APEEJAY STYA EDUCATION RESEARCH FOUNDATION

rooted in values. soaring towards excellence.

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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*

Please visit our website for more: click here

Get Involved

Fellowship opportunities

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

Workshops/Guest Lectures

Regular workshops and lectures on a variety of subjects.

Scholarships

Need-based financial aid to deserving student

Faculty Sponsorships

By seeding a named faculty seat or fellowship

Internships/Mentoring

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

Please visit our website for more: click here

Also discover the Apeejay Edge: click here

Partnership

Dear Partners,

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

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

Editor

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CONTENT

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Apeejay Stya Svrán Group

ASPECT

The rot in our college education system

The ongoing annual admissions tamasha at the various Indian universities is evidence enough of a system so rotten that it can't be fixed. It can only be replaced by one that addresses current and future needs.

A few days back New York-based Carnegie Corporation released the findings of a poll which stated that the majority of Americans unequivocally believe that access to higher education is a right. The findings are as important as the occasion. The former because of the current debate raging in that country about whether so many people should be going to college at all. But the backdrop to the survey is equally important. It marks the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act that established federal funding for establishing many of the best known US public colleges and universities. Despite a raging Civil War in the country, president Abraham Lincoln and the members of the Congress passed that crucial piece of legislation. Within months it led to the founding of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), which became a guiding force in the evolution of American science and technology. In its wake, the country became a magnet for some of the brightest and best students from the world over, a trend that continues today.

Here in India, we continue to treat education as a plaything for politicians to pull out when they please and throw away when it no longer amuses them or worse still, stops serving their limited political objectives. The annual admissions tamasha at the various Indian universities is evidence enough of a system so rotten that it can't, no shouldn't, be fixed. But I am not even going there. There are many more manageable things that our parliamentarians in their wisdom prevaricate over. The bill to create a new independent regulator for higher education, The National Commission for Higher Education and Research, which will replace the discredited University Grants Commission and the All India Council on Technical Education, is still pending passage in Parliament two years after it was mooted. The regulatory apparatus is so wobbly that we expect a new scam to be unearthed with every passing semester now. Its passage is crucial to bring some stability to the system but try telling that to our esteemed MPs.

IIT Delhi campus

Is it any surprise then that our universities are rated so poorly? According to the authoritative QS World University rankings, the highest ranked Indian university outside of the IIT system is the University of Delhi whose overall global ranking of 398 is as depressing as its 75th rank in Asia. Nearly 50 years after the University Grants Commission awarded 6 of its 18 planned Centres of Advanced Studies to the university, there has been little by way of global recognition for the Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology and Sociology centres, the honourable exception being economics. The 154-year-old University of Calcutta, once a byword for excellence in scholarship, doesn't even come within the top 600 universities in the world.

The demographics are also working against us here. China's population in the 15-19 year age bracket is projected to decline by 17% between 2010 and 2015, translating into 18 million fewer college-going youths, according to US census data. By contrast, India's college-going population is projected to increase by five million, or 5%, over the same period. That means in 2015, India will have nearly 20 million more college-going people in the 15-19 year age group than China. But while China continues to invest heavily in building new colleges and universities, we have little time or appetite to bother about such tasks. We are happy with making cosmetic changes, or worse needlessly interfering in the only working model of education in the country – the IIT system.

Already the consequences of the large scale mismatch between input and output in our higher education are upon us. According to a recent study by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), India lags China in creation of higher value-added manufacturing and export-oriented jobs. Indeed, 41 per cent of India's job creation in the past decade was in low-skill construction, compared to 16 per cent in China. This is the result of the many more options for quality education that Chinese students have had over the last 15 years as compared to an Indian child's dilemma after school.

Part of the problem of course is that there just isn't enough ongoing research related to the higher education system in India. So higher education in India continues to exist in a vacuum, with no feedback mechanism in place to make course corrections. Today, it would be unthinkable for any company worth its salt to launch new products or support existing ones without sufficient insights into the mind of its consumer. Our college education system however, defies all such scientific analyses and study. The content in most cases hasn't been updated in decades while the teaching methodologies are downright arcane.

While our schooling system has received some attention in recent years, thanks to studies by various non-state bodies, the higher education

system is a black hole. All we know is that 75% of technical graduates and more than 85% of general graduates are unemployable by India's high-growth global industries, including information technology. Those are shocking numbers. In any other field of activity such alarming failure rate would call for an immediate suspension of the institution and the people responsible for such a mess. A throwback to the British period, Indian universities are geared to imparting education in the liberal arts and sciences to prepare people for careers in the civil service, the legal profession and little else.

A World Bank study some time back identified lack of autonomy and accountability, resource constraints and poor quality and relevance in many institutions among the various factors responsible for the poor quality of higher education in India. The single biggest factor may be the inability to see it as the most important development issue in the country. The success of our IITs and IIMs to produce corporate executives for multinational corporations hides the reality of our rotten college system beyond a few storied institutions.

Ironically, it will take so little to transform the system provided the will is there. The use of instructional software to reduce the workload of teachers, simple but well-thought-through online quizzes to gauge student progress, and complementing the current staffing system with imaginative additions like industry professionals and undergraduate mentors, are just some of the steps that can be taken without the need for massive funding. It will however require a culture shift in the way the administrative machinery functions.

Source: June 28, 2012/ Live mint

NEWS

Prime Minister assures on autonomy of IITs

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday assured members of the All India IIT Faculty Federation (AIIITFF) that the autonomy of the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) would remain "intact".

Federation members, who include faculty from all IITs, met the prime minister in New Delhi on Friday morning to seek his intervention in the new common entrance test format, which they believe will dilute the IITs.

"Dr Manmohan Singh showed immense patience and listened to our issues and concerns. He has asked us to remain engaged in dialogue with the HRD Ministry and assured us he'll talk to Mr Kapil Sibal (HRD minister)," AIIITFF president Sanjeev Sanghvi told mediapersons after the meeting.

Federation members stressed at the meeting that IITs should remain in control of the admission process to their institutes, and that any new entrance test format should not be implemented in the 2013 session.

The federation also raised the issue of giving weightage to school board marks - called normalisation - in the admission process.

"Normalisation of board marks needs more study," AIIITFF secretary A.K. Mittal said.

Prof S K Das from IIT Madras clarified that they did not object to the proposal in totality, but it required more homework.

"We don't oppose the proposal but we want that the examination be conducted by the IITs only and not by an outside agency. There are two parts to the exam, screening and final selection, and at least the final selection should be in our hands," Das said.

The federation, along with IIT alumni associations, have been opposing the new format entrance test as it incorporates a non-IIT format. The proposed format also includes a fixed weightage for school board marks.

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal had earlier declared that the common entrance would not effect the autonomy of the IITs.

Source: June 15, 2012/Ibn Live

He helps special children with education, life skills

For G Balaji, his own sufferings due to visual impairment made him work for the cause of blind children.

Born in Mysore, he lost his sight permanently at the early age of five due to glaucoma (an eye disease in which the optic nerve is damaged in a characteristic pattern). But this did not dampen his spirit. "People teased me for being blind and made me feel inferior. They all lacked simple human values," recollects Balaji.

Balaji, 43, is now working as assistant professor in political science and public administration department at Maharani's College. He completed primary and high school studies in Little Flower Convent and St Louis School for the Blind (Chennai). He secured 85% in SSLC.

Later he studied at St Philomena's College (Mysore) and did PG in political science at the University of Mysore.

When he thought of pursuing doctoral studies, he chose issues related to special persons. His thesis is entitled 'Concept of welfare administration for the

physically handicapped in the state of Karnataka: Mysore a case study from 1981 to 1996'. He was awarded PhD in 2006.

When asked what makes him serve the physically challenged, he said:

"Alexander the Great, Vivekananda and others are my role models. They struggled in life. I too have experienced problems, and so want to give my love to the physically challenged."

His aim to instill confidence among special persons made him set up Shubhodaya Charitable Trust under the motto 'Confidence is the supreme power'. Through the trust, Balaji wants to impart education among the physically challenged.

'Voice Books' is his first project. It contains recordings of teachers and other experts who spoke on subjects prescribed for students of Karnataka. Speaking on its advantages, he said:

"It helps them overcome difficulties in learning, and builds self-confidence, while the Braille system has limitations." 'Voice Books' will release on 1st of July

His next project 'New Vision-Cornea Transplantation' is to help the visually impaired whose vision could be restored by cornea transplantation. The proposed centre will have an eye bank and other equipment necessary for treatment.

Balaji dreams of setting up an integrated school with world-class facilities so that physically challenged children can study with other kids. "Only education can empower the physically challenged children.

Given right education, it can do wonders," he said, adding that the disabled must put maximum efforts to grow independently.

On how one can make blind people happy, he said: "I want to buy a bus and take all children on a long tour and visit places like parks, sanctuaries, museums, and trekking.

All children crave to be out in the world and feel everything whether (s)he is able or disabled."

Balaji's better half Harinakshi is a professor at St Philomena College (Mysore), and they have a five-year-old daughter. He has 15 years of teaching experience, and has written a book 'A guide to Indian Constitution: Engineering and Professional Ethics'.

He hopes to get support from people for his trust so he can work for the cause of physically disabled people in a bigger way.

Source: June 16, 2012/Times of India

IGNOU's prep course for students desiring higher education

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has started the admission process for a preparatory course for those aspiring to pursue higher education but who have not cleared Class 12, a varsity statement said.

"The Bachelor's Preparatory Programme (BPP) offers solution to students above the age of 18 years, who after clearing the programme can apply for a bachelors' degree but only at IGNOU," an official said.

According to IGNOU, a student can choose any one of three options offered by the programme.

"It offers preparatory courses in general mathematics, social sciences and commerce. Last date to submit the application form is July 30, 2012," the statement added.

"The preparatory programme is offered in Oriya, English, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, Malayalam and Gujarati," the varsity statement said.

Source: June 16, 2012/IANS/Greater Kashmir

AICTE nod for shutting over 40 institutes in phase two, 5 in state

There has been an over six-fold increase in the number of technical institutes across the country which have got approval of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to shut down since April. In its previous meeting, the AICTE had okayed the closure of 44 institutes, taking the total to 51 at present. This includes around 32 management institutes and the remaining are engineering and MCA institutes, said AICTE Chairman S S Mantha. In the first phase, seven institutes had received the Council's nod for closure.

"We will have another meeting of the AICTE soon and the numbers are expected to go up further. In all, 138 institutes had requested for closure," said Mantha.

Over the past few years, several states have been struggling with massive vacancies at its engineering and management institutes. This year, the AICTE had received applications for permission for closure from 138 institutes and the reason cited was low admission rates. Prominent among them were states such as Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Among the institutes that have been given the go-ahead in the second phase, five are in Maharashtra and a large chunk is from Andhra Pradesh.

Academicians said only institutes with a robust academic life, flexible curriculum in sync with the

changing market needs, quality faculty and good industry interaction or collaboration, would be able to survive the current market dynamics. "This is especially true of management and engineering institutes. The two streams are in huge demand among students, but few institutes offer the kind of holistic education that can make students market/industry ready," said an academician.

Meanwhile, the number of new institutes approved to start from the 2012-13 academic year stands at 309. This includes engineering, management and polytechnic institutes. This number is also expected to go up after the next AICTE meeting. Over 200 applications to start new institutes this year across various technical disciplines were rejected by the AICTE.

Source: June 17, 2012/IANS/Indian Express

Fee waiver: Income limit of poor families increased

The Punjab government has enhanced the annual income limit of families of poor students under the fee waiver scheme from Rs. 2.5 lakh to Rs. 4.5 lakh for admissions in polytechnic colleges. Technical education minister Anil Joshi said on Sunday that the state government had taken this decision to benefit a large number of students from rural areas. He said that keeping this in view, the government had also extended the date for submission of applications for admissions in polytechnic colleges from June 15 to 25.

The minister said the students who had cleared the joint entrance test could get direct admissions in polytechnic colleges as 2,500 seats in these colleges across the state had been reserved. He said these seats would be filled under the fee waiver scheme of the All-India Council for Technical Education.

Joshi said that under this scheme, the students would have to pay only Rs. 5,625 annually, while the total fee was Rs. 27,625. He said SC students with a family income of less than Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum would have to pay only Rs. 1,100 as tuition fee for a three-year course under the scheme.

Source: June 17, 2012/Hindustan Times

Rs 3,300-cr for upgrading technical education

The Punjab government on Monday approved a Rs 3,300-crore plan under which 43 new ITIs and 2,500 skill development centres would be set up in the state.

"With the setting up of the 43 new it is in the uncovered blocks, which would cost Rs 1,200 crore to the state exchequer, the number of seats in these technical institutes would increase from present 50,000 to four lakh," Anil Joshi, Minister for Technical Education, said.

The new ITIs would focus on emerging technologies according to the changing needs of the industry.

Besides the ITIs, 2,500 skill development centres will be set up at a cost of Rs 1,800 crore under Kaushal Vikas Yojna.

The government also approved short term courses in skill development and hospitality in ITIs to be started at a cost of Rs 300 crore under Public Private Partnership, the spokesman said.

Joshi said that all officers would ensure that utilization certificate required for release of central funds would be issued without delay. He regretted that funds were available under various schemes for skill development, but have not been released for want of utilization certificate.

Source: June 19, 2012/Indian Express

President gives away Awards to Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Pali/Prakrit Scholars

The President of India Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil today conferred Certificates of Honour to scholars of Sanskrit, to scholars of Sanskrit (International), to scholars of Persian, scholars of Arabic languages and scholars of Pali/Prakrit. The awards are announced once a year on Independence Day in recognition of substantial contribution in the field of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and Pali/Prakrit.The following is the list of scholars who were awarded today. The awards ceremony was for the years 2010 and 2011.

The awards for 2010 are as follows:-

SANSKRIT

1. Prof. V. Swaminathan
2. Prof. Umashanker Sharma 'Rishi'
3. Dr. Shankar Dev Sharma Avtre
4. Prof. Vijay Pandya Devshanker
5. Shri H.V. Nagaraja Rao
6. Pandit Moti Ram Shastri
7. Dr. Deviprasad Khanderao Kharwandikar
8. Shri Bhubaneshwar Kar
9. Pandit Madan Mohan Sharma
10. Shri G. R. Ramachandra Sastri
11. Prof. Sitanath Dey
12. Dr. Kapil Deva Dvivedi
13. Dr. Ganesh Dutt Sharma
14. Dr. Jaydutt Upreti
15. Smt. Gouri Dharmapal

SANSKRIT (INTERNATIONAL)

1.Prof. Csaba Tottossy

PERSIAN

1. Dr. S. M. Talha Rizvi "Burque"
2. Dr. Muhammad Yousuf

ARABIC

1. Prof. Mohd. Abdul Majeed
2. Saeed Ahmad Palanpuri
3. Prof. Ashfaq Ahmad Nadvi

PALI/PRAKRIT

1. Dr. Udai Chandra Jain

The awards for 2011 are as follows:-

SANSKRIT

1. Prof. Kaniyambakkam Elayavilli Govindan
2. Dr. Nod Nath Mishra
3. Dr. Satya Dev Choudhary
4. Dr. Manibhai Ishvarbhai Prajapati
5. Dr. Vijay Pal
6. Pt. Keshav Ram Sharma
7. Shri Somayaji Vidwan Samba Dixit
8. Prof. Rahas Bihari Dwivedi
9. Prof. Krishna S. Arjunwadkar
10. Prof. (Dr.) Sadashiva Praharaja
11. Prof. Indra Datt Uniyal
12. Dr. Satya Vrat Varma
13. Sri V. Raghunatha Sastrigal
14. Prof. Amar Nath Pandey
15. Prof. Pratap Banerjee

SANSKRIT (INTERNATIONAL)

1. Shri Huang Baosheng

PERSIAN

1. Prof. Mohammad Iqbal
2. Prof. Hafiz Mohammed Ziauddin Alias Shamsi Tehrani
3. Dr. Md. Mansoor Alam

ARABIC

1. Dr. Mohammad Atiqur Rahman
2. Prof. Zainus Sajidin Siddiqi
3. Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah

PALI

1. Prof. Angraj Chaudhary

In addition, the President is also pleased to award the Maharshi Badrayan Vyas Samman to the following scholars of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and Pali/Prakrit:-

SANSKRIT

1. Dr. Braj Bhushan Ojha
2. Dr. Somanath Dash
3. Dr. Sampadananda Mishra
4. Dr. Veernaryana N.K. Pandurangi
5. Dr. Dharmendra Kumar Singhdeo

PERSIAN

1. Dr. Shahid Naukhez Azmi

ARABIC

1. Dr. Mujeebur Rahman

PALI

1. Dr. Mahaveer Prabhachandra Shastri

The distinction is conferred once a year on the Independence Day in recognition of substantial contribution in the field of Sanskrit, Pali/Prakrit, Arabic and Persian.

Source: June 19, 2012/PIB

Government asks varsities to go for accreditation

With some elite central universities yet to seek accreditation, the government on Friday favoured that they go for it and had a "unanimous" agreement on the issue.

The issue came up at a conference of the vice chancellors of central universities here on Friday chaired by HRD minister Kapil Sibal where there was "unanimous agreement regarding the need for accreditation of the varsities to advance academic quality and act as examples for the higher education sector in India," said a HRD Ministry statement.

The development assumes significance given the fact that National Accreditation Regulatory Authority Bill, which mandates all institutes to seek accreditation is stuck in Parliament, hampering government's aim to ensure quality.

Central universities like Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamila Milia Islamia are some of the prestigious universities among others who are not accredited so far.

Providing benefit to the students, the meet also agreed to collaborate on student mobility by way of credit sharing, as well as sharing of courses between universities, faculty etc.

The problems faced by the Central Universities especially with regard to filling up the vacant faculty positions and autonomy regarding allocation of faculty posts were deliberated upon.

According to the statement, it was agreed that while individual problems could be settled through internal mechanisms, common problems like absence of pension portability under the national pension scheme in the central universities set up after 2004 could be taken up at the level of Government.

The central universities agreed to implement uniform accounting standard as recommended by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).

Source: June 19, 2012/Times of India

Technical education possible in distance mode'

Distance education could be used as a medium to deliver courses in technical education, provided norms are in place to regulate the standard of education so provided, said professor N R Madhava Menon, founder vice-chancellor of National Law School of India University, Bangalore and the National University of Juridicial Sciences , Kolkata.

He was delivering a lecture on "Education for responsible citizenship" at the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development at Sriperumbudur on Friday. As chairman of a seven-member committee appointed by the ministry of human resource development, professor Menon recently submitted a report suggesting measures to regulate education being imparted through the distance mode.

He said that distance education, if properly organized, could double or even triple enrollment in higher education, professor Menon added that there would be several private players in such a scenario.

Source: June 23, 2012/Times of India

AICTE to build one research park in each state

Coimbatore: All India Council for Technical Education on Saturday said it will build research parks, one in each state, to promote research across industries.

The council would provide Rs 1 crore as seed money, while industry would have to provide a matching grant for the parks, to be set up on premises of an Institution, at least in a 3,000 square foot area, AICTE Chairman S S Mantha said while inaugurating AICTE-CII University-Industry Congress 2012 here.

AICTE wanted such parks in every state, and the industry can form a cluster and do extensive research on their needs with the assistance of the selected institutions, he said.

Expressing concern over the declining quality of higher education, Mantha said there is a need to create a curriculum so that both the sectors, higher education and industry, grow together to achieve the desired quality.

Nandhini Rangaswamy, chairperson, Education Forum, CII Southern Region, said the industry chamber, in partnership with AICTE, has launched a survey of industry linkages of engineering institutes.

Engineering institutes and engineering departments of the universities in six streams of Chemical, civil, computer and IT, electrical, electronics and communication and mechanical engineering are eligible to take part in the survey, she said.

Their industry linkages would be captured and feedback analysed to arrive at best institutes in every stream, Nandhini said.

Source: June 23, 2012/ PTI/Zee News

Shri Kapil Sibal Suggests Setting up of Council of Deemed to be Universities

A meeting of the Vice Chancellors of Deemed to be Universities was held under the Chairmanship of Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal, here today to discuss about the Joint Entrance Examination for admission to Engineering courses and implementation of uniform accounting standards in these institutions. In his inaugural address, he suggested the setting up of a Council for all the Deemed to be Universities to co-ordinate matters of common interest with representation of Vice Chancellors, prominent academicians and UGC/MHRD.

The concept and modalities of Joint Entrance Examination were explained to the participants and detailed discussions were held. It was explained to them that the proposal was to have a single exam in engineering giving weightage to School Board marks for all CFTI (Centrally Funded Technical Institutions) and the Deemed to be Universities were welcome to join it so that not only the system of exam is streamlined but also reduces the stress and inconvenience on the students. Deemed to be Universities would have the freedom to choose appropriate weightages for performance in Class XII Boards and JEE.MAIN/ AIEEE normalised on percentile basis. Deemed to be Universities wanting to give 100% weightage to Class XII Board marks performance for admission was also welcomed. However, the stress was on having no other test in addition to the above.

After detailed discussions practically, the Deemed to be Universities welcomed the proposal of having a single exam in Engineering giving weightage to school Board marks. They assured the minister that they would be intimating their decision on the weightages for the two Board marks and AIEEE exam. Those institutions which have concerns, may also indicate their concerns and a separate meeting could be held with them to resolve the situation.

It was also clarified by Shri Sibal that this will not affect the management quota as also reservation for the weaker sections of the society.

The second presentation was on adoption of uniform accounting standards in all the Deemed to be Universities. It was decided to organize the Capacity Building Programme, on uniform accounting standards through UGC and its adoption by the Deemed to be Universities in collaboration with ICAI for all Deemed to be Universities. A standard e-package of the accounting system would be provided to all the educational institutions including Deemed to be Universities.

Source: June 25, 2012/ PIB

IIT Bombay starts training 10,000 teachers

The training programme for 10,000 teachers was inaugurated on Monday by human resource development minister Kapil Sibal at the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay.

Under the 'Talk to a Teacher' project of the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) of his ministry, training for 10,000 engineering college teachers from across the country is conducted by leveraging broadband network and ICT tools.

The programme is being conducted through 168 remote centres across India. The lectures are delivered from IIT Bombay by professors of the institute and IIT Madras.

Through the software A-VIEW, audio-video connectivity is provided between all the centres and IIT Bombay. The course consists of lectures, live interactions and lab sessions.

"This method of synchronous education has been developed at IIT Bombay, under the leadership of D.B. Phatak. This method of education allows participation of a large number of women teachers, who normally are unable to join contact programmes at distant locations, owing to family commitments," an IIT official said.

Kapil Sibal interacted with the remote centres from Kanyakumari, Rajkot, Srinagar and Nagpur.

A representative of IIT Bombay presented an Aakash Tablet to the minister.

Unlike other tablet devices, Aakash could also be used to create computer programmes in Python, C, C++ and Scilab, he said.

Source: June 26, 2012/ Times of India

8 university tie-ups picked for Obama-Singh awards

A series of institutional partnerships aimed at propelling research and training in the field of energy security, climate change, agriculture sciences and health services are part of the Obama-Singh Initiative announced recently.

As part of the bilateral education partnership, eight collaborative efforts have been awarded. Among the India-led partnerships include tie-ups between Rutgers University and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to establish a national vocational school in India that will eventually train up to 1 million people every year.

The vocational school has been designed to assist up to 80% Indian graduates considered unemployable by multinational companies and to increase the number of young people taking part in formal vocational education and training (just 4% of the population).

For India, the most pressing need is to reform its higher education and widen the skill development system, developing scalable solutions that can rapidly enhance the quality and quantity of educational opportunities available to the 550 million Indians under the age of 25.

US-led partnerships include University of Montana and Bangalore University addressing impact of climate change and changes in socio-economic structure on traditional agriculture and development of sustainable communities among indigenous populations.

Cornell University with University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture and Technology, Meerut, will work on implementing reformed curriculum in emerging areas of agriculture and food security.

University of Michigan has tied up with Maharashtra University of Health Sciences to jointly develop a masters degree for health profession faculty in the US and India. The programme will include public health, nursing, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and Indian systems of medicine.

Other India-led partnerships were between Mahatma Gandhi University and Brown University, Duke University and Plymouth State University to study an interdisciplinary and community oriented approach toward sustainable development.

Banaras Hindu University will partner with University of Pittsburgh to research the paradigm shift in energy scenario for the 21st century toward renewable energy sources required for both India and the US. While IIT Kanpur is expected to join hands with Virginia Tech for an international programme on sustainable infrastructure development, its Delhi counterpart will work on

resource building for ecosystem and human health risk assessment with special reference to microbial contamination with Drexel University.

According to the HRD ministry, each project will receive an award of $250,000 that can be utilized over the three year grant period, with the aim of encouraging mutual understanding , educational reform and economic growth. PM Manmohan Singh and US President Barack Obama had committed $5 million each as part of the endeavour to build an enhanced India-US partnership in education.

Apart from the Obama-Singh Initiative, India has also planned to establish 100 community colleges. It has also announced the C V Raman Fellowship with the first tranche of 300 junior faculty members to be placed for post-doctoral research in American higher education institutions in October. About 10,500 faculty members will be sent over five years.

Source: June 26, 2012/ Economic Times

IIM students should be given degrees instead of diplomas: Kapil Sibal

Union minister for human resource development, Kapil Sibal has suggested that instead of diplomas, degrees should be issued to all the students graduating from the Indian Institutes of Management.

The issue was one among the key concerns raised at a review meeting of MHRD on Tuesday, when Sibal and senior officials of the MHRD met chairpersons and directors of all the IIMs at IIM-Lucknow. Although there was no official briefing on the meeting, sources informed TOI that the HRD minister said that the deemed university status to IIMs would allow the institutes to award degrees. The proposal which is currently under consideration by the ministry is expected to lend greater global acceptance to the IIM pass-outs. However, Sibal did not say when a formal decision in this regard would be taken.

Historically, IIM graduates from across the country have been lapped up by top recruiters from across the globe. However, students wanting to pursue higher studies or those interested in research have found management diploma an impediment in showing the requisite number of academic years. As a result, the demand of a degree certificate, instead of a diploma has been growing stronger. Tuesday's discussions, therefore, are being seen as a step in the right direction, to address this concern.

Among other key issues taken up during the quarterly review included the need for IIMs to compile a world-class management journal to showcase research undertaken in the field of management. Sibal and IIM directors also discussed the need for a National Academy of Management, on the lines of the existing Academy of Law. Sibal said a draft plan to create this academy is underway and once completed, this will also be included in India's 12th Five Year Plan.

The MHRD-IIM panel, on Tuesday, also took up matters pertaining to strengthen infrastructure facilities for students studying at IIMs across the country. To attract more foreign students, especially from countries where education standards are at par with or above than that of India, the panel also discussed the need to build better student-related infrastructure, including hostels and libraries for attracting them. A need to strengthen and fast track infrastructure development at the new IIMs in the country - at Tiruchirapally, Kahsipur, Ranchi, Rohtak, Raipur and Udaipur - was also taken up by the directors and MHRD officials. Having opened in the recent past, most new IIMs are still functioning from rented campuses and with faculty borrowed from other institutes. In this regard, the panel also debated the necessity for recruiting more teaches at the country's most reputed institutes of higher education. Though the paucity of teachers was felt more acutely at the IITs, the panel also said that the ministry would, through a National Knowledge Network-like body, look at filling vacancies.

Source: June 27, 2012/ Times of India

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

MBA too costly? Take an education loan

Look around and you would find everything becoming more and more expensive: from eggs, to milk to petrol, you just have to name it. The same is true for the cost of education. Flip through any college admission prospects, especially for professional courses, and you will find the fees running into lakhs.

In some cases, the average education cost of a masters in business administration (MBA) degree has trebled in the last five years, according to recent reports. Even now, costs are high.

So how do you cope up with the costs?

You either save up over the years to fund your kid's education and if you haven't done so or want to go for higher studies yourself, your only recourse would be taking an education loan. Here is what you need to know before taking a loan.

Who can get a loan?

You can avail an education loan if you are an Indian citizen and already have a confirmed admission in an institute. Some lenders may approve a loan even before you get a confirmed admission.

Keep in mind that most lenders give a loan for individuals in the 16-35 years age group.

Eligible institutes

You may not get a loan for an institution next door, unless it meets the requirements of the lender. Lenders usually prefer to give loans for courses for a college degree, university courses and professional courses such as MBA, engineering and medical sciences.

Lenders usually look for reputed institutes and courses that promise good job prospects. Take the case of Rajesh Sangati, a Mumbai-based private sector employee. A graduate from the Indian Institute of Technology, he took a loan of Rs. 20 lakh to pursue MBA from the Indian School of Business. "My loan got processed within an hour," he said.

How much you get?

The loan amount depends on whether you are going to study in India or abroad. Lenders usually offer up to R15 lakh for your study in India. While for foreign universities, the loan amount could go up to R20 lakh. Some lenders ask for 5-15% of the loan amount as margin money.

However, some government-owned banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) offer up to 100% of education expenses as loan and do not demand any margin money. These banks will ask for a collateral or co-application when the loan amount is high.

Collaterals and co-applications

Usually, for loans up to R7.5 lakh, you may not need to give a collateral or a security, but for loans above that, you will have to. A collateral need not only be a residential property. Lenders accept fixed deposits, insurance policies, National Savings Certificate and Kisan Vikas Patra as collateral. For government-owned banks, the limit could be around Rs. 4-5 lakh.

Lenders may also insist on co-applicants on the loan. "Co-applicants have to be Indian passport holders," said Bhonsle. "They need to have valid know-your-customer (KYC) documents such as personal identity and address proofs."

Other usual requirements for co-applicants are financial documents such as bank statements, salary certificates, income-tax returns and so forth.

What are the costs?

The interest rate varies from lender to lender. Some banks, including Bank of Baroda, offer a fixed rate of interest, which is usually 2-2.5% above the bank's base rate. "Education loans are on floating rates," said said Prashant Bhonsle, country head, Credila Financial Services Pvt Ltd, an HDFC Ltd company. "The rate of interest ranges from 12.5% to 14.5% depending on the course, college/institute and university." Keep in mind that women get a discount of 1% on the interest rate in government-owned banks.

The processing fee is around 2% of the loan amount. So if you have availed a loan of R20 lakh, you will need to shell out a processing fee of R40,000.

"If you can get a fixed rate loan, it would be better since you will know the exact amount you need to pay as an EMI," said Kiran Telang, CFO, ABT Capital Advisors, a Mumbai-based financial planning firm. "With a floating rate loan, the interest rates may increase and managing the payments could get difficult."

You can get an income-tax benefit for an education loan under section 80E of the Income-tax Act.

What about moratorium?

Simply put, moratorium is the period during which you don't need to repay the loan. This period takes into account the duration of your course and extends up to a year after the course completion. Usually, if you get a job immediately after this period, the moratorium ends within six months of being employed. Once the moratorium period is over, you get seven years to repay the loan.

In fact, you can even payoff the interest component of the loan during the course and get an interest waiver of up to 1% for the moratorium period.

Choose your course carefully and don't get into an education shop to get that degree. If you find a good place that will offer you a good job prospect, go for the loan.

Source: June 15, 2012/Hindustan Times

Richard Ivey B-School expands in India

Forays into India with customised executive education programmes

A few months back the GAIL management wanted to discuss some of the key decisions that were taken earlier and examine if some of them could be tweaked and implemented again. It approached Canada's Richard Ivey School of Business to design an executive education programme that could highlight such key decisions implemented by the organisation in the past.

Dr Ariff Kachra, Managing Director-India, Richard Ivey School of Business, scripted a suitable programme for senior executives of the company, marking the institution's foray into executive education programme in India. The institute had also developed a similar programme for Aircel executives earlier this year.

CUSTOMISED PROGRAMS

It designs customised company-specific programmes and no two programmes are the same.

"Today Indian corporates are increasingly going for executive education programme. Some 35 Indian companies, including government-owned organisations, have approached us to design customised executive education programmes. Typically, such programmes are for the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and executives at the minus one and minus two levels," Dr Kachra said.

But how does one measure return on investment for such workshops?

"When an executive-level manager goes through executive education offered by a world-class institution, the expected return is to emerge with new, value-creating ways of thinking about their business. Return on investment on executive development should be measured at all three stages of the process — design, delivery and post-programme," he said.

Innovative methods

The institution's executive development programmes do not involve traditional lecture. Dr Kachra said, "The truth is that in a transformative executive education experience, the meeting of the mindsets must emerge. We believe discussion methodologies, like the case method and simulations, are the best ways to educate executives."

Ivey is also keen on developing a rich repository of business case studies in India. The institute has developed more than 200 India-focussed business case studies for management education. "Ivey has so far trained over 360 Indian faculty members in case teaching and writing. We intend to bring out 500 case studies in the next two years," he said.

It is adding one new India-centric business case every week through its own faculty and its collaboration with Indian School of Business, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore and Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurgaon.

FOCUS ON CASE STUDIES

Ivey believes that management education in India will increasingly use case studies as tools. Its top-five India-based cases are Infosys: the challenge of global branding, Eli Lilly in India: rethinking the joint venture strategy, Dabbawallahs of Mumbai, Swatch and the global watch industry and Louis Vuiton in India.

Teaming up with the Hyderabad-based Indian School of Business, Ivey offers open workshops for faculty across India. And with its recent partnership with MDI Gurgaon, it expects to step up its production of case studies.

"The next decade will see India emerging as biggest repository of case studies. The driving force of Ivey's strategy in India is to be a knowledge partner in management education," Dr Kachra said.

Source: June 15, 2012/Business Line

Policy framework of higher education needs expert, careful handling

The recent decision of Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD), regarding a single unified test for admission to technical institutions including IITs was taken in haste without taking the Senates of IITs into confidence, opines the FEDUCTA (Federation of Central Universities Teachers' Association).

Talking to media persons, president of FEDUCTA, Prof Girish Tripathi, on Friday said that the higher education is a delicate issue of national importance and its policy frame work, its implementation and management needs experience, expertise and careful handling.

Quality and excellence are the corner stones on which the entire fabric of higher education depends

and to achieve these goals autonomy is of paramount importance. Educationists have always been of the opinion that major policy decisions and fresh initiatives should be taken only after wide ranging deliberations with the faculty.

He further said that the purported objective of this proposed test is to minimize the inconvenience to a very large number of students who are required to appear in a number of entrance tests conducted by different agencies.

Secondly it is being argued that by taking into consideration the marks obtained at plus + 2 level the menace of coaching will be curbed to a large extent. It is also being said that the quality of education in schools and colleges will improve.

"FEDUCTA is not fully convinced as to how the proposed test will be able to achieve the self proclaimed goals of MHRD. For ushering an era of quality education the government needs to provide better infrastructure, highly qualified teachers, well equipped library, laboratory etc", said Prof Tripathi.

FEDUCTA is also of the opinion that proposed test will have no effect as far as the menace of coaching is concerned.

The present model of IIT-JEE tests was designed by the faculties of IITs to test the depth of knowledge, creativity, innovative capacity and overall suitability of the students for thriving and excelling in the atmosphere provided by IITs.

The test has proved its worth for the last several decades and it is a widely accepted fact that the IIT graduates have done exceedingly well in top class Universities abroad both in imparting quality education and in doing cutting edge researches, he added.

However, welcoming the decision of the Senates of various IITs not to toe the ill thought and half baked decision of MHRD, FEDUCTA fervently appeals that MHRD should not try to impose its will on IITs and a much better option will be to enter into consultation with the faculty of IITs on this very vital issue, said the president of FEDUCTA.

He further said that the federation strongly feels that any unilateral decision in this regard will be conceived as an infringement upon the autonomy of IITs which may ultimately result in creating academic uncertainly, dilution of academic standard and tarnishing the coveted global brand of quality and excellence for which IITs are known worldwide. FEDCUTA will like to caution them to honor the autonomy of the Universities and refrain from interfering in their routine functioning, said Prof Tripathi.

Source: June 16, 2012/Times of India

Where Americans hesitate, Indians move in

Despite high average salaries, good working conditions and sustained demand, American students appear to increasingly not prefer studying engineering or information sciences in colleges. This surprising fact has opened the gates to qualified students from other countries, especially India, to occupy up to a quarter of IT jobs in the US.

According to the Condition of Education report for 2012 released recently by the US department of education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), degrees awarded in "computer and information sciences and support services" grew by a meager 4.8 percent in a decade spanning academic years 1999-2000 to 2009-2010. Students getting these degrees comprised just 2.4 percent of the total 1.65 million students who got bachelor's degrees in 2009-10.

Degrees awarded in "Engineering and engineering technologies" increased by 21 percent in the same decade, one of the lowest rates of increase. Students getting these degrees made up just 5.4 percent of the total graduate pass outs in 2009-10, down from 5.9 percent a decade ago.

The number of students getting bachelor's degrees across all disciplines increased by about 33 percent in the decade. Both engineering and IT courses are lagging behind this average.

This talent shortage is sharply reflected in the salaries for these two professions. According to CareerCast.com, one of the top job portals also known for it's popular Jobs Rated report, Software Engineer is now one of the country's best jobs in terms of demand, salary and working conditions. Average annual compensation for software engineer is pegged at $90,000 by CarrerCast.com in its latest Top 12 Best Jobs of 2012.

"Corporate recruiters are scouring the nation's universities in search of smart engineering and IT students, and they simply can't find enough to fulfill their hiring needs. And that typically translates into those jobs being highly ranked in our report," said Tony Lee, publisher of CareerCast.com.

A similar situation can be seen in engineering. With not enough graduates being produced, and global demand, especially in the energy sector (petroleum, power) is outstripping supply, causing salary levels to skyrocket.

Average compensation for petroleum engineer is $114,000 while even the mundane electrical engineer is reported by CarreCast.com to be getting $87,000 per annum.

Indian immigrants appear to have neatly exploited this gap. According to estimates nearly a quarter of

IT related top jobs are taken up by people of Indian origin, mostly those who studied in India. Although this represents a drain on Indian resources, as they have acquired the skills studying in India, but lucrative offers and opportunities seem to weigh more with the immigrants.

Source: June 16, 2012/Times of India

Four kinds of value in higher education

In our national conversation about higher education — in Congress, in state legislatures, and in living rooms across the country — the buzzword is "value." Everyone seems to be talking and writing about the value of a college degree. If you type the words "value of college education" into Google's search box, you will get 20 million results.

When we talk about the "value of a college education," we are typically using the word "value" to mean the worth, or the importance, of getting a degree. As tuition rates in colleges and universities across the country continue to rise faster than the rate of inflation, parents and politicians want to know if the money that families are spending on their sons' and daughters' college degrees will justify the investment. Will it be worth it in the long run?

The quick answer is: Yes. A college degree has become the standard prerequisite for a financially secure middle-class life. Here's proof: A college graduate with a bachelor's degree typically earns about 66 percent more than a high-school graduate during a 40-year career. The unemployment rate for college graduates remains about half that of high school graduates, and a quarter of the rate of high school dropouts. And beyond the financial benefits of getting a college degree, a liberal education teaches us to be critical thinkers; to write clearly and persuasively; to appreciate different cultures and beliefs; and to integrate multiple perspectives before arriving at decisions. These skills hold lifelong value.

Retention rates and graduation rates are two metrics of value. At the University of Virginia, we have a 97 percent retention rate for our students, and a 94 percent six-year graduation rate. This means that almost all of the students who come here stay here, and almost all of the students who stay here also graduate. In addition, we have the highest graduation rate for African-American students among all public universities in the country, at about 85 percent.

UVa and other colleges and universities that offer rigorous academic programs and retain and graduate most of their students on time are offering a valuable education. That's one way we use the word "value" when we talk about higher education.

Accepting the idea that a college degree is worth the expense generally, one could still argue that it's not worth any level of expense — not worth some astronomical cost. For students, it might not be worth taking on a mountain of debt they will carry around for years. Recent reports show that national student loan debt now stands at $870 billion, surpassing the outstanding balances on car loans ($730 billion) and credit cards ($693 billion). Someday soon, the national total for student loan debt will reach the $1 trillion mark.

Facing those kinds of numbers, we use the word "value" in a second sense — to mean a good deal, or a bargain. Students and their families want a college education that will be valuable for the long term, and they want it at a value price.

In this country, we have more than 4,000 colleges and universities. Many of them offer an academically rigorous education that will hold value for students for their entire lives. And many others offer a college education at a reasonable price — although some of these schools offer programs of questionable educational value.

But there is a sweet spot occupied by universities that offer both kinds of value: a valuable education at a value price. Each year, Kiplinger's magazine ranks the "100 Best Values in Public Colleges." This year, UVa held the No. 3 ranking for the sixth time in seven years. The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill was No. 1; the University of Florida was No. 2; and the College of William & Mary was No. 4. It's great that we have so many universities offering strong academic programs at reasonable prices in Virginia and across the country.

But there is also a third kind of value to consider. Many universities, especially research universities, create value by contributing to the economic strength of their home regions and the nation. A study estimated that university-based inventions contributed $450 billion to U.S. gross industrial output and created 280,000 new high-tech jobs between 1999 and 2007. That's a lot of economic value coming from universities.

Universities are in the business of creating the future. Innovation is always risky, because no one has a crystal ball. Innovation often depends on making new discoveries at the frontiers of knowledge, and then linking those new discoveries with markets and social needs. One way we create value is through "proof of concept" research — research so risky that private-sector companies and investors are frequently unwilling to perform this work.

In one proof-of-concept research program, UVa's Coulter Program in biomedical technology, we have invested $7 million over seven years, with an independently audited 7-1 return on investment in follow-on funding to these projects. The projects include new ways to detect pancreatic cancer, and a diagnostic instrument to help surgeons treat blood-clotting problems so they can make surgeries faster. The return on investment yielded about $50 million in follow-on funding, and, at the leveraging rate of 4-1 for state or other outside funding, this means the program brought $200 million in overall funds into Virginia, based on an initial $7 million investment.

Just a few universities in this country are creating economic value for the nation while also offering a valuable education at a best-value price. At UVa, we add a fourth kind of value — a value system grounded in the university's Honor Code. The core values of honor, integrity, ethics, and accountability are engrained in every aspect of academic and social life, and students carry these values with them when they leave Charlottesville.

At a time when the value of college education is under such intense scrutiny, colleges and universities need to demonstrate their value in every sense of the word.

Source: June 17, 2012/The daily progress

Sustainable development becoming a higher education buzzword

When 22-year-old Dhaval Jain, then in his second year at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, decided to go for the Shodh Yatra– journey of explorations – as an elective for his two year MBA programme, he was expecting a mini-vacation.

As he trekked through five days of rough and mountainous terrain in India's Leh district, in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, slept in tents, and ate with and communicated with villagers and agriculturalists, Jain's attitude underwent a sea-change.

"When you are at the IIMs [hailed as India's best business schools], everything is a framework. By the time you finish your first year you are a machine, trained to solve problems mechanically.

"The shodh yatra put me in touch with myself," said Jain, who is currently working with a consultant firm in Mumbai.

"You realise that sustainable development does not end with a statement. Rather you have to live it every day."

Shodh Yatra is a module pioneered by IIM Ahmedabad's Professor Anil Gupta, during which students spend a week trekking through India's villages to unearth traditional knowledge and grassroots innovations that have simplified the lives of people and significantly contributed towards the conservation of biodiversity.

The 15-year-old trek has covered 5,500 kilometres since it began and become a favourite among students.

"All engineering and management students should be exposed to the hardships of daily life and become sensitive towards finding innovative solutions. They should know how India's villages are coming up with simple grassroots solutions without any management education," said Gupta, who is also the founder of the Honey Bee Network, which consists of a database and members who scout out, develop, sustain and reward grassroots innovators.

Focus on sustainable development

It's not just IIM Ahmedabad that has integrated sustainable development into its curriculum. Several leading universities and centres including the Indian institutes of technology, the University of Madras, Jadhavpur University and TERI University have focused on the importance of education for sustainable development.

Notably, all of the four Indian-led institutional partnership projects selected for the first Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative awards, announced in Washington on 13 June, focus on sustainable development themes, such as renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure development.

The Indian government recently entered into an agreement to set up a Category I institute of UNESCO in New Delhi called the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development.

The institute will promote education and research for peace and sustainable development, and the capacity development needs of member states with a focus on Asia and the Pacific region.

In the north-western state of Gujarat, eight Gandhian ruralvidyapeeths (colleges) have decided that each year three students studying agronomy extension and veterinary science should focus their dissertations on themes such as organic farming and understanding traditional practices. So far they have produced more than 100 dissertations

"It is compulsory for doctors in India to serve in rural areas before they receive their final degree. This should be done for engineers and managers also. The higher education institutes that are

focusing on sustainable development through practice and not just theory should be encouraged by the government," said Gupta.

Going green

For several institutions, a green campus has become serious business. The trend began with IIT Kanpur's five star rated Centre for Environment and Energy. The building was given five stars by Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Environment (GRIHA), India's green building design evaluation system.

Following this, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) sent a letter to all newly established central educational universities that are in the process of building campuses.

"The HRD ministry asked us to make a presentation to all higher educational institutions since they are coming up with new infrastructure. We are in the process of helping some institutes with the design of their buildings," said an official of GRIHA.

The campus of the Indian Institute of Science, Engineering and Research (IISER) in Kolkata, established in 2006, is being built at a cost of Rs5,000 million (US$90 million). Four major water bodies inside the more than 100 hectares of land sanctioned for the campus will be left intact and developed into nature parks by geo-scientists and wetland experts.

"According to the architectural plan, there will be no building over three storeys to disturb the natural look of the place and some of lectures may be held in the open," said former director Sushanta Duttagupta, who was involved in the planning of the campus.

Attitudes to curriculum and pedagogy

Long before the United Nations launched the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2005, the Indian supreme court in 1999 directed that environment education must permeate all levels of education.

Despite initial delays, most universities had introduced an undergraduate environmental studies course from the 2004 academic year.

According to Kiran B Chhokar, founding editor of the international, peer-reviewed Journal of Education for Sustainable Development, this is a significant step towards making environmental education and education for sustainable development a reality in undergraduate institutions, which account for 85% of students enrolled in higher education in India.

"Not many countries have made it compulsory to have a course on the environment as part of the curriculum. The supreme court ruling has immense potential to reach out to thousands of students if it is correctly implemented," said Chhokar.

However, the potential may be lost due to the limited understanding of the concept of sustainable development among teachers.

"The court order is about including the environment as a subject, but what do people understand by environment? Most think it is about pollution, greening, dams etc. But the developmental aspects of environment are not considered," she said.

Chhokar, who has taught in several universities and academic staff colleges in India, said education for sustainable development was kept in silos and lacks a holistic approach in higher education.

"Today education for sustainable development includes a focus on green economy, education for peace, conflict as a result of competing demands for resources and many other areas. But universities have subject experts in pollution, de-forestation, wildlife etc.

"Some of them are good at making linkages with social issues. But a majority just confine their lectures to the subject area," said Chhokar, who recently retired as higher education programme director at the Centre for Environment Education.

Building capacity in sustainable education

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE), headquartered in Ahmedabad, has focused on capacity development of students, teachers and leaders in higher education institutions by delivering programmes and instructional material. In collaboration with institutions of higher and professional education, CEE designs and delivers tailor-made courses to institutions.

Notably, a survey conducted by CEE in 2007 into how compulsory courses on the environment were being taught, revealed that only two of the 37 respondents had received training to teach the course.

Two-thirds of the respondents reported that they followed the University Grants Commission model syllabus, stuck to lectures without any component of field visits and project work, and rarely gave their own inputs.

"India has made significant leaps with the introduction of masters courses related to sustainable development. But any course has to be contextual," said Chhokar.

"Today there are content and facts that students are supposed to know, but questioning, trying to see how something affects you, how you are contributing to it, what you can do about it and the

various alternatives, those critical thinking skills we do not teach in most sustainable development programmes yet."

International footprints

Impressed by theShodh Yatra and student's experiences, Malaysia's Ministry of Science and Technology has started learning walks in its universities. The Shodh Yatraat IIM Ahmedabad also attracts many international students.

The decade-old TERI University, which offers several courses and three masters programmes with a sustainability focus, is also one of the founding members of http://ProSPER.Ne– the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network – an alliance of 21 higher education institutions in the Asia-Pacific region under the auspices of the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS).

Education for sustainable development has been taken up independently by a handful of higher education institutions in India in the absence of any focused advocacy or associations.

However, ahead of Rio+20, the UN summit for sustainable development being held in the coming week, Chhokar felt that not enough attention is being given to education on sustainable development even on international platforms.

"There is the official process that is happening. But most people involved in education for sustainable development have been feeling that there is not much focus being given to education," she said.

"You are talking about sustainability or sustainable development but the role of education in achieving this is not being stressed. The kind of commitments that governments should be making to education for sustainable development are not there." Others like Anil Gupta are sceptical about international summits such as Rio.

"I am not very optimistic about these platforms. The solutions to India's development needs will not come from Rio but from strong leadership within the country. Education for sustainable development has the potential to bring this change and our universities can play a significant role," Gupta said.

Source: June 17, 2012/University World News

India, US join hands to create quality academics

Plan to groom Indian academic leaders

Institutes in India and the US will join hands to create a pool of trained mid-career academics who will be groomed to be potential leaders as part of a long-term objective to strengthen Indian higher education Structure.

Penn State's Center for the Study of Higher Education in association with Rutgers University and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, will host an Indian Higher Education Academy at Penn State in 2013 specifically to address the needs of Indian higher education and build academic leaders.

This is part of a proposal, for which the three institutions were awarded the Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative Grant, as announced by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently. Robert M Hendrickson, interim director and senior scientist at the Centre For Study of Higher Education, Penn State University, told HT that besides onsite sessions from May 19 to May 23, 2013, at Penn State, six virtual sessions would be scheduled during the 2013-2014 on topics selected by participants.

As many as 30 heads from the Indian higher education field are expected to participate in the academy. Elaborating further, Prof Hendrickson said, "The academy has been set up to provide foundational knowledge to help academic administrators of higher education institutions become more effective administrators of academic units. Several higher education leaders and vice-chancellors from India will be present at the Academic Leadership Academy, to be held from June 24 to June 28. They will help put topic areas in an Indian context for the 2013 India Academic Leadership Academy."

Speaking on the matter, he said, "The Academic Leadership Academy was originally developed to address the problem of developing leadership vacuum created by the retirement of 50% academic leaders in the US. With the development of new post secondary institutions in India, there is a growing need for quality academic leadership."

Tata Institute of Social Sciences professor B Venkatesh Kumar, who is the project leader from the Indian side said: "We will identify potential candidates from universities and institutes who are

mid-career, and then put them through a process of training and mentoring."

Source: June 19, 2012/Hindustan Times

Quantity vs Quality

With more colleges and less students, engineering colleges and universities across the country have requested the AICTE to stop granting clearance for new colleges. The inside story.

Engineering colleges and universities from Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan have been writing to the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) over the last year, requesting the body not to approve new engineering institutions in their States, owing to a severe slump in demand. The AICTE, a statutory body whose approval is necessary to start courses in streams such as engineering, management, pharmacy and architecture has on its part, taken note of the states' request and in turn, directed the universities to make a demand-supply analysis and propose how many colleges need to be started in the next three-year window.

"The AICTE increased the minimum marks for engineering admission in December last year, in the hope of increasing the quality of student intake," says R Sethuraman, vice chancellor, Sastra University, "This means the cutoff begins at 45 to 50 per cent for general category and 40 to 45 per cent for students under the SC and ST criteria. However, I believe this move will reduce the quality of engineering in our country since AICTE should also focus on improving the quality of teaching faculty, since engineering is a lot more than a mere degree."

He continues, "Our findings show that the majority of teachers in many engineering colleges are mediocre. When professors lack employability skills, how can we expect students to be employable? So, it is time that we seriously start looking at the quality of teachers."

At a time when even the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are unable to fill their seats, at least three state governments have declared a halt to the sanction of new engineering colleges in their states since they are facing a problem of plenty. Karnataka and West Bengal are the other states where a large number of engineering seats remained vacant last year.

"The council (AICTE) lays down norms but fails to look at infrastructure, facilities and human resources in colleges," says V Shiv Kumar, director of UGC for latin studies and Jawaharlal Nehru Study Centre. "India is now home to 3,393 engineering colleges that have 14.85 lakh seats available. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh have about 70 per cent of engineering and technical institutes. When admissions closed last year, the AICTE estimated that nearly two lakh seats went unfilled," he adds.

This hole in engineering admission has academicians worried. This year, the AICTE has relaxed entry norms for tech schools, hoping for increased demand. However, despite lowering the minimum qualification score, doubts still persist on whether all seats will be occupied. "The quality of engineering has deteriorated. Seats are going vacant in rural areas," says K V Gunvansh, chairman, Jodhpur Engineering and Technology Institute, "There are no takers for specific engineering programmes, although core engineering courses (civil, mechanical and electrical engineering) still have takers. In Rajasthan, the state government has requested AICTE to not cancel the approvals of existing colleges."

This situation has boiled down to a toss-up between the quantity of engineers and their quality. While the AICTE declined to comment, the next three years will determine whether our universities churn out quality or quantity.

Source: June 21, 2012/Education Times

Back to India: Engineers start company in India after completing Master's in US

Armed with a Master's in Information Management and Computer Engineering from Syracuse University, Harshal Bhakta and Deep Shah made a decision that many wouldn't unless a compulsion—they came back to India immediately after graduating. The motivation behind this decision was to build their own software development company in India, for India. The duo started Information Works in Gujrat to develop applications for SMBs and the education sector;their first app was for CAT exam (Common Admission Test) aspirants. I asked them a few questions about their decision and how their past few months of starting a business in India have been, here's what they had to say:

Q1: What does your company do and do you call yourself a startup or a small business?

We have started InformationWorks based on a shared vision of coming up with technology solutions that solve a real problem to the best of our ability. Our vision is to provide unique solutions based on our perspective of the problem & user expectations. We want to build opinionated software, I mean, softwares that try to think on users behalf, software that just work out of the box, softwares that are dead simple to use and I can go

on. To put simply we want to build software that our users will love to use. I know these are difficult promises to keep. But that's the whole point, we want to challenge ourselves and keep implementing things till we get it right.

We recently started InformationWorks and are currently exploring a few product ideas. Going by the definition of a start-up we definitely are operating like a start-up. However, the way people look at us in India is a bit different. For people who are not really familiar with the concept of a start-up we are a small-business trying to earn money by making software. For those who understand the start-up terminology we are a technology company exploring multiple ideas. We plan to come up with multiple products under the InformationWorks umbrella.

One thing that we are focusing on right now is the influence of technology on Indian education system. We think there is a lot that can be done in that area. Initially, we want to come up with a few products that will contribute to the education system.

We plan to focus on a single product at a time, which makes our operations very similar to a start-up. The team we have at InformationWorks is in for a long run and unlike a start-up we wish to keep the team formation intact even if one of our ideas fail. This makes us operate like a start-up but grow like a company.

Q2: Why did you decide to move back to India? The Silicon Valley is in the US and the NYC startup scene is drastically improving, did US not fascinate you anymore?

It was more about where we would be more comfortable in terms of resources. I have easily managed to secure a good angel investment in India, whereas it would have been tough for us in the US to convince people to believe in two random Indian kids who still are not sure what their next product will be. hahahaha. Jokes apart, I just felt that India needs us more than US needs us. What India has given us is the space that we need to try our ideas, fail and then try more. Whereas in the US we would always have been bothered by VISA issues or be scared if we are doing our taxes right blah blah blah..I don't even know if we as two non resident aliens would be allowed to found a company in the US. It just didn't feel right to be in the US in our early experimentation phase.

And if at any stage we feel that India is limiting us from the vision that we have for our company we will definitely consider going back to US again.

Q3: Mobile applications and websites, how do you see them changing businesses in India? Do the people have ready access to resources like PCs, smartphones, laptops, tablets and connectivity that business applications will impact daily activity?

The way people use technology in India has changed to a great extent. People are using smartphones more than ever. Web-applications are now penetrating into the business operations & daily lives in India. Resources are increasingly getting available to the people of India. It's not the resources that is a problem in India, but lack of quality technology products is something that needs attention. More people are doing online transactions, be it buying train tickets, movie tickets or buying stuff. Moreover, people have started using internet in every aspect of their lives - By every aspect we mean its used for business, entertainment, learning, activism, social networking etc.

Awareness about technology products and their use in daily operations is increasing in India and we wish to contribute to that. We plan to come up with a few products that support the education system in India and we wish to help people become more aware about the benefits they can get by using such products. We will have more to talk about this when we launch a product.

Q4: You've said SMBs and the education sector are your starting points, how do you see yourself adding benefit to their business and profits?

Indian businesses and educational institutions have a specific way of functioning. We feel that creating products focused on supporting their operational practices, we can open up new opportunities for their growth. A lot of stuff done here is manually operated and there is immense potential to come up with technology solutions to reduce the error rate and increase an individual's productivity. We will have to closely work with businesses and gather a lot of user feedback to actually make an impact. It is interesting to work on a problem, come up with an elegant solution and make money out of it.

Q5: How much impact do you think does your being in India bring? The US outsources development, couldn't you remain in the US and service clients? Do decision makers in India require a different approach?

Being in India was a personal as well as a strategic decision. Personally, being in India has always been one of the future plans. Strategically speaking, we currently have enough resources in India to start with. We don't want to restrict ourselves by creating solutions specific to India. However, we feel more connected when working on a problem in an environment we have grown up in. It makes it more fun too.

It would have been a better idea to be in US if we just wanted to service clients in US. However, we wish to contribute to the technology products market of India and operating as close to that as possible is an added advantage.

Q6: How do you see your 2 years in the US and the education here shaping your thought process, products and company?

Deep: Its a great question. Honestly, the two years I have spent in the US have meant everything to me. In a sense those two year made me learn, think, dream and execute. I had felt a new urge to learn, to compete and to excel from the first lecture I attended at the University. Working as a programmer along with assisting professors, doing lil bit of consulting here and there along with taking academic course was definitely the best part. Those two years changed my entire perspective on education, products, companies, start-up etc. Every single day I spent in the US was helping me grow as a person tremendously. It was a different me altogether. More than the courses I took, it was the conversation with professors, peers, friends and colleagues (at part-time jobs) helped me a lot. The open conversations that one can have with professors helps tremendously.

The M.S. Information Management course at Syracuse University has a bad reputation of being not too specific in any particular thing. But that has actually help me try my hands at everything. And what I have realized is that the courses that I have hated the most have always helped me the most. Be it policy or a design course. Because those courses made me uncomfortable and made me think differently. To say it bluntly, every decision I take are mostly influenced by those two years spent in the US. This doesn't mean that I don't value what I learned in our undergrad. But I just didn't like the way how colleges work in India. I don't want to elaborate too much on that as I get really opinionated and it is altogether a topic for another discussion.

Harshal: I have been a programmer all my life. When I started my undergraduate course here in India I had a strong urge to learn as much as possible about technology and programming. I was somehow disappointed with the education system here in India. There is a lot that needs to be changed but I will talk about it someday when I feel I have achieved enough ;). After completing my undergraduate course I worked for Accenture for about 2 years. It was a great learning experience working for a company like Accenture in India. However, my quest to understand how the world works and progresses with technology was still not satisfied.

I decided to go for a Master's degree to Syracuse University and I will never regret that descision. Coming to United States and studying at Syracuse University gave me a much needed exposure to how world leaders in technology are contributing to the progress of the world. I was a mediocre student during my school days and failed at several stages of life that did not interest me enough - I failed in Biology, Physics & Maths to name a few :P. At SU,having had an opportunity to prove myself by taking up projects that interested me the most gave me the much needed confidence in life. The flexibility provided by the professors at SU helped me be more creative in all the projects. I got an opportunity to spend more time on the projects by losing a few grade points. I invested this time in implementing the functionalities in a much better way than expected. I realized that such flexibility and freedom is somehow missing in the Indian education system.

Freedom to be more creative is the one thing I value the most about my 2 years of education at SU. Courses offered at SU were technically challenging. I enjoyed working on most of the projects and knew this is what I want to do all my life - Coming up with creative technology solutions. The exposure I got in US by working for multiple small companies at Syracuse and one of the best technology companies at Seattle is invaluable. I got to know a lot of people who had a different but interesting perspective about technology. The experience I had in US over the period of 2 years in all the domains influence the decisions I make everyday. US & India are different in a lot of aspects and I am using experiences I had at both the places to go ahead in life.

Q7: Giving up Amazon and going back to India for starting a business is a huge deal, how easy was the decision and why? I read the blog post but what was the moment like when you decided that you'll give up Amazon's hefty pay & go back home?

I thought a lot before I gave up the offer from Amazon. I knew what I was giving up, but I also knew what I was giving it up for. I knew the kind of struggle I was choosing for myself as against the hefty pay package offered to me by Amazon. There comes a moment in life when you realize what you want to do in life & InformationWorks is what I ever wanted to do. I realized that I will enjoy the struggle more than working for Amazon. For anyone taking such a decision, it is extremely important to know if you will enjoy the struggle and not regret what you are giving up. I knew I will never regret giving up an offer from Amazon. InformationWorks means too much to me to regret about anything else that I need to give up.

When I actually gave up the offer I felt relieved and fresh. Getting to build a company based on your ideas and principles is a priceless feeling. I am living my dream and so should everyone else.

Amazon was a milestone in my life, never the destination. InformationWorks is the destination. I am finally home.

Q8: Satyamev Jayate is making an impact on society, how do you see entrepreneurs like you changing outlook in India?

We think Satyamev Jayate is making an impact on the society because the show has been executed very well. There have been shows that have tried to do similar things but have failed. The success of Satyamev Jayate is because of the way it has been designed and executed.

Similarly, In India entrepreneurs exploring new as well as old ideas and taking risks to change the way Indian businesses operate is one of the major advantages. We wish to make an impact on the society in the longer run by coming up with technology products that are efficient. Nothing impacts a society more than a group of individuals motivated to create elegant solutions. That is what InformationWorks is going to be. We will see how that goes as we move ahead towards our goal. Till then we will continue to have fun with our struggle.

I've had very interesting conversations on a wide variety of topics with Deep and Harshal, this Q&A was as interesting and at some level inspiring.

In the US, immigration of skilled labour is a huge debate, this year the annual H1-B cap was reached in record time. While one side argues that immigrants take away American jobs, the other says its better to have skilled labour we educated working for us rather than for another country.

Source: June 23, 2012/Zd Net

Empowering with education

It was an accidental meeting between K C Johrey, a retired IAS officer, and Lt Gen (Dr) M R Kochhar, a retired Army officer, which led to the founding of Shiksha Bharati in 2009, a school for the underprivileged at Palam Vihar. "Gen Kochhar offered me a lift home and I asked him what he does for a living. He told me he is a pensioner and I said same here. Let's talk business then. This is how we started talking," Johrey chuckles.

"We both started talking about the education sector and since that was the time when the Right to Education Act had been passed, we came up with the idea of starting a school that gives access to education to the marginalised sections of our society. Since we both are residents of Palam Vihar, we thought why not open up a school here," says 85-year-old Johrey who is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Eco Development Foundation, a decade-old NGO which works on community development through education. "We try to align ourselves with other NGOs, and set up schools for underprivileged children. For example, we have a school like this, The Bharatiya Academy, in Haridwar. The main beneficiaries are the victims of war and other underprivileged children," he says.

"For Shiksha Bharati, we found a primary school building in the C block of Palam Vihar, which was constructed by the government but wasn't being used. We first took all the necessary permissions to run the school there. In the beginning, for almost 15 days, we didn't even get a single student. And then one day my domestic help enquired about it. She then informed a few of her relatives and that is how we got our first few students. After that, there was no looking back. In six months, the response we got was overwhelming," says 72-year-old Gen Kochhar who also heads an organisation, Aniket Ashray Society, which provides affordable health care to the needy. After the RTE Act came into effect, he diversified into education with Shiksha Bharati.

The school has about seven classrooms and has students in the age group of 4 to 9, from KG to class V. They are all children of domestic help and migrant labourers. The school teaches children as per the curriculum of the state board. Every child gets clothes, books and food. While 142 students have been enrolled, about 150 are on the waiting list. The approximate cost of educating a child at the school is about Rs 6,500 a year.

"The funds we get are the pension money provided by my father and Gen Kochhar, and other donations that come our way from the neighbourhood. Every little bit helps. We have hired five teachers to assist us but we only pay them Rs 3,000 a month. They teach more out of a sense of purpose," says Geeta, Johrey's daughter, a volunteer in this effort. "The meal is provided by ISKCON but earlier Mrs Kochhar and I used to buy ration ourselves and cook for the children," says Sudha Johrey, 77, who is a teacher. "It is a pleasure teaching these children. They are so enthusiastic to learn and grasp things quickly," she says.

"We want to build five to six additional classrooms so that the children on the waiting list can be accommodated but we don't have the necessary funds," says Gen Kochhar. "We have tried in the past to approach corporates to provide us some help in this initiative but we were disappointed," says Geeta.

Source: June 24, 2012/Indian Express

Education is the key to community emancipation'

Dubai-based journalist Mazhar Farooqui has everything that one can ask for in life- health, loving family, and a decent job. But his soul is restless and heart beats for millions of unfortunates who are losing out in the race to prosperity just because they don't have the support and opportunities.

Since 2004, he along with his friends and other supporters are running an organization that is working to reduce the drop-out rate of Muslims. In just 8 year Aaghaz Foundation has made significant impact in the lives of many people living in Lucknow. In this interview Mazhar Farooqui talks about the work of the Foundation.

Aaghaz Foundation started with a focus on stemming the drop-out rate of Muslim children. why do you think that focus is important?

Education is the key to community emancipation. It's a long term investment that Indian Muslims have criminally ignored for years. We felt illiteracy is the single biggest threat to our community because it's directly linked to unemployment and backwardness. According to a recent study if we don't pay attention to education for another few years, we might lose millions of children to illiteracy. Out of 100 Muslim students who start school, hardly 4 manage to study beyond class X. The average number of years an Indian Muslim girl studies in school is just 2.7 years. We had two ways to react to these numbers: We could have brushed them aside and heaved a sigh of relief that we are not one of the statistics. Or we could have asked ourselves, is there anything we can do to make a difference. We chose the latter.

What are some of the ways to reduce the drop-out rate?

It's pretty simple actually. All one needs to do is to identify a poor Muslim child and sponsor his/her fees.

If you can't find a deserving Muslim child yourself, get your friends/family members to find one for you. With so many Muslim children not going to school, this should not be difficult. Alternatively, get in touch with Aaghaz Foundation www.aaghazfoundation.com we have a huge data bank of Muslim students who can't afford to pay their fees because of financial constraints. One individual may not be able to help 10 others, but 10 individuals can certainly help one if they join hands.

What are some of the programmes Aaghaz Foundation is running?

Aaghaz Foundation runs four major educational programmes in Lucknow.

1) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME to plug school drop outs and give financial assistance to poor Muslim students.

STATUS: Each month we pay the fees of several hundred students across dozens of schools under this programme. As soon as someone recommends us a student who needs financial support, Aaghaz asks its members to volunteer for a pre-scholarship survey. A minimum of three volunteers are needed. The volunteers visit the student's house with a set of questionnaire based on objectively verifiable indicators to determine whether or not the student is eligible for scholarship. The academic record of the student, his/her financial condition etc are among several key things that are taken into consideration. Priority is given to orphans and meritorious student. Once it has been vetted, the case is discussed at our meetings and, subject to survey findings, the scholarship is approved or rejected.

2. FREE COACHING CENTRE: to impart free coaching in English, Maths, Physics & Chemistry for classes IX-XII (Associate partner: Aligarh Alumni Association) Scores of students, mostly girls from very poor families attend free evening classes six days a week at the Lucknow Coaching Centre located at Mehr Montessori School in City Station.

3. FEEDER PROGRAMME to provide financial assistance to students at the grassroots. (Associate partner: Aligarh Alumni Association)

4. LUCKNOW COACHING & GUIDANCE CENTRE to prepare students for Banking Railways and LIC exams. Thousands of posts are advertised in these sectors every year. (Associate partner: Aligarh Alumni Association,Aligarh Forum/India Wisdom Foundation) In its first year itself seven Muslim students cleared a banking entrance examination. From this year, we plan to prepare students for other competitive exams. Plans are also afoot to start a computer centre to make the centre self-reliant.

You don't take money from the government or donor agencies. Then how do you fund your operation?

Aaghaz Foundation is a 100 per cent community initiative. It raises funds from the community and ploughs it back into the community. Every penny that we raise goes solely towards the cause of education as Aaghaz has no expenditure of its own. We have no office rent and pay no salaries. Everybody is associated with Aaghaz voluntarily.

We raise funds through membership contributions which is as low as Rs. 100/- per month and contributions from our patrons and well-wishers. Thankfully, we have enough members to keep us running like well-oiled machinery. In many cases the school/college fee of most of the students is sponsored either wholly or partially by our members.

What have you learned from the work that you have done for Aaghaz?

In October 2012, it will be eight years since a motley group of friends met for the first time in Lucknow with a common agenda in mind: Plugging school drop-outs among Muslims. When the meeting ended, the friends had collected Rs 2,000/-

It was enough to pay the school fee dues of a grade VIII student who was a class topper but was on the verge of dropping out because of financial constraints.

That's how AAGHAZ was born. A few friends, Rs 2,000/- and just one needy student.

Little did anyone know then that this small initiative would one day transform into a massive community movement that will grow beyond Indian shores and impact hundreds and thousands of lives. Today, we have cases where poor students supported by Aaghaz Foundation have got lucrative jobs and are now supporting students themselves. It's Aaghaz Foundation's firm believe that even if 5 per cent of Indian Muslims join hands, they can easily take care of the remaining 95 per cent. It's not rocket science. Considering the magnitude of the problem, our efforts so far are like the proverbial drop in the ocean but our resolve is firm and unwavering.

Archimides said give me a place to stand and I can move the world. Can Aaghaz root out illiteracy from the community? Frankly speaking, we are nowhere near that degree of optimism, but now that we have made an Aaghaz, a beginning, we have a place to stand; we are not entirely without hope either.

Source: June 24, 2012/Two circle net

Global education on the principle of equal exchange

Global education should rest on the principle of the equal exchange of knowledge, is what Laurie Patton, dean of arts & sciences and professor of religion, Duke University, firmly believes.

She elaborates, "It cannot be a short-term exchange, but a long-term and sustainable model, where education institutions and countries engage in equal exchange of ideas, research, students, faculty, and so on. Not simply short-term initiatives such as internships or gap years. For example, students should study the same modules with the same teams both in India and in the US to get a truly balanced global perspective on issues."

Patton was visiting India to further strengthen Duke's engagement with institutions here. "The big debate in higher education globally is about skills development and its relationship to liberal arts.

No matter where you land in the debate, a transformational rather than a transactional 'checklist' model should be at the heart of all curricula." She feels students should be taught how to connect the dots between education and the larger society that they live in.

"How is the knowledge they are gathering going to impact society? Education in the 21century has to integrate social issues, and do so through the study of history as well as contemporary society."

She asserts that 21century education requires three skills — innovation, adaptation and integration. Innovations — in the remix, information-laden culture we now live in — are as much new combinations of information, data, social networks, as in the discovery of new laws of nature. Both forms of discovery, according to her, are important for innovation to occur.

Adaptation is not only the ability to be flexible, but the ability to imagine ways of thinking and working and living that have never existed before. Students today must respond to changing conditions more quickly than ever before.

Integration is not only the ability to put things together, but also to find new ways in which knowledge fits into the world.

"We live in a world in which the discreet, siloed forms of knowledge remain some of the most powerful driving forces in our lives." And yet that fact can make integration all the harder. She says, "In the arts & sciences, we help students make those connections and make their knowledge fit, as they build their lives."

Patton, who received her BA from Harvard University and her PhD from University of Chicago, is the author/editor of eight books on South Asian history, culture and religion. She translated The Bhagavad Gita for the Penguin Classics Series and has written two books of poetry.

Her current research for two forthcoming books focuses on religion in the public sphere and on women and Sanskrit in contemporary India.

On the emerging trends in areas of study within the arts & sciences, she says global health, environmental science, neuroscience , human

development, and technology and culture, are key emerging fields. Trinity College of Arts & Sciences comprises 36 departments (social sciences, humanities and sciences), with a focus on liberal arts education for undergraduate students.

Source: June 25, 2012/Times of India

Indian society needs good managers to eradicate poverty'

Pankaj Chandra, director, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIM-B), says Indian society needs good managers to eradicate poverty.

Management remains a popular choice among students ; however, the question is whether India's business education is ready for the new needs and challenges. According to Pankaj Chandra, director, IIM-Bangalore, business education is in a state of flux at this point of time in India. Also, the scenario has changed globally as increasingly managers have to play a bigger role in society and its development; therefore, schools have to provide the right education and training for the managers of tomorrow.

On the increasing number of Bschools in India, Chandra believes that every management institution in India is of a different quality and over a period of time the quality will improve. And those who do not offer quality education would eventually close down. However, according to him, IIMs have always been very dynamic. He says, "When other business schools come up, their experiences will enrich us and ours will enrich them and we will grow together." Elaborating on the challenges, Chandra says the focus of developing nations should be on good managers who can work on solutions to eradicate poverty. "Poverty is linked to government and its management. So, in many ways if we manage our government well, manage our public distribution system well, manage our traffic well, manage our urban processes well and manage water well, I think we can get rid of poverty."

As far as the trends in business education in India are concerned, he adds, "People are involved in different kinds of experiments. It's probably too early to say that there are some key trends that are emerging. But people are looking at sectoral MBAs, they are introducing more issues about society into the MBA programme and are starting to do more real-life projects. I believe all these are good trends."

On whether a Bachelor of business administration (BBA) is gaining popularity in India, Chandra says, "I hope not. This is because one needs to have a very strong undergraduate degree in some discipline before actually getting into management." He, however, supports students opting for specialised Master's courses in business education if not an MBA.

Source: June 25, 2012/Times of India

Global education on the principle of equal exchange

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Source: June 25, 2012/Times of India

Yes Minister! You've got it right

Kapil Sibal needs to be commended for upholding the importance of Class 12 marks for admissions to institutes of higher education

After visiting New Delhi in the mid-1970s, the editor of an important American newspaper, the story goes, wrote that only in two places are Indians not permitted to have a drink at a five-star hotel — South Africa, and India!

Sadly, some 40 years later, that story could well be about Indian degrees and diplomas. India's Class 12 certificates issued by the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and various State Boards are accepted as a qualifying score for an admission to undergraduate classes in more than half of the top 200 universities in the world. The only country where these certificates are not accepted (or scores not recognised) is India itself. Why else would we run a plethora of entrance tests for admission into universities or institutes, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) included? It is well recognised that there is great discrepancy between boards. The Odisha Board of Secondary Education may not be comparable to say, Delhi. But going by the number of students from Odisha crawling around Delhi University, this may not be entirely correct.

Coaching industry at Kota

Union Minister of Human Resource Development (HRD) Kapil Sibal has now got it right by recognising that the Class 12 score must be considered, at least in part, for admission into higher education including the IITs. This, I hope, is the first step towards abolishing all entrance tests and recognising the certificates that are in any case issued by the government. By not recognising the Class 12 score we have created what we would call "Kota style education," which at the last count was a Rs.50,000 crore industry.

To elaborate: some 1,00,000 students on completion of Class 10 carry their bag and baggage, and at times, alongwith one of their parents, and travel to Kota, Rajasthan. The back-breaking two years involve admitting themselves to one of the several hundred coaching classes for the IITs, National Institutes of Technology (NIT) or medical colleges, where they work for about 18 hours a day. Neither the soaring temperatures in Kota nor the appalling living conditions bother them. As passing Class 12 is mandatory to get into the IITs, these students get admitted to one or another board as distance learners. They need only a pass certificate — the scores are unimportant.

"Kota style" education now thrives in the backstreets of Bethia, Berhampur and Tirunelveli. It is a $10-billion industry, and is now run by many public limited companies, some hugely funded by overseas private equity funds — $10 billion is more than the government's annual funding to the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Mr. Sibal needs to be complimented for bringing sanity into higher education by recognising that our own degrees and diplomas must be counted in admissions to our own colleges and universities.

As for the hue and cry created by IIT alumni associations about the Minister's proposal to democratise IIT admission, you don't have to be a genius to appreciate and understand the sentiments of the IIT alumni. Let us not forget that they are all born and brought up in the same country as us and have grown up in the same feudal culture. They are the neo-Brahmins. After all, how can they permit children of lesser castes to get into their temples? This is the overriding sentiment. The purported line is that we must protect quality of education of the IITs. But the real need is to protect the IITs from "Kota style" coaching classes.

Five-point agenda

Here is a five-point agenda to improve higher education, particularly technical education, in India.

Create capacity: Permit private institutions to significantly increase capacity. It is well known that the school to college dropout ratio is 70 per cent. The moment we say this, the bogey raised is that quality will fall. Therefore, what is required is a strong autonomous regulator that will certify the quality of education, like in all developed parts of the world. Encouraging quality, removing

bottlenecks, and enhancing capacities should be the cornerstone architecture of the regulators rather than "control."

Government managed (read controlled) technical education is now about 10 per cent of the total number of seats. Increase the capacity of the IITs and NITs by 5x. People ask, where are the teachers (of "quality")? The answer is to increase the compensation package of teachers by 5x. Many corporate organisations are willing to sponsor chairs in much the same way as it happens in the western world, to pay deserving teachers.

Introduce for-profit higher education: The best kept secret is that the currently structured trust managed educational institutions are truly not "not-for-profit." We must acknowledge that and ask the regulator to grant, say, a 12 per cent equated return to investors in these institutes and universities.

Create a band of adjunct faculty: Top educational institutions all over the world operate with a strong partnership with industry and business. The starting point is to get a large list of volunteers from industry who are willing to devote time as adjunct faculty. Clearly there are issues of consistency in education delivery but industry bodies like the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) can very well be motivated to provide this thrust. We need to work on a model of how academics can work hand in hand with practising managers.

Privatise some IITs and NITs: privatising a non-profit organisation is bound to stir up a hornet's nest. But some IITs and NITs can be privatised on an experimental basis.

Create competition: Before the private universities bill has even been passed, the HRD Ministry is already talking about controls. The anti-competition lobby is already working to eliminate future competition. If our objective is to create capacity, let us welcome any registered university from any respectable part of the world. Competition will decide whether the students want to go to Delhi University or Hawaii University's campus in Delhi!

Amartya Sen, the Nobel laureate, said when asked about the large number of rural schools in India that have only one room and one teacher, "I will have a school with only one room and one teacher rather than no school at all." We can't change overnight our higher education to match MIT, Harvard or Oxford. Let's start with capacity creation as the top most agenda. In the meanwhile, congratulations Mr. Minister for the first, forward-looking step.

Source: June 26, 2012/The Hindu

From Where I Sit - Big Bong theory

Two memoirs by Indian scholars who spent many years at Oxbridge offer salutary insights into life at the ancient universities. Tapan Raychaudhuri, author of *The World in Our Time* and a professor of Indian history at the University of Oxford, retired from the institution in 1993, while*Fifty Years of Indian Archaeology* (1960-2010): Journey of a Foot Soldier chronicles the professional life of Dilip K. Chakrabarti, a professor of South Asian archaeology at the University of Cambridge who stepped down in 2008.

Oxbridge professorships are among several threads common to their lives. Both these "Big Bongs" (an Indian acronym for upper-class Bengalis) studied at Kolkata's Presidency College, which in its heyday attracted the best minds in Bengal. They later taught at Calcutta University and the University of Delhi. Their writings provide a window into the deterioration in Indian university life over the past half century, which contrasts with their descriptions of outstanding teachers in Kolkata from the 1940s to the 1960s, Bengal's tradition of historical research and the range of English books educated Bengalis once read.

To Professor Chakrabarti's library, the footpaths of Kolkata's College Street seem to have yielded second-hand copies of Rudyard Kipling and the archaeologist V. Gordon Childe, while the landed intelligentsia to whom Professor Raychaudhuri belonged were huge admirers of philosophers such as David Hume.

Upper-class Bengalis who migrate to Oxbridge are sometimes derided for being more royalist than the Queen, so there is some anticipation that the real juice of these memoirs will flow when the Big Bongs reach the Promised Land. And flow it does. Professor Raychaudhuri finds Oxford "a major centre of empire worship" and is dismayed by the ignorance, even among radical colleagues, of the blood shed by the British Empire: one of them "had never heard of Britain's exploitative role" until he visited India, although he had studied British history at Oxford.

Professor Chakrabarti is justifiably aggrieved for a different reason: despite international recognition as South Asia's leading archaeologist, he was never made a college fellow nor even director of study. Two decades in Cambridge left him on the outside looking in at a glass case forged by a peculiarly English variety of academic insularity, whereby all scholars are proclaimed equal but some are more equal than others.

So, does Oxbridge treat non-English colleagues worse than North American universities? Professors Raychaudhuri and Chakrabarti believe so. The former recounts the experience of the Bengali philosopher B.K. Matilal, Spalding professor at Oxford in the mid-1970s, whose Indian-English accent, irrelevant when working in Canada (where he achieved international fame), got in his way at All Souls College. There, Professor Matilal was made to feel alien, Professor Raychaudhuri writes, which "throws light on a deplorable side of life in this university, the fact that some members of this august institution lack elementary civility".

A third Indian academic's memoir chimes implicitly with these insights. Padma Desai, professor of economics at Columbia University, praises the liberal atmosphere of US higher education in*Breaking Out: An Indian Woman's American Journey*. Hers is a path of liberation made possible by academic acceptance in the US.

Personal circumstances form a vital fault line in how academics remember their lives and careers. But it would seem there is a PhD waiting to be done on Oxbridge's upper-crust strategies to save itself from Third Worldlings with the wrong accent - a variety of snootiness from which the Ivy League seems relatively free.

Source: June 28, 2012/Times Higher Education UK

Price of education

In an economic downturn where job opportunities seem to be shrinking, many are choosing to opt for higher education. How are students planning on financing their higher education?

Learning never stops. An education may last forever and maybe priceless but it definitely doesn't come free of cost. Many institutes offering courses for higher studies charge heavily for imparting knowledge. Therefore a student thinking of walking into a campus for higher studies must have a plan. The tuition fee, hostel fee, food charges, extra college costs, travel expenditures, cost of living in the city, etc. must be calculated. A student must find out everything in detail and plan for contingencies. Apart from speaking with the colleges, talking to other students bring hidden costs to light. Planning ahead will prevent you having to cut your adventure short or hold you back from experiencing other cultures. You shouldn't have to starve yourself to study and travel and have enough money to come back home.

Different students have differing opinions on how they choose to finance their higher studies. Most fresh graduates seem to trust their parents to financially support their intention to study further, while those who have been working for a while now feel that they should not depend or burden their parents with their needs. This choice may come from a sense of maturity and the value of money and education that is augmented by experience.

Are we clued in?

Yalamamthili Dhanalakshmi, who graduated last year form Gitam college, Vizag and is working now says, "I want to take a loan and study. I have decided to do an MBA in India and so I have been saving for it. I don't really know anything about loans. I just know that you can borrow the money and pay it back when you start working. I got the idea of taking a loan from my cousins, who too took loans for their education. I haven't spoken to my parents about this, it might take some convincing, because I'm sure they will be ready to pay and not want me to take a loan." Another student, Monica Hariharan went to University of Westminster right after her graduation and depended on her parents to fund her studies but she did part-time work during her time there to earn a little extra.

Is your college eligible?

Counsellor Chaya Devi of Destiny Overseas Pvt. Ltd. says that 80 per cent of the students who go abroad are from middle class families and take education loans. She also says that the most favorable banks for such loans in the city are Andhra bank, SBI, HDFC, Axis bank, SBH, Punjab National bank and Bank of India. "Several times, students face the problem of the bank not having the student's college on their list of colleges for which they give loans," she says. A student can get a loan for any course, even those apart from the conventional ones like engineering and management. "Students don't have any problem in repaying these loans because they get employed as soon as they finish college and the time period to repay the loan is also quite long," she added.

Economies matter

Khush Desai says, "I have thought of studying MBA abroad and will take a loan for this. Also it's better if one takes a loan abroad itself because the interest rates there are lower and it is given to you in dollars. Of course I will need help from my parents, I will need them to be my guarantor. But I'm 25 years old and don't want to live off my parents money."

According Prashant Bhonsle, country head, Credila Financial Services, a firm that focuses exclusively on education loans says 50 per cent of the applications to Credila are from students who want to study in India and their loan amount ranges from Rs15 to 20 lakh; 30 per cent of the applications are

for loans abroad, and these range from Rs 5 lakh to 1 crore. He adds that it is extremely difficult (almost impossible, especially in current economic conditions) for an Indian student to avail an education loan abroad. Viswanathan Nair, general manager of Syndicate Bank Hyderabad holds that taking a loan in India is much better because the interest rate is lower here.

He also says that they are faced by a high number of loan defaulters. He says, "After completing their studies, students' priorities change.

Students now want to buy a car, a house and taken additional loans and their ambitiousness overrides the responsibility of repaying the education loan. It is because of this attitude that we face a high number of defaulters."

Bagging that scholarship

Students can also get scholarships to pay for their expenses. Working helps to earn some extra spending money, but a student shouldn't count on this method to pay his fees. Universities are happy to aid students and offer them many scholarships. These may be partial or complete.

Who can get a scholarship? - Scholarships are given on many criteria such as academic performance, excellence in sports, arts, research or project work done by the student, etc. The university needs to believe that you will add to their academic wealth.

How can one get a scholarship? - Applying early is the key. Universities announce dates for this much in advance. Universities award scholarships to the first applicants who fulfill the criteria. So though you may be better than the rest, but the first to apply has higher chances of getting a scholarship.

Paying it off

Chaya Devi's suggestion to students is to limit the loan amount to a part of the anticipated salary. For example if your salary is Rs 50,000, your installment payment shouldn't be 50,000 too. If the loan is for education abroad try to save- pay off the interest as soon as possible, book tickets in advance, get a roommate and use your credit card sparingly. Banks usually give loans to more conventional courses.

Management is the top choice followed by technical and medical streams. Banks don't provide loans for students wanting to study arts or in fields they believe have low employment opportunity. However if a student is arranging for studies abroad, he/ she needs to get all the paper work in order. Apart from taking guidance from a counselor, talk to students who have studied abroad and try to build a pragmatic picture in your mind. All this can be boggling so don't rush into anything. After all, being prepared is half the battle already won.

Source: June 28, 2012/ Education Times/Times of India

Role of technology in education

One of the primary objectives of the Mathematics Laboratory and Technology Centre at Delhi Public School, R K Puram, which was founded in 1994 to improve and enhance school mathematics, has been to explore the use of technology and their relevance in Indian classrooms. The activities of the lab can be broadly classified as follows:

- To create and conduct projects and activities that focus on applications of mathematics to real-life problems
- To integrate the use of technology, specifically graphing calculators, computer algebra and other software packages in mathematical modelling activities
- To investigate the use of technology in teaching mathematics at the middle school and senior secondary level

Technology plays a key role in most of the activities conducted by the centre. It is equipped with computers, computer algebra systems such as Mathematica, software packages such as Geometers Sketchpad and Autograph and graphics calculators, in particular, the Casio CFX 9850 GB plus.

All these are important tools for exploration and visualisation. Presently, the laboratory is a part of mainstream teaching where students meet once a week at an allotted time and perform experiments and activities under the guidance of the teacher.

Over the last few years, students have worked on several projects in the lab. For example, some of the key projects done by students of class XI and XII include mathematical modelling in genetics (based on matrices and probability), RSA:

Public Key Encryption (based on numbertheory), brand switching problem (based on matrices and probability), equilibrium temperature distributions (based on Matrix Theory), queuing problem at a vehicle service station (based on calculus and probability) and many others.

The centre conducts research projects to study the effect of the use of various technologies and teaching methods on students mathematical understanding and performance. These may be categorised as follows:

- Projects related to exploring the effect of hand-held technology such as graphic calculators on students concept formation in maths
- Projects related to investigating the effect of computer technology such as computer algebra

systems and other mathematical software on students understanding in mathematics

• Use of computers and technology has redefined the role of the teacher. The role of the teacher in the lab has been found to be significantly different from that of the usual classroom.

The computer serves as an electronic whiteboard whose output is entirely in the teachers control. The teacher acts as a facilitator, the students to making their rather than providing the solutions on the blackboard.

Lessons become more enjoyable and this results in a stronger link between the teacher and students. The computer encourages students to explore and discover on their own. Technology has greatly increased the range of students mathematical activities by enabling them to explore concepts and discover results for themselves.

Students also explore problems by writing their own programmes, which enable them to think actively about the they are implementing in solving the problems. This increases their ability to think analytically. The lab makes the student aware of career options in mathematics.

In the laboratory, students may be exposed to problems of an exploratory nature, which they do not otherwise encounter in their regular syllabus or curriculum. This does not preclude the curriculum from the laboratory. Rather it enriches the subject of study and encourages a spirit of research among students.

Source: June 30, 2012/ Times of India

RESOURCE

Latest Statistics on Indian Higher Education

University Grants Commission (UGC) released a report "Higher education in India at a glance" summarizing key datapoints of relevance for policymakers and administrators. Here are three charts from the report:

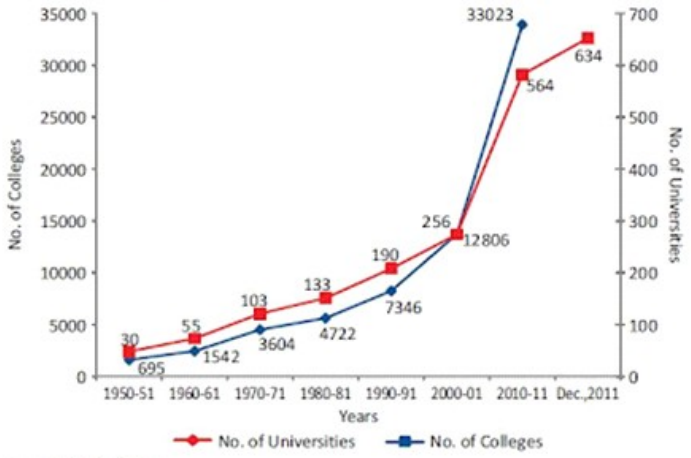
Massive expansion in supply of colleges:

India added nearly 20,000 colleges in a decade (increased from 12,806 in 2000-01 to 33,023 in 2010-11) which translate into a growth of more than 150%. Number of degree granting universities more than doubled from 256 to 564, primarily due to deemed-universities and private universities. India has a complex affiliation system where a university can have hundreds of public and private teaching colleges affiliated to it.

Lesser growth in student enrollment:

Although number of students enrolled in higher education doubled from nearly 8.4 million to 17 million in a decade, it grew a slower pace than

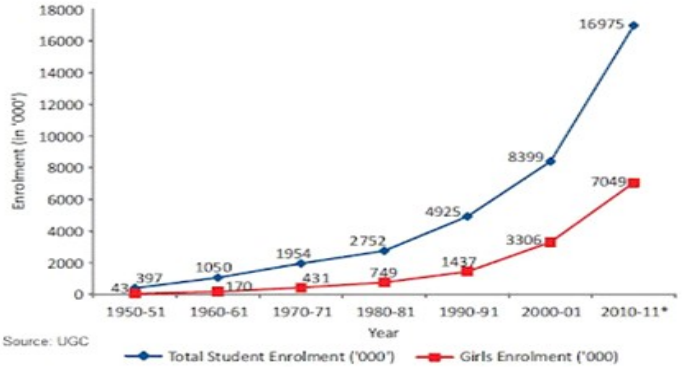
Growth of Higher Education Institutions



Source : MHRD / UGC

number of colleges which grew 2.5 times in the same period, creating a paradoxical situation of excess capacity in a country where gross enrollment ratio is less than 20%.

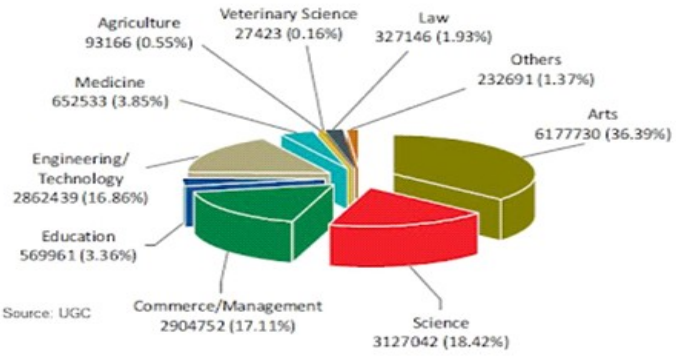
Growth of Students Enrolment ('000') in Higher Education



Three-year degree and engineering:

Student continue to be sorted into two tiers--engineering and three-year degrees of Arts, Science and Commerce. Every sixth student in India is enrolled in engineering/technology program and more than 2/3rd of Indian students are enrolled in three-year undergraduate degrees.

Faculty-wise Students Enrolment in Higher Education 2010-11*



Source: June 18, 2012/Dr Education

Alternative to global education ranking

Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), will work on an alternative to the global education ranking system said APQN's newly appointed president Jagganath Patil speaking to the TOI.

Patil who is deputy adviser of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is the first Indian president of APQN, which has been set up with the purpose of serving the needs of quality assurance agencies in higher education in a region that contains over half the world's population. APQN is one of the higher education-related organizations and associations in Asia headquartered in Shanghai and is already helping to build alliances between agencies, and assisting countries/territories that do not have a quality assurance agency of their own.

"I am happy that I could place India on the quality map of higher education. Despite being the third largest higher education system in world we are nowhere on global rankings. I have argued against ranking in global platform at Spain. Now this is an opportunity to try and give some alternative to the global rankings. I am leading an APQN project approved by UNESCO which aims at setting up Quality Informations Systems at institutional, national and international levels. If this initiative gets support from various countries, we will be able to help millions of students whose mobility is affected due to gap in quality information," Patil told the TOI.

Patil has been a leading figure in APQN for the past seven years. As project leader, board member and vice-president he has led several initiatives of APQN. Patil added," APQN was the first network to receive the World Bank Development Grant Fund (DGF) from September 2004 to March 31, 2008. For the past three and a half years it has also been a beneficiary of the Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) grant administered by UNESCO".

Source: June 19, 2012/Times of India

Indian University Admissions: The Crisis of Confidence in Quality

Expansion, growth and access have been the buzzwords for Indian higher education in last five years. However, they all sounds hollow when you hear that some colleges in Delhi University expect 100% marks for admissions. As this cartoon from Manjul shows, "aiming high" has a new standard.

The talent pool aspiring for quality higher education is increasing at a much faster rate than number of institutions with quality. This means that more students with highly competitive academic preparedness are available, however, the institutions with high quality have not increased in the same proportion. According at a recent article in Times of India,number of students with over 95% marks in CBSE (XIIth grade) have shot up from about 1200 last year to over 2100 this year, while the number of undergraduate seats in the University of Delhi roughly the same as last year at 54,000.

Instances like this, question the whole rhetoric that Indian higher education is reforming and expanding access. The reality seems that Indian higher education is regressing as the availability of quality institutions is unable to keep up with supply of talent pool. According to UGC, number of colleges in the India increased by 53% in five years to nearly 26,000 colleges in 2009. If this quantitative expansion of colleges had as significant qualitative element in it then students would have had more confidence in their choices to go beyond the "tried and tested" reputed brands. However, we have a situation of a crisis of confidence and hence many students with high academic ability are aiming for the same set of select few institutions with lowest career risks.

While the private sector has contributed a lot in increasing the access to higher education, it has focused on "money-minting" professional programs in engineering and management and has often done it without much consideration to quality.

This example reiterates the horror stories we have heard from highly selective IIT and IIM admissions that much still needs to be done in terms of instilling quality in Indian higher education and gaining the confidence of prospective students to explore beyond the select few.

Source: June 20, 2012/Dr Education

Suicide may soon be leading cause of death in India, reveals study

Four of India's southern states — Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnakata and Kerala — that together constitute 22% of the country's population recorded 42% of suicide deaths in men and 40% of self-inflicted fatalities in women in 2010.

Maharashtra and West Bengal together accounted for an additional 15% of suicide deaths.

Delhi recorded the lowest suicide rate in the country. In absolute numbers, the most suicide deaths in individuals, aged 15 years or older, were in AP (28,000), Tamil Nadu (24,000) and Maharashtra (19,000).

The first national study of deaths in India, published in the British Medical journal The Lancet on Friday,

says that suicide has become the second-leading cause of death among the young in India.

Of the total deaths by suicide in individuals aged 15 years or older, about 40% suicide deaths in men and about 56% in women occurred in individuals aged 15-29 years. Suicide deaths occurred at younger ages in women (average age 25 years) than in men (average age 34 years). Educated persons were at greater risk of completing a suicide.

The risk of completing a suicide was 43% higher in men, who finished secondary or higher education, in comparison to those who had not completed primary education. Among women, the risk increased to 90%. Lead author of the study Professor Vikram Patel of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine told TOI that the 1.87 lakh people committed suicide in India in 2010.

About half of suicide deaths (49% among men, and 44% among women) were due to poisoning, mainly ingesting of pesticides. Hanging was the second most common cause for men and women, while burns accounted for about one-sixth of suicides by women. Professor Patel felt that with the decline in maternal death rates, suicide could soon become the leading cause of death among young women in India.

The study says the National Crime Records Bureau underestimates suicide deaths in men by at least 25% and women (36%).

He told TOI, "Overall, more Indian men commit suicide than women, but the male to female ratio for suicides is smaller in India than in many Western countries, in particular among youth. Studies have suggested that social factors such as violence and depression are key determinants of suicide in women."

Prof Patel pointed out to lack of national strategy for suicide prevention in India.

He said, "Suicides can be prevented through interventions like banning the most toxic pesticides and teaching rural communities on safe storage of pesticides. India should also startmental health promotion for young people through schools and colleges and introduce crisis counseling services and services for treatment of depression and alcohol addiction."

Source: June 22, 2012/Times of India

A shift in student mobility from China and India by 2015?

The recent recession continues to redefine the funding model of public higher education. The top three destinations for international students – the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia – have all experienced budget cuts and a stronger emphasis on cost justification and self-sufficiency.

In these times of financial stress and the search for additional streams of revenue, undergraduate international students are emerging as saviours. They are less dependent on financial aid, as they are more likely to be funded by their families, and offer a longer stream of revenue (four years) compared to masters programmes (two years).

Large-source countries like China and India have become critical for recruiting undergraduate international students.

Scale and contrasting patterns

With more than 700,000 Chinese and Indian students enrolled in global higher education institutions, every third globally mobile student is from one of these two countries.

In the US, international student enrolment increased by nearly 175,000, between 2000-01 and 2010-11, and Chinese and Indian students contributed to nearly 84% of this growth.

These figures indicate the scale and role of these two source countries in global student mobility.

In my article, "Drivers of Mobility of Chinese and Indian Students", in International Higher Education, I argued that Chinese and Indian student mobility was increasing due to a combination of demand and supply factors.

On the supply side, the ability to afford foreign education has increased, leading to a rapid expansion of the education pipeline. On the demand side, aggressive outreach efforts by universities and the adoption of a wider range of recruitment options are supporting the mobility of Chinese and Indian students.

However, the similarities between China and India in size and other factors have ended now, and contrasting patterns of mobility are beginning to emerge.

A major difference is that China has a much stronger growth momentum, at the undergraduate level, than India. The contrasting pattern is clear when juxtaposing the 8% decline of Indian undergraduate students to the 43% increase of Chinese students in the US.

This translates to an increase of 17,055 Chinese students, compared to a decrease of 1,188 Indian undergraduate students. For every one Indian student in the US, there are four Chinese undergraduate students.

This contrasting pattern becomes extremely important in view of the current economic woes

faced by public institutions and their search, on an increasingly limited budget, for international undergraduate students.

But are these trends among Chinese and Indian undergraduate students sustainable, and what are future trends?

Reversal of trends for 2015?

I estimate that beginning in 2015, growth trends in the undergraduate market for China and India will experience a reversal. This is the time when India may surface as a major growth country for undergraduate student recruitment, while China could start losing its growth momentum.

However, in terms of absolute numbers of undergraduate enrolment, I predict China will continue to outpace India. My estimate for a reversal of recent trends is based on four interrelated factors.

Demographic shifts

The Chinese population in the 15-19 year age bracket is projected to decline by 17% between 2010 and 2015, translating into 18 million fewer college-going youths, according to US census data.

By contrast, India's college-going population is projected to increase by five million, or 5%, over the same period. This means that in 2015, India will have nearly 20 million more college-going people in the 15-19 year age group than China. Demographic patterns in China and India will influence the supply of potential undergraduate students.

'Self-financed' students

China already surpasses India in terms of the wealth and size of its middle class, which can fund foreign undergraduate education. For example, China had 535,000 individuals with investable assets of US$1 million or more, while India had 153,000 in 2010. Furthermore, the single-child policy in China has allowed family resources to concentrate on one child.

However, the children of wealthy middle-class Indian parents who started working in new-age industries, like information technology, in the mid- to late 1990s will start graduating from 2015 onwards. This segment of 'self-financed' students will expect quality and have an ability to afford international undergraduate education.

Pace of education reforms

Both China and India have their share of problems in balancing quality and access.

Given China's track record of aggressively expanding its higher education system and welcoming foreign institutions, it is more likely successfully to enforce quality. This will mean more quality choices for Chinese students at home.

By contrast, the pace of reform in India has been very slow and embroiled in politics rather than policy. It is unlikely that Indian higher education can keep pace with the demand for quality education. This inability to absorb demand will increase the demand of 'self-financed' Indian students for foreign education.

Campus concerns

Given the over-reliance of the US on Chinese undergraduate students, concerns are growing about campus diversity and the role of agents in driving this growth.

A recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education referred to the large number of Chinese students on some campuses thus: "what seems at first glance a boon for colleges and students alike is, on closer inspection, a tricky fit for both".

It added, "though the agents act as universities' representatives, marketing them at college fairs and soliciting applications, that's no guarantee that colleges know the origin of the applications, or the veracity of their grades and scores".

Campus concerns, such as diversity and the potential threat to integrity of the admissions process due to fraudulent agent behaviour, may lead universities to consider ways of becoming less dependent on Chinese students.

Conclusion

Public higher education in leading destinations for international students is clearly shifting towards self-sufficiency, resulting in pressure to recruit more international undergraduate students as an additional source of revenue.

China and India are large source countries for international undergraduate students, but their mobility patterns are expected to show different trends, beginning in 2015. Given that undergraduate recruitment requires a significant amount of seeding and relationship-building, institutions should start preparing for these shifting patterns.

However, institutions should not let fiscal urgency and the quest for numbers make them lose focus on the quality of students recruited, the integrity of their admissions process and issues of campus diversity.

Source: June 24, 2012/ university world news

India-EU Student mobility – A Win-Win Opportunity for the EU?

- Education services industry has a global turnover of up to 90 billion dollars.

- International student fees assist in financing the higher education sector in host countries.
- According to available statistics present with UNESCO, there were 51566 Indian students in Europe in the year 2009 of which 34065 were based in UK.
- According to a large number of studies,Indian students are amongst the best and the most highly achieving students especially in the fields of IT, engineering, medicine and biological sciences
- Providing better employment opportunities for Indian graduates from EU-based universities should be seen as a mutually beneficial arrangement as it addresses the growing skills shortage in the OECD countries as well as provides strong incentives for Indian students to choose EU countries for higher education.
- Financial feasibility of foreign education and employment prospects are the driving forces for Indian students in European (non-English speaking) countries.
- Steps should be taken to reduce the high monetary impact on Indian students by providing scholarships to meritorious students with conditions regarding their return to India.

European universities should implement a mechanism of integration to assist Indian students to bridge the cultural and language gaps in host (non-English speaking) EU countries.

Introduction

Education is an important area of cooperation for both India and the European Union (EU). India-EU strategic partnership in education has been further strengthened through the revision of the Joint Action Plan (JAP) in 2008 which addressed the issue of student migration, education and academic exchange (Mukherjee and Chanda 2012:1) Apart from promoting positive bilateral relations between the two economic powers, promoting student mobility is also mutually beneficial in terms of the huge economic incentive it provides. A profit-churning industry with a global turnover of up to 90 billion dollars (Mukherjee and Chanda 2012: x), education services is a sector that the EU should promote further in the coming decades.

Indian students abroad

Since the past ten years, there has been a remarkable rise in the number of Indian students pursuing higher education outside India. India is one of the key markets targeted by the leading providers of higher education. India has grown considerably in terms of its contribution in the international students market and is the second most important source country after China[i]. Even though the US is till the top destination for Indian students (53.6% of Indian students abroad chose to study in the US in 2009[ii]), its market share has drastically reduced since 2000 mainly because of stricter immigration policies post 9/11.

On one hand, the percentage of Indian students in the US has reduced, but on the other hand, a combination of political and economic developments has promoted Indian students to seek Europe, in particular UK, as a destination for higher education. UK has attracted over 17 % of Indian students in 2009[iii], becoming the second most important destination after the US. It has been the most preferred destination for Indian students in Europe due to four reasons – colonial heritage leading to a long standing relationship between UK and India; presence of reputed institutions of higher education; Indian students' preference to study in programmes taught in English; and the presence of a large Indian diaspora in UK providing a 'home-away-from-home'. However, UK education comes with some disadvantages as well which includes its high cost such as premium tuition fees coupled with sky-high living expenses.

In such a situation, other European countries are slowly gaining favour amongst the Indian student community, especially countries such as France and Germany. In addition, Indian students also fulfil the shortage created by low EU student enrolment in science and engineering courses. According to a survey carried out by the Erasmus Mundus programme[iv], students from India usually do not perceive the EU as a single entity and see differences in between member countries with regard to living costs, tuition fees, facilities provided, visa regulations, work permit regulations, quality and teaching methods. Mainland/continental European countries are slowly gaining favour among the Indian community for higher education because of cheaper tuition costs, availability of scholarships and growth in programmes taught in English.

UK has recently changed its immigration policy and removed its post-study work visa (PSW) route for non-EU nationals. This visa was an essential incentive for non-EU students to come to UK as it allowed them to work in UK for 2 years (without a need for a sponsor) after they graduate from a UK university. With the change in immigration policies in UK, it is a crucial time for other European host countries to gain momentum and attract more Indian students to join their higher education establishments.

Essential aspects for promoting India-EU student mobility:

- Scholarships– Scholarships, such as those provided through the Erasmus Mundus Programme, need to be increased to provide financial assistance to meritorious Indian students. These should be given with conditions regarding the students' return to India.
- Employment– employment policies need to be made more flexible to fill labour market shortages in the EU and give an opportunity for Indian students graduating from EU-based universities to gain work experience. Internships and employment through tie-ups with European companies based in India can act as an incentive.
- Student exchange programmes– Partnerships between Indian and EU-based universities need to be promoted so that there is exchange of students, faculty members and researchers between the two regions.
- Advertising and Marketing– Strategic promotion has to be conducted in India to promote European universities and improve visibility of programmes taught in English through education fairs, virtual discussions on online student forums, etc.
- Flexible visa and immigration policies – policies tackling illegal migration should not affect genuine students and a special visa facilitation system should be introduced for students to make the visa process more standardized and simplified across the EU.
- Integration mechanism–language training and cultural workshops need to be conducted (both pre-course training as well as later upon arrival in host country) to alleviate cultural and language barriers.

Indian students, along with the rest of the international student community, pay premium fees for studying in countries such as USA or UK which can be almost three times the amount charged to local students (Lall 2008 cited in Mukherjee and Chanda 2012:3). Not only is the income generated through these fees beneficial for the host country economies , but the presence of meritorious Indian students also creates a healthy competition amongst the student community and raises the performance standards of host universities (Khadria 2001 cited in Mukherjee and Chanda 2012:3). In the present globalised world, the EU needs to make sure that it promotes student mobility through specialized education policy framework, which can in turn maintain EU's competitive edge at the global level and fulfil the predicted labour market shortage in specialised sectors.

reference

[i]UNESCO database on International students at tertiary level (ISCED 5 and 6) cited in Mukherjee and Chanda 2012: 6

[ii]UNESCO database on International students at tertiary level (ISCED 5 and 6) cited in Mukherjee and Chanda 2012: 8

[iii]UNESCO database on International students at tertiary level (ISCED 5 and 6) cited in Mukherjee and Chanda 2012: 13

[iv]Survey titled 'Perceptions of European Higher Education in Third Countries' cited in Lall, M. (2006)*Indian Students in Europe: Trends, Constraints and Prospects – Living in 'the Age of migration',*Briefing Paper for the Academic Network for European Research on India

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Mukherjee, S. and Chanda, R. (2012) *Indian Student Mobility to European Countries: An* Overview, CARIM-India Research Report 2012, Migration Policy Center (MPC), Florence, Italy

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Note: This brief is largely based on MPC's research report titled 'Indian Student Mobility to European Countries: An Overview', CARIM-India Research Report 2012, written by Shahana Mukherjee and Rupa Chanda

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Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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