans

Meanwhile, the *Hindustan Times* has announced that higher education in India is set for a boost with the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry finalising plans worth Rs800 billion (US$15.2 billion) to improve access to colleges and universities.

The Indian government has embarked on an ambitious plan to double the gross enrolment ratio from the current 17% to 30% by the year 2020. For this, an abundance of new universities and colleges are needed across the country.

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal declared that 200 new universities (100 of which will be community colleges) and a degree college in each district in India will be opened by 2017. In addition to new institutions, many existing colleges will be upgraded – either into universities or autonomous colleges with degree-awarding powers. The Rs800 billion allocation will be 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 and give better access to schools for girls and other socially deprived sections such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

In addition, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* just reported that these ambitious plans will require extensive corporate support. In addition to increased contributions from companies, a new report recommends the government give land free for 999 years to private entities to set up educational institutions, academic facilities and technology parks.

"The existing higher education system in India lags in comparison to global standards and is inadequate to meet the demand. There is a need to engage the corporate sector to invest in existing institutions and set up new ones," said N.R. Narayana Murthy,

leader of a government-sponsored committee and founder of Infosys.

Source: May 11, 2012/Moniter ICEF

E-education sector to touch $45bn mark by 2015

At $600 billion, the education spending in India has surpassed that of the US and is growing by leaps and bounds, a research report said.

The education spend in India is at $600 billion and the private education segment alone is expected to cross $45 billion mark by 2015 from the present $35 billion, according to a research report prepared by Investor Relation Society, affiliated to US based Global Investor Relations Network.

The report said that skill and vocational training are fast throwing good amount of opportunities.

With an education network of more than one million schools and 20,000 higher-education institutes, the market size of the Indian education system is estimated at $45 billion, Investor Relation Society president M S Anand said.

A little over two lakh Indian students migrate overseas every year for higher studies. These students alone contribute to foreign universities as much as $5 bn every year.

Based on this observation, several foreign institutions are foraying into India. This is expected to boost the quality of education in the country, the report said.

The higher education in India shall soon witness a sea change, leading to a surge in the growth of education sector. The sector may not only witness emergence of growth of small companies into gigantic organisations, but also lead to entry of new players.

These new players could be either technocrats as in the case of First Object Technologies Ltd or companies promoted by conglomerates like Zee.

Source: May 14, 2012/Times of India

Outlay for education in 12th Plan to be four times higher

The government aims to spend Rs 4.13 lakh crore on higher education during the 12th Plan period (2012-17), about four times the amount allocated in the previous plan at Rs. 84,943 crore. According to the ministry of human resource development (MHRD), majority of the funding would be used to set up new institutions and expanding the existing ones. The list includes state universities, general degree colleges and professional and technical educational institutions.

In the previous plan period, the share of education in the total plan outlay correspondingly increased from 7.7% to 19.4%. Thus, around 50% of the 11th plan outlay was devoted for elementary education and literacy, 20% for secondary education and 30% for higher and technical education.

"The thrust of the 12th plan is on consolidation of the existing institutes and strengthening the existing central universities, new Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management and state universities with infrastructure and faculty. More than establishing new institutes, quality improvement by funding states to improve their education infrastructure is the focus," said a ministry official.

Setting up of new institutes pertains to the Universities for Innovation which are proposed to be created in the 12th plan at a cost of Rs. 2,500 crore and the ministry is also planning to cover a minimum of 50% students through various financing schemes as part of demand side management in higher education in the 12th Plan.

"The allocation in the 11th plan was more than Rs. 84,000 crore but the amount spent was close to Rs. 40,000 crore. Hence, the increase now is almost 10 times of the spend," said a planning commission official. The 12thplan approach paper mentions that about 18% of all government education spending or about 1.12 percentage of GDP is spent on higher education today. This should be raised to 25% and 1.5% respectively.

An increase of 0.38% of GDP means an additional allocation of about Rs. 25,000 crore to higher education for the centre and the states taken together.

The outlay is in line with the government's target of increasing the gross enrollment ratio (GER) in higher education from 15% now to 20% by 2017 and 25% by 2022.

Moreover, this year's budget talked about the setting up of the Credit Guarantee Fund to serve the credit needs of students and this assumes significance as the total outstanding loans of public sector banks for education as on March 31, 2011 stood at Rs. 43,074 crore in more than 22 lakh accounts.

Source: May 15, 2012/Indian Express

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Brain drain or not, the right to emigrate is fundamental

Socialists like health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad won't admit it, but they rather liked the Berlin Wall.

They think it's morally right to keep citizens captive at home, unable to migrate for better prospects. Azad has proposed not a brick wall but a financial one: he wants all doctors going to the US for higher studies to sign a financial bond that will be forfeited if they do not return.

Sorry, but the right to emigrate is fundamental. States can curb immigration, but not emigration . The UN declaration of human rights says in Article 13, "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own." Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights incorporates this right into treaty law. It says: "Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own. The above-mentioned rights shall not be subject to any restrictions except those provided by law necessary to protect national security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others." The public health exception relates to communicable diseases, not a shortage of doctors.

Hitler didn't give German Jews the right to migrate . Communist East Germany thought it had a right to shoot citizens attempting to escape over the Berlin Wall. The Soviet Union mostly had strict curbs on emigration, but allowed the mass exit of its Jews to Israel after the 1967 war in which Moscow backedthe Arabs. Moscow imposed a "diploma tax" on emigrants with higher education, to claw back the cost of their education. Israel often picked up the bill, leading to sneers that the Soviet Union was selling Jews. International protests obliged Moscow to abolish the tax.

Like the Soviets, Azad wants to claw back sums spent on educating doctors. Like East Germany, he seeks to erect exit barriers by denying Indian doctors a 'no objection certificate' to practice in the US. The right to emigrate does not enter his calculations: Azad does not want this azaadi!

Many Indians will back him, saying the brain drain imposes high costs on India. Well, all principles have some costs, but that's no reason to abandon them. Azad wants curbs just on doctors, but the principle applies to all Indians. Would India be better off if it had kept captive at home economists like Amartya Sen and Jagdish Bhagwati? Three Indian migrants to the US have won Nobel Prizes-Gobind Khurana (medicine) Chandra Shekhar (physics) and V Ramakrishnan (chemistry). Had they been stopped from leaving India, would they have ever risen to such heights?

Cost estimates of the brain drain are exaggerated or downright false. Remittances from overseas Indians are now around $60 billion a year. NRI bank deposits bring up to $30 billion a year. Together , they greatly exceed India's entire spending on education (around $75 billion). Even more valuable are skills brought back by returnees.

Remittances skyrocketed only after India made it easier in the 1990s for students to go abroad. One lakh per year go to the US alone. The number of US citizens of Indian origin has tripled since 1990 to three million, and the US has replaced the Gulf as the main source of remittances.

The brain drain has anyway given way to brain circulation. Youngsters going abroad actually have very limited skills. But they hugely improve their skills abroad, mainly through job experience , so returnees bring back much brainpower.

Indian returnees were relatively few during the licence-permit raj, because omnipresent controls stifled domestic opportunities. But economic liberalization has created a boom in opportunities of every sort, so more Indians are returning. Azad should note that the fast expansion of private hospitals has attracted back many doctors. Scientists, software engineers, managers and professionals of all sorts have flocked back. This carries a simple policy lesson: create opportunity, not barriers.

Millions of Indians will not come back. Yet they do not constitute a drain. They have become huge financial assets for India through remittances and investments.

They have also become a foreign policy asset. Three million Indian Americans now occupy high positions in academia, Wall Street, business and professions. They have become important political contributors, and two have entered politics and become state governors (Bobby Jindal and Nikki Haley). Indian Americans have become a formidable lobby, helping shift US policy in India's favour, to Pakistan's dismay.

However, these are secondary issues. The main issue is human freedom. The UN declaration of human rights recognizes the right to migrate. This fundamental freedom has more value by far than the financial or foreign policy value of the diaspora . Never forget this in the brain drain debate.

Source: May 06, 2012/Economic Times

India Inc looks for 'she-power' at senior levels

A concept B-schools have been selling for more than three years has finally been bought by Indian companies: More women managers at senior positions.

Various companies, including Vodafone India and Mahindra and Mahindra, have begun focussing on getting more women at senior leadership positions.

We are out in the market recruiting senior women talent. Gender diversity is a focus for us. We are working through availability, location and choice of role aspects," said Ashok Ramchandran, director (human resources), Vodafone India.

Ramachandran adds women at the top of various management levels bring plurality, different thinking, different focus areas and leadership styles and values. So, while Vodafone strives to hire from outside, a major task at hand is also to build talent within the company.

Currently, women in senior management positions at Vodafone India form six per cent of the work force. The company plans to raise the number to 15 per cent in two years.

At automotive major Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M), a 50: 50 gender ratio is being considered. "A diverse work force is important, as harnessing the potential of diversity produces powerful business results, enables deeper discussions among work-teams and produces richer results," said Rajeev Dubey, president (group HR, corporate services and after market), M&M.

Head-hunters reckon it is the services sector that has been very active in hiring more women for senior positions. "There are more women in the labour market, and more females pursuing higher education. So, there are more women contenders for senior posts. However, this kind of participation is absent in sectors like oil & gas and manufacturing," said E Balaji, managing director and chief executive, Randstad India.

Business schools have not only been preaching this concept, but practicing it as well.

For instance, at the Indian School of Business (ISB), the percentage of women in the management programme rose from 25 per cent to 29 per cent in the last five years. The batch of 2012 had 167 women students, accounting for 29 per cent of the batch.

"Women today have a lot more opportunities than in the past. There is increasing acceptance in different quarters about their abilities, and the value they bring to the work force," said Ajit Rangnekar, Dean, ISB. He adds while this percentage is high compared to other Indian B-schools, it falls short of the figures in global B-schools such as Wharton (45 per cent) and Harvard (39 per cent).

"Currently, our workplace reflects a healthy diversity, with almost 50 per cent women in the staff. We must just replicate this in our classrooms, too," he said.

At the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM-K), director Debashis Chatterjee has been saying women make better managers and they have learnt to be more competent in a diverse set of skills and attitudes. The institute has been increasingly emphasising on more women students in the campus. In the first post-graduate programme at IIM-K in 1999, there was only one woman student in a batch of 42.Consequent to the changes in the institute's admission policy, the 2013 batch has 36 per cent women.

In its International Business Report, global accountancy firm Grant Thornton had recently said businesses in India had the least number of women in senior management (14 per cent), compared with the global average of 21 per cent. It added economies such as India, Japan and Mexico had low female economic activity rates, with the India's proportion of female adults in the labour force at 33 per cent.

Source: May 06, 2012/Business Standard

RTE tramples upon our freedom: CISCE chairman

Even as private unaided school managements are having some anxious moments with the State government gearing up to implement the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 from this academic year, confusion is rife owing to lack of clarity on many issues.

In an exclusive interview with The Hindu, Jose Aikara, chairman, Council for The Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), New Delhi, said that some of the clauses in the Act were "unscientific" and the government must be sympathetic and practical while implementing the Act.

Excerpts from the interview.

Q: The general impression is that private unaided school managements are against the implementation of RTE and efforts are being made to postpone its implementation…

A: No. We are not against it. In fact, we appreciate the government's efforts to spread universal education. Our only worry is that this Act in its present form tramples upon the freedom of the managements. We have built our schools brick by brick.

In India, less than 10 per cent of the schools are managed by private parties. The presence may be micro, but their impact on society is tremendous. Everyone must recognise the contribution of private schools in improving the quality of education imparted and thereby in building a healthy society.

Then, why should the government deprive us of running our schools. Why should the [school] administration go to local authorities? The government, instead of trying to rein us in, must look at improving its own schools.

When you say you are not against RTE, are you willing to provide 25 per cent seats for poor students?

Yes. But, why should the government insist that these students must be accommodated with other students? We are willing to have separate classrooms for them. We are also willing to adopt government schools so that these students feel comfortable with their group. But, the moot point is who selects these students. Schools do not have any say in this aspect.

How do you think school managements will overcome problems, including the cost of educating a child from a poor background?

There are only two ways: by increasing the class strength and having a nominal fee structure or by increasing the fees and having a class strength of about 30 to 40.

Schools with good infrastructure may think of increasing the class strength. However, schools with limited resources and facilities have no other way but to increase the fees, because managements cannot run their schools at a loss. You also need finances to adopt new technologies.

Without adopting new technologies, it is not possible to improve the quality of education. And, if more students are accommodated in a classroom, it surely will affect the teaching-learning process. I think 30 is the ideal class strength so that teachers can give individual attention.

How long do you think it will take to implement this Act to the satisfaction of both the government and managements?

This Act in its present form is unscientific, and I think it will take about three to four years to implement it satisfactorily so that both are comfortable.

Source: May 06, 2012/The Hindu

Govt not responsible for school education

Kapil Sibal, Human Resource Development Minister, on Saturday said that the government's role is to create an environment for people to educate themselves. He was delivering a lecture on 'Higher Education Policy and Youth Aspirations' organised by the MIT School of Government (MIT-SOG).

"The Central government can only create an environment that will facilitate education. School education is a state subject, even then people think the Central government to be responsible for it. While the Right to Education (RTE) Act and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) have made a big difference, we need the stakeholders in the education system to stand up and make a difference.

"The situation in the higher education sector is also grim. Most university teachers are still opposing the semester system to avoid work. Today we have over 400 universities connected through the National Knowledge Framework (NKF) and we hope we can connect the rest of 240 soon. We have 220 million students going to school and by 2020, 45 million students will reach college. But we do not have enough number of colleges to accommodate all of them. We need to create the infrastructure," Sibal said.

Talking about the recent Supreme Court verdict that makes it mandatory for all private schools to reserve 25 per cent of their seats for students from economically backward classes, he said that all affluent people who have problem with the mandate, should think about the subsidies like fuel, LPG that the government provides for them.

"If they do not talk about giving up those subsidies, why do they have a problem with this 25 per cent reservation?" Sibal asked.

At the beginning of the lecture, Sibal released the proposal of the 3rd students Parliament of the MIT School of Government MIT-SOG). Later, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between MIT-SOG and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) for a collaboration on a joint programme that will address issues of leadership in politics and government.

Certain areas for collaboration have been identified for academic training and delivery.

The areas of collaboration will include academic topics constituency development, election management, campaign management. Exchange programmes, design of syllabus and creation of internship opportunities will also be a part of this collaboration.

Vishwanath Karad, founder director, MAEER's MIT Group of Institutions said, "We look forward to a more evolved curriculum for MIT-SOG with this collaboration."

S Parshuraman, director, TISS, said, "We hope that with such courses available in India, our bureaucrats will not need to go to places like the JFK School of Government for training. For some course modules under the collaboration, the TISS faculty will come to MIT SOG for classes. TISS is

also a part of the NKF. Students from NKF can come down to TISS and access over 8,000 journals."

Value education need of the hour: Sibal

Union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal on Saturday termed immorality as the biggest 'tremor' in society and underlined the need of value education to overcome it.

Sibal was speaking after inaugurating the silver jubilee convention of the Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana (BJS) at the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Balewadi. State School Education Minister Rajendra Darda, Dharmadhikari of Dharmasthala Manjunatha Temple Veerendra Heggade, Justice Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari, founder-president of BJS Shantilal Muttha, national general secretary of BJS Prafulla Parakh and Sarala Muttha were present.

Sibal blamed consumerism for emergence of immorality in society. Highlighting the need of urging people to inculcate ethical values at the school level itself, he applauded the efforts of BJS and Muttha for introducing Mulyavardhan (value education) as a pilot project in 500 schools of Maharashtra. "We will have to create 100 such Mutthas to spread this movement across the country," he said. He also promised to arrange a dialogue between BJS and NSCERT and SCERTs to take forward the journey of Mulyavardhan in the other parts of the country.

Sibal said, "The present day situation is such that there is no trust between husband and wife, students and teacher and the opposition and the ruling party. We have to bring back this trust in society. The leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Lokmanya Tilak used to have a dialogue with society through their writings. This dialogue between leaders and citizens is vanished. There is need to rebuild it." Elaborating various initiatives of the government, Sibal talked about use of technology in tackling challenges. He said, "We have been linking 604 universities and 35,000 colleges across the country through national knowledge network. With this project in place, a student in Maharashtra will be able to listen to a lecture of a professor going on in IIT-Kanpur. A time will come when the convergence technology will enable every student in the country to take lessons sitting at home."

Muttha said the BJS is an action-oriented organisation and not a function-oriented organisation. While elaborating the various projects of the BJS, such as Mulyavardhan, he said, 'We believe in integrating our programmes with the government system. We don't criticise, but provide solutions. Though there is 'Jain' in the title of the organisation, the organisation works for the nation as a whole.'

Books on the various projects of the BJS and its journey so far were released during the inaugural function. . Parakh compeered the event, while vice-president of BJS Prakashchand Surana proposed the vote of thanks.

Source: May 06, 2012/Indian Express

A piece of advice for students

Students must seek credentials of the university where they wish to seek admission in the United States, senior officials from the US Consulate General office said on Monday.

Replying to questions on large contingent of students making a beeline to the US for higher education and the bitter experience they had after getting admitted into a 'sham' university – Tri-Valley University, the officials said students aspiring to study in the US have to do their homework properly.

At an interactive meet conducted by CII, US Consul General Katherine Dhanani and Vice-Consul Matthew Stannard from Hyderabad and Principal Commercial Officer from Chennai stated that in the US, the higher education institutes were totally independent. One should verify about the standards and track-record of various institutes through Indian American Education Foundation and other sources, they said.

They said some colleges and universities were also tying up with foreign universities for collaborative courses and exchange programmes.

Source: May 06, 2012/The Hindu

Involve corporates in higher education: Plan panel committee

New Delhi, May 8 (PTI) A plan panel committee on corporate sector participation in higher education today suggested involving high net worth individuals in setting up a university and getting a commitment from them on positioning the institute among the top 250 in the world in 15 years.

"The committee recommends that a personal invitation from the Prime Minister should be sent to 25 Indian corporates and 25 eminent high net worth individuals to start a university...and a commitment from them for the institution to be in the top 250 in the world over a 15-year period," the committee headed by N R Narayana Murthy said. In this context, the committee drew attention of individuals globally who have played a key role in building higher educational institutions and said India has

over 30 companies with annual revenue of over USD 5 billion and 48 billionairs.

The committee was set up by the Planning Commission in January 2012 to examine and provide recommendations on potential and modalities for corporate sector participation in higher education. The committee said that in return for setting up the institute, they have be provided with complete autonomy, free land and central university status. "If an individual or a corporate is unable to set up a full-fledged university, such entities can set up a centre of excellence within an existing institution of their choice," the committee suggested.

To include the individuals in this drive, the committee suggested that the definition of corporate should be expanded as the move will encourage philanthropic corporate founders, entrepreneurs and individuals to start new institutions to contribute to higher education institutes.

Source: May 08, 2012/Ibn Live

Murthy formula for private push to higher education

The government should provide fiscal incentives and an enabling environment to attract private players to invest in higher education in India, said a committee set up by the Planning Commission. Infosys founder N R Narayana Murthy headed the committee.

It has recommended allocation of land free of cost for 999 years and exemption of companies investing in higher education from income tax. A more liberal visa regime should be introduced for research visitors, it said.

Besides, government and private players should work together towards creating a scholarship fund, a national education loan fund and an R&D fund.

The committee, in its report submitted to the deputy chairman of Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, on Tuesday, suggested that private investment in higher education could be Rs 20,000 crore if the tax exemption was granted.

"The contribution made by a company or a foundation or any other grant-making entity to a university or to a research centre should be eligible for deduction from taxable income to the extent of 300 per cent of such contribution," it suggested.

The report said the top 1,000 Indian business houses should set up a corpus of Rs 1,000 crore to be used as a scholarship fund. Similarly, public sector banks should set up a national education loan fund of Rs 1,00,000 crore and another corpus of Rs 5,000 crore, to be funded jointly by the Union government and companies for encouraging research and development.

"Besides, the centre should remove implicit disincentives in tax and trust laws, like the rule that requires a trust to spend 85 per cent of income streams from endowments in the same year, as it constraints build-up of a corpus," it said.

Private investment in higher education is needed because India has a low gross enrollment ratio (GER) of 20 per cent, when it is 84 per cent in the US, 59 per cent in the UK, 55 per cent in Japan and 28 per cent in China.

Global experiences suggest that a minimum 30 per cent GER is required to sustain a country's economic growth. Besides, higher education spending in India is just 1.1 per cent of GDP, against 2.4 per cent in South Korea and 3.1 per cent in the US.

The report recommended that all academic and research visitors should be exempt from current visa norm of a minimum salary norm ($25,000 a year). They should also be granted a ten-year multiple entry visa where each visit can be of six months' duration. Such visa should be issued within 24 hours of application.

"The corporate sector should take interest in setting up educational institutions because the amount of public resources available for health and education is limited. If you don't bring private resources, you will not get the end result you want," Ahluwalia said.

He said that public resources needed to go into the highest priority areas, especially in primary and secondary education.

The working group on higher and technical education for the 12th plan projected a resource requirement of Rs 4,13,368 crore. Since this large amount is unlikely to be made available, given the limited availability of public resources, the Planning Commission constituted the Narayana Murthy committee in January to suggest how the corporate sector could participate in higher education.

Source: May 08, 2012/Digital fc

Sibal attack panel for rejecting edu loan proposal

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday hit out at the Planning Commission for rejecting a proposal to set up an education finance corporation to refinance student education loans, saying the move was against the interest of the students.

"The HRD Ministry has been knocking at the doors of Planning Commission saying please set up the

corporation... and my friend Montek has been little more conservative than me on these issues. I have to say this because they rejected idea of the corporation," the Minister said.

"Unless the loans are guaranteed by government, no financial institution is going to give loans," he said at a function here with Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia in attendance.

Sibal said the present loan structure of the government was not conducive for either student taking loan or bank offering loans. "We need to actually liberalise the whole structure".

In this context, he suggested that financial institutes should have a flexible lending policy when extending loans for setting up educational institutes.

"I believe the banks must be asked to give long term loan to educational institution paid over period of 20 to 25 years. To set-up an education institution nobody is going to borrow at 12 per cent or 16 per cent and set-up up institution where you have to return the loan over period of 7 years," he said.

Member Planning Commission Narendra Jadav, on the occasion, said a working group on education has recommended allocation of Rs 4,13,000 crore for the 12th plan Period, the allocation of which will be finalised next week.

Favouring policies like free land for setting up educational institutes and health care facilities, Sibal said no private sector would invest unless "you give them appropriate environment".

In this regard, he said the government has to clearly spell out the stand on issues which are hindering reforms initiatives.

He touched upon the issue of litigation involving land and confided that when he suggested free land for educational institutes and health facilities being in an empowered GoM looking into natural assets, "there was enormous opposition to this even in government".

"Every time you want to do something like this, the court thinks we are giving freebies to private sector. Unless these issues are clarified, we won't be able to move forward. Government has to strongly state that these are the fundamentals without which no reform process can take place," he said.

NR Narayana Murthy, who heads a committee on corporate sector participation in higher education, said India does not have adequate number of educational institutions to take care of eligible students.

He said about 26 million seats need to be provided over the next decade.

"The existing higher education system in India lags in comparison to global standards and is inadequate to meet the demand. No Indian college or university features in top 300 list of Times higher education supplement," he said.

Source: May 08, 2012/Zee News

Involve corporates in higher education: Plan panel committee

A plan panel committee on corporate sector participation in higher education today suggested involving high net worth individuals in setting up a university and getting a commitment from them on positioning the institute among the top 250 in the world in 15 years.

"The committee recommends that a personal invitation from the Prime Minister should be sent to 25 Indian corporates and 25 eminent high net worth individuals to start a university...and a commitment from them for the institution to be in the top 250 in the world over a 15-year period," the committee headed by N R Narayana Murthy said.

In this context, the committee drew attention of individuals globally who have played a key role in building higher educational institutions and said India has over 30 companies with annual revenue of over USD 5 billion and 48 billionairs.

The committee was set up by the Planning Commission in January 2012 to examine and provide recommendations on potential and modalities for corporate sector participation in higher education.

The committee said that in return for setting up the institute, they have be provided with complete autonomy, free land and central university status.

"If an individual or a corporate is unable to set up a full-fledged university, such entities can set up a centre of excellence within an existing institution of their choice," the committee suggested.

To include the individuals in this drive, the committee suggested that the definition of corporate should be expanded as the move will encourage philanthropic corporate founders, entrepreneurs and individuals to start new institutions to contribute to higher education institutes.

Source: May 08, 2012/PTI/MSN News

Allot land free to attract private investment in education, says plan panel group

In order to attract private investment in higher education, the government should allocate land free

of cost for 999 years to set up educational institutions, a plan panel committee headed by NR Narayana Murthy has suggested.

The committee also argued that the contributions made by a corporate, a foundation or grant-making entity to higher education institutes should be eligible for deduction from taxable income to the extent of 300% of such contribution.

Implicit disincentives in tax and trust laws to invest in higher education sector should be removed, it said.

The land provided by the government to the private sector for setting up a new institution should have good air connectivity, along with high quality rail and road connectivity and well-developed social infrastructure, it said.

Arguing that states should be encouraged to develop land banks for higher education institutes, the group said corporations having surplus land should be incentivised to give land or provide it on perpetual lease to new universities and institutions.

Norms governing floor space index (FSI) for higher education institutes should be relaxed to encourage compact city campuses, subject to basic amenities such as hostels, sports grounds and other social infrastructure being met, it said.

The panel wants the government to create enabling environment to ensure free exchange of ideas and movement of faculty and students. "A 10-year multiple entry visa for multiple visits of six months duration for each visit for all academic and research visitors should be issued within 24 hours of application. A visa for five-year visit should be issues within five working days," it said in its report.

It was argued that all academic and research visitors should be exempted from current visa regulations of minimum salary norms ($25,000 per annum).

Ensuring easier access to finance for students was also on the mind of the committee as it recommended setting up of 'Indian Corporate Higher Education Scholarship' with a corpus of Rs 1,000 crore contributed by top 1,000 corporations. "This scheme should be encouraged by the government by providing full matching grants as well as providing tax exemption of up to 300% for all contributions," it said. A 'National Education Loan Fund' of Rs 100,000 crore should be set up by public sector banks to disburse long-tenure loans.

But the committee wanted these steps to be complemented by autonomy in charging fees, contending that the country needed an additional 26 million seats in the next 10 years.

Another focus area was research as it suggested setting up a Rs 5,000 crore 'Indian Corporate R&D Fund' with support from the Center and corporates.

The group identified targeted outcomes such as upgrading of up to 75 'top class' universities and higher education institutions, setting up of 20 new 'world class' universities and higher education institutions and developing 20 new national knowledge clusters, along with mobilizing an additional 5,500 faculty members.

To achieve these targets, the panel estimated an investment of Rs 40,000 crore during the five-year plan period with 50% support coming from corporate sector incentivised through suitable fiscal measures.

Releasing the report, Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia pitched for raising fees by universities and providing easy finance for students to complete higher education. "I am in favour of raising fees across the board and giving scholarship that will enable students to go to universities which actually do a good job," he said.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal said: "Private sector is not going to invest unless you give them appropriate environment and the fundamental (requirement of private sector) is land."

Source: May 09, 2012/Times of India

Murthy panel for greater pvt sector role in higher education

To boost the involvement of the private sector in higher education in India, a committee, headed by Infosys Technologies founder N R Narayana Murthy, has suggested path-breaking measures like free land for 999 years, 300 per cent deduction in taxable income to companies for contributions towards boosting higher education and 10-year multiple entry visas for foreign research scholars. The committee said accreditation should be made mandatory for all universities and programmes run by such universities. The panel's report could be considered while framing the final document for the 12th five-year Plan.

To enable students from unprivileged backgrounds to avail of services quality higher education, the panel suggested proposed a scholarship fund with a corpus of Rs 1,000 crore. "All contributions made by the corporate sector for this fund should be granted tax exemption of up to 300 per cent of their contribution," it said. The committee also said a National Educational Loan Fund with a corpus of Rs 100,000 crore should be set up by public sector banks to disburse long-tenure loans.

On land for educational institutions, the committee said that all norms floor space index should be

relaxed to encourage compact city campuses and ensure optimal land utilisation in urban areas.

To ensure big companies were invited to participate in the process of developing higher education, personal invitations should be sent by the prime minister to 25 Indian companies and 25 eminent, high net worth individuals to start a university on meeting the set conditions, the panel said.

Meanwhile, Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia has pitched for raising fees by universities and providing easy finance for students to complete higher education. "Stop funding the universities and just fund students....Then they would go to universities worth paying for," he said.

Source: May 09, 2012/Business Standard

Rs 40,000 cr needed for higher education in 12th Plan: Panel

The higher education sector in India will require an investment of Rs 40,000 crore in the 12th Plan period (2012-17) and half of this would have to come from the corporate sector.

As per the committee report on corporate sector participation in higher education headed by Infosys' chief mentor NR Narayana Murthy, the Centre's contribution of Rs 15,000 crore should be from a mix of higher education sector plan funds while the state governments' contribution of Rs 5,000 crore should be in the form of land grants and institutional investments for setting up education clusters and knowledge hubs.

"The existing higher education system in India lags in comparison to global standards and is inadequate to meet the demand. There is a need to engage the corporate sector to invest in existing institutions and setup new ones," Murthy said while submitting the report on Tuesday.

The committee set up by the Planning Commission recommended the government to allocate land free of charge for 999 years to set up an educational institution and that such land should be usable for setting up academic facilities, incubation centres and technology parks.

Source: May 09, 2012/Indian Express

Building World Class Universities in India

I recently attended the 5th Global University Summit, in which senior leaders from universities from many countries participated and shared views. It was indeed a unique opportunity to meet and listen to leaders of some of the best universities of the world. While it was great to hear the views of these top leaders, and there are always things that one learns and approaches that can be translated to Indian context, it became clear to me that the pressing issues for these universities are simply very different from those faced in India.

At a fundamental level, these universities assume that high quality faculty talent is available, and high quality infrastructure exists. Some of the current focus areas for them are how to support higher education in times of reducing government support (almost in all developed countries the support from government for higher education is reducing with governments pushing them to become mostly self sustaining), improving diversity as they believe that in a globalized world diversity will help in their pursuit of excellence, attracting the best students, evolving strategies for making an impact, etc.

One could not help but see the stark difference from the scenario in India. Even in the top Institutes, getting decent faculty is perhaps the predominant issue being faced. And decent infrastructure remains a major concern – there is just too little money being put in for building educational infrastructure, as we still seem to believe that higher education needs just modest funding – an investment of Rs 200-500 crores for setting a university is viewed as extremely "generous", when this amount is typically used to construct a high quality building for one department (the CS building of UIUC, Georgia Tech, MIT, Stanford – which have come up in the last 10 years, have cost in the vicinity of $100 million). So what is assumed by Universities in the developed world, are the pressing issues in India.

It also became clear that building a world class University, at least by the measures that are used to define such universities, will be a challenge, if not an impossibility, for the next few decades in India. The reason is simple. Research performance drives the global standing of a University, and the two main factors that impact research productivity and quality are faculty and PhD students/postdocs. The well established universities pursue talent at a global level, and are able to get them, given their facilities and good compensation. So they attract the best talent to join as faculty, and they get the best available students in their PhD programs.

The situation in India on these fronts is extremely challenging. Forget about global talent, Indian Institutions are not in a position to attract even the best Indian talent – both the best faculty and the best PhD students from India prefer working overseas. Even the best Indian institution has available to it only those faculty who chose to return to India (or stay in India), and those PhD students who were unable to get fellowships abroad (or did not wish to go abroad). It should, however

be noted, that at the undergraduate level, we are able to attract the best Indian talent, as generally the best students prefer to study in top Institutions in India and only those who cannot make it to them go abroad (if they can afford it.) Unfortunately, top class UGs, while they help build the brand of an Institution in teaching, do not help much in building the research capability of a University.

So, it seems evident to me that in pursuit of excellence, our focus in the foreseeable future should be on doing whatever it takes to attract the best Indian faculty to work in India, attract top Indian students to do PhD in India (which can be facilitated by good faculty), and leverage the high quality UGs to the extent possible. And if we are able to achieve this, then in due course excellence will come and ratings will follow. (For attracting best Indian faculty and PhD students to work in India it is necessary to properly understand from them, what is it that they need to work in India, and build policies based on this. I have done one informal survey of Indian PhD students in US on what they need to return to India – results of this survey are available here, and one of UG students in three IITs regarding why they dont do PhD in India and what they need to do a PhD in India – results of this survey are available here. Inputs from both of these were used to build policies for faculty recruitment and PhD student recruitment at IIIT Delhi.)

Source: May 09, 2012/J World press

Skills needed for work and life

"Building Skills for Life and Work: China gears up for Shanghai World Congress"

The Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) opens in Shanghai on May 14. Convened by UNESCO in partnership with international development partners, it will bring together about 800 delegates from UNESCO's 195 member states representing a wide range of stakeholders including ministries of education, labor, finance and health; international organizations, the private sector, employee organizations, trade unions, academia, youth and civil society. The participants reflect the multi-dimensional nature of the challenge of reforming TVET at a time when skills and employment have become a leading policy concern worldwide.

Thirteen years after the Second International Congress in Seoul in 1999, the Shanghai Congress comes at a time when there is strong demand for upgrading skills, acquiring new ones, and improving linkages between learning and work in the face of demographic shifts, rapid labor market changes and youth unemployment in many countries. The uncertain global economic conditions have heightened the need to transform TVET systems to make them more responsive.

The central focus of the Congress is on how to transform and expand TVET to ensure that all young people and adults can develop the skills needed for work and life. The Congress will provide a unique platform for the sharing of knowledge, best practices and innovative ideas and charting new directions for transforming TVET systems.

In preparation for the Congress, UNESCO has organized several regional and global consultations. UNESCO will launch the World TVET Report and World Database on TVET to provide an important resource for policymakers, practitioners and specialists.

China has earned the distinction of hosting the World Congress through its impressive achievements in expanding and modernizing its vocational education system in tune with its development model. The TVET system has expanded since reform and opening-up was launched in 1978 and played a key role in the development of the country.

The Chinese TVET system connects education at various levels and is linked with general education. It has over 6,000 technical schools and employment training centers and 20,000 private vocational training institutions. Enrollment in secondary vocational education is now about 22 million, more than half of the total higher school level enrollment; the highest proportion in any country in the world. Even in higher education, almost half the students now are enrolled in vocational education. The government provides financial support to 12 million secondary vocational students from rural areas and families with financial difficulties. The employment rate of graduates of secondary vocational education remains more than 95 percent and higher vocational education employment is more than 72 percent. There has been an improvement in the skills demonstrated by students in the annual National Vocational Students Skills Competition. There is also wide acknowledgement of the quality of graduates by the enterprises.

One of the salient features of China's vocational education is the strong cooperation among government, enterprises, trade associations and training institutions. The School-enterprise partnership is the bedrock of China's success. Enterprises are deeply involved in curriculum design, development and review. They provide teachers for vocational institutions as well as

training opportunities for instructors. Students participate in internships at the enterprises for at least one third of their study period. This arrangement benefits both parties, ensuring a constant supply of workers to the enterprises and giving students an opportunity to acquire skills and earn some money. Certificates issued by enterprises to interns enhance their employability. Thus far China's TVET institutions have been able to meet diverse skill needs through an effective public-private partnership.

Nevertheless the next phase of China's social and economic development will pose challenges for the TVET system which will have to step up to meet the needs of what will soon be the world's largest economy in terms of GDP. China is seeking a major transformation from being a low-end manufacturing hub to a more sophisticated, service-oriented and creative economy. While it seeks to improve its competitiveness through innovation it has to reduce its carbon emissions, minimize ecological damage and improve energy efficiency. The TVET system will have to shoulder the responsibility of training a more skilled work force capable of adapting to the new demands of the labor market, globalization and technological upgrading through a process of lifelong learning. This will require openness and flexibility to cater to the needs of youth, women and the aging population.

The migration of rural people to cities poses a major challenge in terms of livelihoods of migrants, reskilling surplus agricultural labor and urban integration. Modernization of agriculture, development of the non-farm sector and the balanced development of the rural and urban areas demand a more diversified and dynamic TVET system.

The Chinese government is responding to this situation with a series of policy measures. The economic stimulus in 2008 provided substantial funding for improving the physical infrastructure of TVET institutions. The National Plan Outline on Medium and Long term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) recognizes the importance of TVET in promoting economic development. There is a major commitment to expand reform and modernize TVET, including a long-term funding mechanism.

A TVET teacher quality improvement initiative has been launched. Nevertheless issues relating to teacher motivation, status and capacity need urgent attention. Vocational schools face difficulties in attracting competent teachers from partner enterprises.

All these and other related issues will be examined at the Shanghai Congress next month. This will provide an excellent opportunity for Chinese policymakers, academics and enterprises to share experiences; compare systems and fine tune their national strategies to improve the quality of TVET so as to respond to the expectations of their societies, especially youth, and to tackle emerging inequities to achieve the vision of a sustainable moderately well-off society.

China will be expected to demonstrate its global and regional leadership not only in shaping outcomes but in providing resources and expertise to help other developing countries improve the quality and relevance of TVET in tune with the evolving needs of their societies and the global market place.

Source: May 10, 2012/China daily

Scholar's paper doesn't add up

'No scientific content' the sticking point as second mathematics treatise is retracted. Paul Jump writes

An Indian mathematician who had a journal article retracted last year over its claims that mathematics and spirituality both "came from space" has seen another of his publications suffer a similar fate for having "no scientific content".

The Elsevier journal *Computers & Mathematics with Applications* published "A computer application in mathematics" by M. Sivasubramanian, who was the corresponding author, and S. Kalimuthu in 2009. Running to just 350 words, the paper claims that the authors used unspecified computer "magnification technology" to provide the first proof of a Euclidean axiom called the "parallel postulate".

"An impossible proposition was proved as possible," the paper concludes. "This is a problematic problem."

As reported by the Retraction Watch website, the paper, which has garnered no citations, has now been retracted by the journal on the grounds that it contains "no scientific content". It was accepted due to "an administrative error".

Dr Sivasubramanian, a senior lecturer in topology at the Dr. Mahalingam College of Engineering and Technology in Pollachi, India, also authored a 2010 paper that claimed that "both science and spirituality came from space". Retracting the paper last year, the journal *Applied Mathematics Letters* said it represented "severe abuse of the scientific publishing system".

At the time the papers were accepted, both journals were edited by Ervin Rodin, professor emeritus of mathematics at Washington University in St Louis.

Professor Rodin told *Times Higher Education* that he had no personal connection with Dr Sivasubramanian, adding that every paper he dealt with had either been accepted by an editorial board member or sent out to two referees.

Timothy Gowers, Royal Society 2010 anniversary research professor in mathematics at the University of Cambridge, suggested that a "half-competent reviewer" would have rejected the parallel postulate paper instantly.

He said the case emphasised the "significant value" added to papers by "the voluntary work of editors and reviewers".

Professor Gowers has led a boycott of Elsevier journals following the company's initial support for a US bill that would have outlawed open-access mandates.

Peter Saunders, emeritus professor of mathematics at King's College London, wondered whether the latest retracted paper was a spoof. It also reminded him of being asked to referee a paper whose author "clearly didn't understand the subject".

In that instance, Professor Saunders said, "the editor apologetically explained that they got a lot of such papers from India because in some of their less prestigious institutions one paper in an international journal would get you promotion".

Source: May 10, 2012/Times Higher Education.UK

Rethinking education in India

Indian education has, after Independence, produced nothing whatsoever - yes, absolutely nothing - of global calibre. Not one earth-shaking discovery or invention, not one outstanding theoretical insight!'. Indian education is unable to anticipate what the future holds.

The controversial Right to Education (RTE) legislation has been in the news lately, for all the wrong reasons. Far from being the panacea its proponents claim it is, it is deeply flawed, for at least two reasons: One, it attempts to transfer public funds to private hands, especially of certain privileged communities; two, it does not address the proximate causes for the rot in the entire edifice of education, which is due to the antics of interfering busybodies with cockamamie Soviet-era ideas.

In fact, the rot goes deeper, because of structural reasons. The first is that the current system of education - allegedly 'modern' - is inherently perverse: It was imposed upon India by the British imperialists, with the single-minded purpose of creating coolies and clerks to help them run the country. That their system was meant to perpetuate colonialism is demonstrated in the book Masks of Conquest by Columbia's Gauri Viswanathan: indeed, English itself was a mask of conquest - an inferior language thrust upon conquered nations: First India, then Ireland.

The system has succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of Thomas Babington Macaulay's infamous Minute on Indian Education, which wanted to produce little brown sepoys to be the cannon-fodder of Empire, metaphorically speaking. Such Brown Sahibs - deracinated, laughable imitations of their white masters - still rule the roost. You merely have to turn on Indian television to see these people strut about flaunting awful 'convent accents' and an utter lack of comprehension about what the world is all about, other than pre-digested nonsense about ye olde Englande or America.

These 'beautiful people' have internalised utterly moronic ideas about distribution without ever worrying about production, quality, or excellence. Which is precisely the reason why Indian education has, after Independence, produced nothing whatsoever - yes, absolutely nothing - of global calibre. Not one earth-shaking discovery or invention, not one outstanding theoretical insight!

That this is much worse than under the imperialists - in their days, there were world-class discoveries and inventions coming out of India, by C V Raman, J C Bose and Srinivasa Ramanujan to name just three - should be reason for the education establishment to hang its head in shame.

The second structural problem is that the middle classes have successfully hijacked the State's spending on education. All of East Asia has invested the majority of its funds in primary education, thus driving up the level not only of basic literacy, but functional literacy, viz. the ability to read a manual and perform tasks according to instructions therein. This has been key in the rise of manufacturing in East Asia, as they have successfully created factory labour.

In India, the comparable achievement is only a drop in the bucket - merely the creation of a cohort of services employees in the IT and ITES sectors, which together do not constitute more than a few percent of the workforce. To be honest, these services, which consist of low-creativity, repetitive work, are mind-numbing, which is one of the reasons for very high attrition in these fields.

There is simply no room for creativity or high-quality research. Anybody who dares to do path-breaking work will soon learn of the Great Man syndrome: All ideas must ipso facto come only from the director or department head; anybody who

deviates from groupthink -- or refuses to toe the line peddled by their thesis advisor - will soon find himself out on the street, without a dissertation, blackballed and unemployable.

There are no doubt islands of excellence in this sea of mediocrity; but having been associated with some of the alleged islands I can with confidence assert that they too do not necessarily produce much that is earth-shaking. With exceptions, the work done there is also mediocre and risk-averse, because that is what Soviet-style system rewards.

In general, the IITs and IIMs are good mostly because of a single factor: The entrance exams, the JEE and the CAT, are good filters, and manage to find a lot of the very best student. And a large number of the best students do attempt these examinations.

That is part of the problem: There aren't sufficient numbers of seats in quality institutions, so that the acceptance rate for the IITs and IIMs is a paltry 0.1 to 0.2 per cent, compared to some of the toughest schools in the world to get into, such as Stanford, which may take 7 to 10 per cent of the applicants.

Quite naturally, of course, the powers-that-be are merrily gutting the JEE (and probably soon the CAT) so that even these oases can be destroyed.

The low number of available seats has led to a pathological situation: There are cramming academies that specialise in pushing students into these institutions. There are entrance exams into these academies, so that students as young as those in their 8th and 9th grade are in this rat-race of cramming to get into the cramming academies, and then cramming to get into the institutions themselves. There are clearly too few seats in the brick-and-mortar institutions of excellence.

A huge premium is placed, therefore, on memorising facts so that students can 'crack' the entrance exams. This has in fact become the entire objective of the school education system: Stuffing children's heads with useless facts, and killing every spark of creativity, innovation and thinking outside the box.

An intriguing recent book by Columbia's Stuart Firestein (a neurologist, but he has been teaching a broader course on this subject) titled Ignorance: How it Drives Science posits that it is not the acquisition of facts, but the ability to know what one does not know that drives the spirit of inquiry, and thus makes any progress possible. Naturally, by this measure there will be absolutely no innovation coming out of India. And that in fact is the case by and large.

This was not always true: In an earlier time, before the imperialists damaged the system, Indian education was far more balanced; and no wonder ancient India was the most creative and innovative civilisation in the world. There was an efflorescence of creative activity, unmatched even by the Western gold standard: Their Renaissance. Out of this came things as diverse as Panini's grammar, the infinite series of Madhava; the Aryabhatiya, the Hortus Malabaricus, and theYogasutras.

In his landmark work, The Beautiful Tree, Dharampal has quoted the imperialists themselves about the quality and quantity of indigenous education. There was a school in every village, and all groups enjoyed the benefits of gurukula-style education that created citizens, not drones. That high-quality, individualised system has been abandoned for today's education factories churning out ill-prepared, ill-equipped, second-rate graduates.

But going back to the issue of quantity, it has been known for a very long time that India does not have enough quality institutions. At long last, the powers-that-be have recognised this. Their solution: Create a large number of entities! Quality? Who cares about quality?

Thus the move to wave a magic wand and produce a large number of IITs and IIMs. I got a mail from someone that listed new IIMs at Trichy, Udaipur, Rohtak, Raipur, Ranchi, and US Nagar (Uttarkhand). With all due respect, the only thing this is going to achieve -- especially given the abysmal quality of PhD dissertations and thus of newly minted faculty in India -- is that the IIT and IIM brands will get diluted.

Par for the course. As is normal in India, the allegedly omniscient economists, lawyers and other interfering busybodies who rule the country always try to solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions, whereas the world has moved on. The answer is not to clone large numbers of IITs and IIMs -- their business models, after 50 years, are no longer appropriate - but to rethink higher education altogether.

That is precisely what a group of entrepreneurs and educators are doing in the US: They are disrupting education wholesale. More about that in the next part of this essay.

Source: May 10, 2012/Rediff.com

Set the bar higher

Turf wars over legal education have done little to improve its standards

Some say that law is an instrument of power. Little wonder then that regulating access to the corridors of legal power is lucrative business — particularly when the regulatory turf lies in the world's largest

democracy, which now boasts more than 900 law schools.

Recently, the Bar Council of India (BCI) was in the news for protesting attempts by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to usurp its superintendence of legal education through the Higher Education and Research Bill, 2011. This squabble is merely one of many in a series of turf wars between various agencies to assert their dominance over legal education.

All of this naturally raises the question: does the BCI have the competence to regulate legal education in the first place? In terms of legal competence, the answer appears to be in the affirmative. As for institutional competence, the less said, the better.

Even in terms of legal competence, there is an important caveat that seems to have been missed by the BCI in all these years of regulatory dominance. Section 7(1)(h) of the Advocates Act, 1961, requires the BCI "to lay down standards of... (legal) education in consultation with the Universities in India imparting such education". Past records do not suggest any meaningful consultation with universities. While castigating this deficiency, the National Knowledge Commission noted that of the 10 members of the BCI's Legal Education Committee, only one was a full-time legal academic.

The lack of proper consultation is not just anathema to the law, but has also had an impact on the quality of BCI norms. Any legal educator knows that it is near impossible for law schools to fully comply with the BCI's rather onerous curriculum requirements. To add to its woes, the 184th Law Commission Report noted several complaints from law schools that the BCI's directives often "tend to be arbitrary."

The BCI's attempt at salvaging its institutional credibility through a Directorate of Legal Education led by a legal academic was a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, apart from conducting the All India Bar Exam, the Directorate appears to have done little else. If the BCI is serious about this institution and its role in setting standards for legal education, it must ensure that the Directorate is well funded, sufficiently autonomous and not subject to wanton interference by BCI officials.

While enhancing its institutional legitimacy, the BCI would do well to keep in mind that the purpose of law schools is not to merely mass-produce technically competent lawyers ready to serve the bar. Rather, it is to cultivate critical thinkers, social reformers and creative leaders free to pursue an array of career options. Law schools must therefore be encouraged to experiment with their curricula and conceptualise courses that foster critical and creative thinking beyond the black letters of the law.

The Advocates Act mandates the BCI to consult with law schools while formulating educational norms, but it does not specify the form or extent of consultation. For this process to be effective, it is important that law schools form a representative association that speaks in one voice to the BCI.

This association must work with the BCI and the University Grants Commission (UGC) to fix the bottlenecks plaguing even the most elite of legal institutions. Although the prime minister was generous in labelling the National Law Universities (NLUs) "islands of excellence amidst a sea of institutionalised mediocrity", these islands fall several notches short of "excellence" when measured against their international peers. They mostly bask in the glory of their students without investing significantly in upgrading their standards. The quantum and quality of research output are appalling and the teaching methodology continues to rely largely on a one-way lecture based transmission of legal doctrines that are simply regurgitated during exams. There is no real interactive or experiential learning.

Most problematically, the governance structures of these premier institutions are extremely fragile, hanging on the whims and fancies of vice-chancellors chosen to lead them. Visionary VCs have taken law schools up by several notches, only to have unimaginative successors undo the work in no time.

What is most worrying is that many of these leading institutions have no public funding and are forced to rely primarily on student fees. Not only is this unsustainable in the long run, it effectively strips away the "public" character of these institutions and converts them to elitist centres with hardly any representation from poor, marginalised students.

Going forward, we need to move beyond the turf wars and craft creative solutions to redress the various problems plaguing legal education. Only then can we hope to create world-class institutions that push the frontiers of knowledge and encourage their students to use one of the most powerful tools of social justice to fashion a better society for all of us.

Source: May 10, 2012/India Express

It works abroad, why not at home

Easier to approach foreign universities for sending exchange students under semester system

Semester system, combined with grading, is the most popular way of teaching and assessing in higher education world over. Indian education system is gradually moving to the same style in colleges. Changes are being brought in school education as well.

"We moved from the annual examination system to the semester system keeping many things in mind. It increases efficiency and defeats the laid-back attitude among students and teachers. It also makes it easier for our students to go to other countries," said a former Delhi University who was a part of planning for the new system.

He said it has become easier to approach foreign universities for sending students on exchange programmes. "Earlier students went for presentation of papers or for a few weeks. Now they can go for an entire semester," he said.

JNU's example

The global studies programme of Jawaharlal Nehru University is an example. Students come from other parts of the world for one semester and take classes at various departments.

"Students from here go on similar courses. It can happen only in the semester system because students are exchanged, facilitated by foreign ministries, for a few months," said Dhanpath Shyam, a humanities student at JNU. He attended one such course in the Netherlands while doing his MA.

DU is also planning to convert its three-year Bachelor's courses into four-year stints. According to one expert, this will meet the the requirement of 16 years of education to pursue a Master's degree from the United States and Europe. "It's a welcome step," she said, even while adding that the length of a course does not determine quality.

Scrapping board exams in class 10 and adopting a project-based approach for school education too prepares kids for studies abroad.

But the switch has not been taken positively by many as it involves assessment of students by schoolteachers for 11 years, rather than by a board.

Critics say that many teachers don't understand the project-based approach. Students are made to submit numerous 'projects', which just means a lot of printouts. Teachers don't look at the content, they just see the highlighting of the text with colours.

Anjali Verma, mother of two said students are taking coloured print-outs to make their presentations look attractive.

This might be the easy way out for them right now, but it doesn't prepare them for tougher academic life later.

Source: May 12, 2012/Deccan Herald

Passport to new age skills

The 21st Century requires global perspectives with ability to work seamlessly with people from diverse backgrounds. International education is an effective way to acquire skills that are essential if one wants to be a part of global teams. Universities in every corner of the globe welcome Indian students as they add a different perspective to a class.

In a new trend, students are opting for unconventional programmes like fashion styling, film-making, script writing, acting, music production, adventure sports, production design, environmental sciences, sustainable energy, culinary arts and games development, among others.

Netherlands, for instance, is offering several courses in water management, while France offers an array of luxury brand management programmes. Universities in Germany are making waves with their research initiatives in modern transport engineering, bio-sciences and energy solutions. Caribbean and Russian colleges, on the other hand, are emerging as destinations for medical studies. Sports and allied fields, including sports psychology, sports physiotherapy and sports nutrition, are niche areas in Australian colleges, while marine engineering and marine sciences are on offer at coastal universities (Florida, California, Hawaii, Philippines, Southampton and Gold Coast).

If you have suddenly woken up to find out that application deadlines are over, do not panic. There are many universities in the US, Canada, Australia, Singapore and New Zealand who have 'rolling admissions,' which means they will continue to accept applications till they have seats, right up to the end of June for the session starting in Fall 2012. In fact, a large number of universities in each country have multiple intakes throughout the year - in January, May and September - making it convenient for students to apply.

UK's common application process, UCAS, is open for international students till June 30, for entry to most degree programmes in September 2012.

Also, several universities are using technology to conduct online courses, which carry full credit for students who decide to skip a semester. Even a year's credits may be earned through these various online courses and Advanced Placement programme, making it possible for students to join universities a little later in the academic cycle.

Despite high costs of an American education, with an average tuition fee of $30,000 (approx) per year, US still remains a popular choice with Indian students. One of the reasons is the flexibility the universities offer in terms of creating your own programme at the UG level. In the US, you can apply for a major called 'undecided' and after two years of taking classes in various streams, you can declare a specific major. The earliest intake that students can try for is January 2013. For admissions, students will need SAT and TOEFL scores. The popular courses at the UG-level include computer science, engineering, business management and liberal arts. You can consider applying for a course in medicine, dentistry or even marketing in the UK. For automobile engineering, Germany offers several options. And for design and luxury brand management, take a look at colleges in Italy and France.

For admissions, you are likely to need TOEFL or IELTS. The degrees are generally of three years' duration (medical/health-related courses are of longer duration with additional entrance criteria) and your fee will be around £15,000 per-annum. For hotel management, Australia is a good option with the main intake in February. There is an option overseas for every requirement.

Source: May 14, 2012/Times of India

Language exodus reshapes India's schools

The belief shared at all levels of Indian society that an English-medium education is the key to children's prosperity is changing classroom teaching but experts worry about standards

Dinesh Mandal, an illiterate villager from Bihar, came to India's capital city nearly three decades ago with a dream – to make sure that, unlike him, his son Umesh would get a proper education.

To make that possible, Mandal took up work in a home in the heart of Delhi, in an area built by the colonial British and popularly known after its chief planner and architect Edwin Lutyens. Lutyens's Delhi not only has extensive quarters for household staff attached to its sprawling government bungalows; it also provides schools where the families of the poor working for top politicians and officials can get their children educated.

But Mandal's dream has remained unfulfilled. His son Umesh failed to graduate from his local school, where he was taught in Hindi, one of India's official languages. Though he finds work intermittently, he is at present unemployed. As a result, he has moved to a satellite settlement 50km away.

Mandal, though, hasn't given up on wanting to educate his progeny – only the language has changed. He has kept back his three grandchildren – a boy and two girls – with him in his one-room tenement, and is now convinced that educating them in a school with English as the medium of instruction will emancipate his family.

"If my son Umesh had studied in an English-medium school, our life would've been different today," said Mandal. "Now my grandson is doing that, and I'm doing all I can to ensure my two granddaughters also get admitted to an English-medium school."

More and more across India, parents are forsaking educating their kids in their mother tongue in favour of English. Despite warnings from educationists that a child's cognitive development is affected by early schooling in an unfamiliar language, there has been an exponential increase during the last decade in English-medium schools in the country.

The latest data compiled by the National University of Education, Planning and Administration (NUEPA) shows that the number of children studying in English-medium schools has increased by a staggering 274% between 2003 and 2011, to over 20 million students.

"In village after village you will see signboards for English schools which are no more than private shops," said Anil Gupta of the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. "They're capitalising on the huge aspirations of people wanting to improve themselves economically. The desire for education is no more an argument."

After two decades of rapid economic growth, landing employment has also become equated with knowing English, especially due to the software boom and the expansion of the service sector. Corporates, though, still complain of poor skills among job seekers.

"There are lots of schools, but no trained teachers," said Gupta. "The issue is not of quality going down, but of no quality to begin with."

But it's not just private entrepreneurs who are riding the "educate your child in English" wave. In response to lobbying from parents, even provincial governments are abandoning their diehard commitment to the language of the region and increasingly supporting English. Votaries of regional tongues are now seen as impractical language chauvinists, while more informed debate on the importance of language in child development is lost in the din of politics.

Goa is a good example. Last year the authorities reversed the state's language policy and announced that even English-medium schools would get grants. The Catholic church runs a majority of Goa's government-aided schools, and it switched to

English overnight. Opponents of the move have gone to court, but people dismiss regional language advocates as hypocrites since contrary to their public stand, they too send their children to English-medium schools.

"Indian politicians basically want to keep us docile and backward," said English language activist Savio Lopes. "If my child is schooled in [Goa's official language] Konkani, how will he find a job outside the state, when English is the nation's link language?"

Educationists argue the real problem is the method of teaching, since a child can become proficient in English if it is taught properly even as a second language. India's poorly skilled teachers are a dilemma – only 9% of 730,000 teachers from private and government schools, for instance, passed a recent national eligibility test.

When the standard of teaching in a regional language school is good, the difference becomes apparent. "In India, teaching of languages is generally very outdated, no matter which language," said Anita Rampal, professor of education at Delhi University. "But a study we did in Delhi showed that students who began learning in Hindi for the first five years in a school that taught language well showed the ability later to think independently and write creatively in both Hindi and English."

NUEPA vice-chancellor R Govinda pointed out that many high achievers, such as former prime minister PV Narasimha Rao, did elementary schooling in a regional language, and later became proficient in other languages. Govinda himself went to a Kannada-medium school.

"The current perception that English will resolve everything is not correct," he said. "States should invest more in developing good English teaching, and evolve a comprehensive language policy."

Cultural theorist Rita Kothari pointed out that English and regional languages contain different "storehouses of knowledge", both of which are essential for a student. English provides a wealth of modern ideas and historical understanding. "But without regional languages, the richness of the landscape will get flattened," she said.

The real challenge is to raise standards in all languages, and produce good teachers. "The best don't want to teach," said Paul Gunashekar of the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad. "In my university, we don't feel the focus should be on English alone at the expense of the mother tongue and regional languages."

Source: May 15, 2012/Guardian UK

RESOURCE

Indians don't feel 'engaged' at work: Survey

A record high of 31% of Indian adults - or about 240 million Indians - rate their lives poorly enough to be considered 'suffering', according to the 2012 Gallup research released Monday at the Behavioral Economics Forum in New Delhi. This is against 24% "suffering" in 2011.

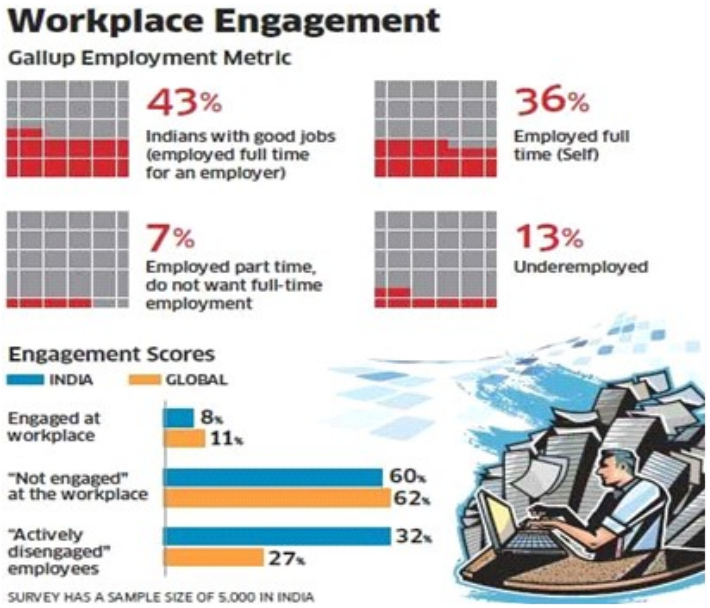
Engagement in Indian workplaces is also a concern, with 8% of Indians who are employed for an employer being engaged, versus 32% being "actively disengaged".

Gallup classifies respondents as 'thriving', 'struggling' or 'suffering', according to how they rate their current and future lives on a ladder scale with steps numbered from 0 to 10 based on the Central Self-Anchoring Striving Scale. Gallup considers people to be suffering if they rate their current lives and their lives in five years at a 4 or lower.

The poorest and least educated Indians are the most likely to be suffering, but suffereing has increased among Indians at all income and education levels.

Suffering has risen among the poorest 40% of India's population since 2008, reaching 38% in early 2012.

At least 5% of Indian adults who have a college degree or more education fall into the suffering category, versus 32% who have completed their Secondary School Certificate education.



"The key factors affecting Indian citizens' well being are income, education and employment - all linked and influenced by the workplace," said Jim Clifton, Gallup chairman and CEO. Gallup research reveals that a "good job" - which Gallup categorises as

being employed full time for an employer - is important to overall well being. In early 2012, 43% of Indians had these good jobs.

"The workplace is the centre of India's ability to transform the well being of its citizens and to further strengthen India's economy and its presence on the international stage," Clifton added.

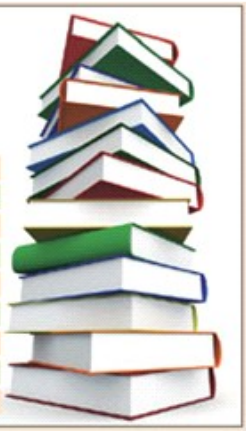
Source: May 01, 2012/Economic Times

25% of Indian students covered by distance education: Study

Those who thought that distance education was passé are in for a surprise as close to one-fourth of the country's students are getting educated through the distance mode.

REACHING OUT

Year	Distance teaching institutions	Student enrollment
1962	1	1,112
1970-71	17	29,500
1980-81	34	1.6 lakh
1985-86	40	3.5 lakh
1990-91	51	5.9 lakh
1995-96	57	10.3 lakh
2000-01	79	13.7 lakh
2005-06	117	18.3 lakh
2009-10	200	36.6 lakh



The Open Distance Learning (ODL) system, also known as Distance Education (DE) system, has evolved as one of the effective modes of education and training as the overall annual growth in enrollment between 1975-76 and 2008-09 was 5.6% for the conventional system, while it was 16.3% in the ODL system.

In fact, the enrollment in distance education has been increasing approximately at the rate of more than 10% in last two decades. Enrollment in Open Universities (OUs) and Distance Education Institutions (DEI) has increased steadily at a higher pace than in conventional programmes.

According to the report of a seven-member committee headed by NR Madhava Menon, the share of distance education increased from 2.6% in 1975-76 to 8.9% in 1985-86 and further improved to 10.7% in 1990-91 and to 20.56% in 2008-09.

‘‘At present, close to 24% of all enrollments are in the ODL system and growing fast because of the reach of this mode and the opportunities it gives to those who are already employed and seek to enhance their qualifications,’’ Prof V N Rajasekharan Pillai, former vice chancellor of IGNOU and member of the committee told FE.

Interestingly, the contribution of ODL to gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education has risen to about 22%.

Numbers favour distance education despite the general mindblock against it — something that experts say is developing a skilled labour force in the country.

‘‘Distance education is challenging the tyranny of conventional education system of 10+2+3. It is a very good vehicle for motivated people who want to re-enter the work force or the education system by getting certified. Distance education needs wide open entry gates, but tight exit gates,’’ said Manish Sabharwal, chairman, TeamLease Services.

A TeamLease study recently said 58% of India's youth suffer some degree of skill deprivation as the higher education system lacks flexibility (in entry, exit and re-entry). This, it says, can be scaled up in quality and reach only by creating competition with transparent regulation, legitimising distance education, legitimising private ownership, creating, recognising and legitimising vertical mobility among short-term certificates and medium-term diplomas by paying more attention to school-level education, fostering PPP models and deregulating higher education and study centre frameworks. Tweaking the skill and employment ecosystem is also required, it says.

‘‘Specialised programmes, especially in higher education, add more qualification and hone the current skills. This helps people in doing their jobs better," added Aditya Narayan Mishra, president, staffing at Randstad India.

The total enrollment in the conventional system stands at 136.42 lakh and there are another 36 lakh learners in ODL system. ODL constitutes about 22% of the total enrollment in the conventional system.

"Enrollment in technical and professional courses in the ODL system is less than 10%. In DEIs, it is in the range of 6-10 % and in state open universities (SOUs) it is in the range of 10-15 %,’’ the report noted.

About 87% of the total enrolled students in conventional system are at the graduate level. In the ODL system also, the enrolment is highest in undergraduate programmes, but it is less than that in the conventional system. The percentage of students enrolled for post-graduate general programme in conventional system is 10.92 %, while the same in the ODL system is in the range 15-20% in SOUs and around 30% in DEIs.

A very small proportion, almost 0.7% of the total number of students, in conventional system are enrolled for research. Out of the total research

students (0.83 lakh), 86% are in the universities. There were 954 PhD students in open universities prior to UGC notification not allowing research programme through distance mode.

Source: May 04, 2012/Indian Express

Indian Distance Learning Market Analysis

Post-independence era has seen India flourish remarkably in the field of providing higher education. Government initiatives along with innovative technology have facilitated the education providers to overcome all the boundaries and impart knowledge in every corner. India can be counted to posses one of the largest higher education systems in the world. Still, there is a lot of untapped opportunity and potential for the development of higher education system in India. Earlier, education was considered to be meant for the elites only, but now education has become compulsory for all, at least till a specific age. Various limitations of attaining regular course of education opened doors to this alternative system, i.e., distance education.

According to our statistics, the current gross enrollment ratio in higher education is not at par with the world's average. To meet this target of world's average, the country is targeting a high economic growth of over 8% in the coming years. However, to be at par with the economic growth in the global marketplace fueled by the knowledge economy, the country still needs to increase the number of student enrollment in higher education. This can only be achieved through the development of distance education in the country.

According to our latest research report, "Indian Distance Learning Market Analysis", the distance education market in India expected to grow at the rate of around 24% during 2011-12 to 2015-16. On the back of technological development, increasing awareness, rising faculty crunch, and increasing penetration of internet in the country, this market is anticipated to reach INR 87 Billion by the end of 2015-16. However, the aim of the government to raise its current GER from around 13% to 30% by 2020 that will also boost the growth of the distance education in India.

It is expected that soon, India will emerge as an e-learning and m-learning hub. Rapid growth of the Internet, innovative technology, and multimedia has enabled the world to succumb and brought the regions to each other. E-learning companies are continuously involved in the development of their products and experiencing high demand of more innovative products.

Our report, "Indian Distance Learning Market Analysis" provides an in-depth research and rational analysis of the current status and expected position of the distance education system in India. It also presents an overview of the various government initiatives in India to promote distance learning along with the regulatory norms required to enter into this market. Deep analysis of growth drivers and significant hurdles has also been covered in this report. Investigation of the e-learning market in India along with an overview and prospects of m-learning is profoundly been analyzed in this report.

Source: May 04, 2012/ Bharat book

Urban Indian women choose career over motherhood: Survey

A majority of young married working women in Indian metropolices are choosing career over family as they are in no mood to raise kids, a survey released here Thursday said.

About 1,200 married, working women without children in the age group of 24-30 in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and other major cities were interviewed by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) during March and April.

While Mumbai topped the survey, Bangalore came in second followed by Delhi.

"Over 650 of the working women said that they won't be starting a family anytime soon as career advancement and higher education was their priority, which they couldn't sacrifice to raise kids," said the survey.

Another 200 respondents were of the view that pregnancy would spoil their physical appearance while around 70 considered themselves too young to be a mother.

However, about 220 respondents had no qualms in becoming mothers as it would make them feel happier, and were not fearful of the effect motherhood might have on their career.

The remaining candidates wanted to accumulate enough wealth before they started a family.

The survey also included interview of about 800 stay-at-home mothers and 40 percent of them said that it was better to raise their kids at home rather than pay a bomb at day care units.

Besides, a majority of them said they were proud of choosing motherhood over work as it would lead to comprehensive development of their wards during the pre-school years.

About 35 percent said they had sacrificed their social life to raise their kids while 25 percent said

they regretted not being able to work, tangled as they were in managing their houses and kids.

Source: May 10, 2012/ IANS

Doctors and engineers driving taxis in Vancouver, study finds

Doctors, engineers and architects are all driving cabs in Canada, and many of them are immigrants from India and Pakistan. Government data released Thursday shows thousands of university-educated newcomers drive taxis because they are not able to find work in their chosen fields.

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Government data released Thursday shows thousands of university-educated newcomers drive taxis because they are not able to find work in their chosen fields.

Vancouver immigration lawyer Richard Kurland said the data confirms a long-held belief that "PhDs are driving cabs in Canada."

"I am floored. The study confirms what common sense told us," he said. The data came from 50,000 government tax records in 2006 which were analyzed for information about education, immigration and cab drivers.

They showed more than 8,000 immigrants drove cabs despite having college or trade diplomas. The numbers were almost as large for Canadian-born drivers. There are about 20 PhD-educated immigrant cabbies in Vancouver.

Kurland said many cabbies know a lot more than how to find street addresses. "In some places you can receive architectural advice on how to build a house. It's like: 'Take me to the airport please and what do I do about this mole?'" he said.

He said the under-utilization of training has led to "high blood pressure, long-term frustration and unhappiness." "There is a lot of sad stuff," he said.

Indian-born cabbie Amrik Mahil, who lives in Surrey, studied civil engineering at university but was never able to secure a job in the waste water treatment field.

"I tried and tried to get on at the Annacis Island sewage plant, but there were no openings," said Mahil, 55. He and his wife took $3.65 an hour jobs to make ends meet in the 1980s.

"I will never forget working in a convenience store," he said. Driving a cab in 1993 was "brand new and kind of scary."

"I did it because my upbringing was that you have to work for a living," he said. Mahil drove a cab and used his managerial skills to eventually become president of Blacktop & Checker Cabs.

He owns a cab licence today, drives for Blacktop and will be the NDP candidate in next year's provincial election in the Surrey-Panorama riding.

Kurland said immigration rules have changed since 2006 to make it less likely that educated workers will be left out.

"The problem used to be delays which lasted more than five years. Today, there are one-year waits because the intake of applications has been capped at a manageable number," he said.

"There is mandatory English-language testing and checks to make sure immigrants have proper credentials," he said.

Source: May 10, 2012/ The Province

Higher education ranking: UK '10th best'

The report for Universitas 21 rated the UK 10th best at providing higher education in a ranking of 48 countries.

The study put the UK second for university research and teaching but 27th for spending on higher education. Universities UK said other more established global rankings regularly put the UK system second to top.

Ross Williams, lead author of the Universitas 21 study, said the evidence showed the UK system was very efficient.Professor Ross, of University of Melbourne, told BBC News: "The model is that if you want to maintain high output you must maintain high resource levels.

"Think of all the extra resources that are going to higher education in East Asian countries. You are going to have to put in more resources even to maintain your rankings."

Universitas 21, an international group of universities, claimed the new ranking was the first to compare the effectiveness of national higher education systems.

Their analysis put the United States top, followed by Sweden, Canada, Finland and Denmark. The UK was ranked 10th overall despite coming second only to the United States on the strength of the universities themselves.

It came 27th for the resourcing of universities and 41st out of 48 for government spending on higher education.

The report claims: "The difference in ranking between output and resources is the greatest for all 48 countries and reflects very high productivity." Universities UK, which represents all UK universities, said it was difficult to compare

international education systems - but other more established compilers of world rankings such as Times Higher, QS and Shanghai Jiaotong consistently rated the UK as second behind the United States.

Chief executive Nicola Dandridge said: "League tables cannot tell the whole story... and positions will vary from one table to the next, depending on the selection of criteria and methodology used.

"Based on measures of output and efficiency, the UK remains the second strongest university system in the world after the US.

"It attracts more overseas students per capita than the majority of major higher education systems, and it remains one of the world's leading research powers measured by total publications and citations.

"However, we continue to spend less as a percentage of GDP than the average of OECD countries. "We should remain acutely aware that other countries are investing more than the UK and that our reputation as a world-class provider of higher education is not a foregone conclusion."

Source: May 11, 2012/ BBC

Female Indian Grads Aren't Necessarily Keen on Working

Indian women are lucky if they can beat the odds against them — such as low education levels and traditions that uphold gender bias, like early marriage — to live the lives they envision for themselves and their families. But now, the middle-class women who *do* manage to graduate from higher education and are financially solvent enough to go into lucrative fields like consulting or banking would, well, rather not. For example, take Bavleen Sawhney, a top-ranking graduate of Ohio State University who told *Bloomberg* that she'd rather be a personal shopper than toil away in a managerial position:

"I've told my dad I don't want to work," said Sawhney, 22, who travels around New Delhi's malls in a chauffeured sedan to browse shoes by Jimmy Choo Ltd. and handbags from Bottega Veneta Srl for wealthy clients. "A nine-to-five job doesn't suit me."

More women are studying at Indian universities, too — the number of women working towards commerce-related degrees in Indian universities per 100 men almost quadrupled to 63 from 1980 to 2002 — but once they graduate, they return home in droves. Only 22 percent of India's female graduates are working women, which is lower than even the number of illiterate women entering the workforce. And they're contributing to a huge national problem: "a shortage of technical, professional and managerial staff that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh says is constraining growth."

India ranks very low on the World Economic Forum's ranking of gender parity in economic participation, scoring above only Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Yemen. National incomes would rise by more than 12 percent by 2025 and gross domestic product would increase by $110 billion in a decade if just half of India's working-age women joined the workforce. But what's in it for the ladies, especially those who want to start families, and only have to pay paltry amounts to afford lavish lifestyles with full time household help? ("Helpers" that cook and clean only cost about $151 a month in India's capital.)

Both businesses and the government are scrambling to entice women to get into the 9-5 mentality. "Especially for women for whom the economic need is less, the challenge is finding them work that is interesting and challenging, and also making them feel rewarded," said Naina Lal Kidwai, the head of HSBC Holdings Plc in India, which offers incentives like flexible hours and sabbaticals. Some companies try to portray their work environments as young and carefree, while others offer lengthy maternity leaves. There are also "Second Career Internship Programs" which have been successful. India has outlawed pay discrimination and marriages for women under 18, and is considering a bill that would reserve a third of Parliament seats for women.

Here's the thing, though: the goal for many employed people is to make enough money to eventually relax, reap the financial rewards, and support their families. If women don't have to actually be employed to do all that, can they really be convinced go back to work for the good of their country? The title of the *Bloomberg* piece seems a bit sexist — "Jimmy Choos Luring Indian Women Graduates From Work" — but let's all ask ourselves an honest question. If you could enjoy your ideal lifestyle without working an office job, wouldn't you?

Source: May 11, 2012/Jezebel

Ranking Reveals World's Top Countries for Higher Education

New research into national education systems gives the first ranking of countries which are the 'best' at providing higher education.

The Universitas 21 Ranking was announced May 11, 2012 at an event at Lund University in Sweden. Universitas *21*, a leading global network of research

universities, has developed the ranking as a benchmark for governments, education institutions and individuals. It aims to highlight the importance of creating a strong environment for higher education institutions to contribute to economic and cultural development, provide a high-quality experience for students and help institutions compete for overseas applicants.

Rankings.

Research authors at the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research,University of Melbourne, looked at the most recent data from 48 countries across 20 different measures. The range of measures is grouped under four headings: resources (investment by government and private sector), output (research and its impact, as well as the production of an educated workforce which meets labour market needs), connectivity (international networks and collaboration which protects a system against insularity) and environment (government policy and regulation, diversity and participation opportunities). Population size is accounted for in the calculations.

Overall, in the Universitas 21 Ranking of higher education systems, the top five were found to be the United States, Sweden, Canada, Finland and Denmark.

Government funding of higher education as a percentage of GDP is highest in Finland, Norway and Denmark, but when private expenditure is added in, funding is highest in the United States, Korea, Canada and Chile. Investment in Research and Development is highest in Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland. The United States dominates the total output of research journal articles, but Sweden is the biggest producer of articles per head of population. The nations whose research has the greatest impact are Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United States, United Kingdom and Denmark. While the United States and United Kingdom have the world's top institutions in rankings, the depth of world class higher education institutions per head of population is best in Switzerland, Sweden, Israel and Denmark.

The highest participation rates in higher education are in Korea, Finland, Greece, the United States, Canada and Slovenia. The countries with the largest proportion of workers with a higher level education are Russia, Canada, Israel, United States, Ukraine, Taiwan and Australia. Finland, Denmark, Singapore, Norway and Japan have the highest ratio of researchers in the economy.

International students form the highest proportions of total student numbers in Australia, Singapore, Austria, United Kingdom and Switzerland. International research collaboration is most prominent in Indonesia, Switzerland, Hong Kong SAR, Denmark, Belgium and Austria. China, India, Japan and the United States rank in the bottom 25 percent of countries for international research collaboration. In all but eight countries at least 50 percent of students were female, the lowest being in India and Korea. In only five countries were there at least 50 percent female staff; the lowest being in Japan and Iran.

Lead author, Professor Ross Williams at the University of Melbourne, said: "In a globalised world, a strong higher education system is essential if a nation is to be economically competitive.

"While there are a number of well-regarded global rankings of individual institutions, these don't shed any light on the broader picture of how well a nation's system educates its students, the environment it provides for encouraging and supporting excellence. Students choose countries to study in as much as individual institutions, and the Universitas 21 Ranking offers clear data to support decision-making."

Jane Usherwood, Secretary General of Universitas 21, said: "More transparency and clarity is needed around the comparative strengths and qualities of national education systems around the world in order to encourage knowledge-sharing, collaboration and development of opportunities for students in all countries. We hope the Universitas 21 Ranking will become an established point of reference for policy-makers, education institutions and development bodies globally."

Universitas 21 is an international research network of 24 universities and colleges. Its membership works together to encourage international mobility and engagement between staff and students.

Source: May 11, 2012/Science Daily

What Country Has the Best Higher Education System?

The United States' higher education system is commonly considered the best in the world, and a new study concludes that's true. Universitas 21, a global network of research universities, recently released its official rankings based on the results of a year-long study.

The study's authors examined education systems in 48 nations around the world, relying on four measures: resources (investment by government and private sector); output (the amount of research schools produce and their impact); connectivity (how well they collaborate with other nations); and environment (campus diversity and breadth of

opportunities). The researchers then adjusted the data for population. Here are the top 10 nations:

Rank	Country	Score
1	United States	100.0
2	Sweden	83.6
3	Canada	82.8
4	Finland	82.0
5	Denmark	81.0
6	Switzerland	80.3
7	Norway	78.0
8	Australia	77.8
9	Netherlands	77.4
10	United Kingdom	76.8

The United States' strong performance was driven largely by its total output of research journal articles, the measure that comprised 40 percent of the ranking. Examining the categories of resources and connectivity reveals room to grow. Government funding of higher education per GDP is highest in Finland, Norway and Denmark. American universities are forced to rely on private funding more than other nations do, the researchers found. And when it comes to international research collaboration, the United States is at the bottom of the pack, along with China, India and Japan.

The good news is that the majority of countries earn high marks when it comes to learning environment. In all but eight countries, at least half of students are women—the lowest percentages are in India and Korea. But when it comes to gender equity in university staff, few nations fare as well: Just five have gender parity on the faculty, with the lowest numbers in Japan and Iran.

Universitas 21 says it hope the rankings will serve as a benchmark for governments, institutions, and individuals, highlighting the importance of creating strong higher education systems around the globe.

Source: May 12, 2012/Good Education

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.

Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation

Apeejay Stya House
14 Commercial Complex, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, Part - II
New Delhi 110048
Tel. No. (91 – 11) 29228296 / 97 / 98 **Email:** aserf@apeejay.edu
Fax No. (91 – 11) 29223326 **Website:** http://aserf.org.in