APEEJAY STYA EDUCATION RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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Announcements

All-India Dr. Stya Paul Essay Competition 2012-13

On the occasion of its Silver Jubilee Year, Apeejay School, Saket announces "All-India Dr. Stya Paul Essay Competition 2012" on the theme ***"The importance of Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century"***

Click here to Participate

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 2013. Click here to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Stya University announces admission for the session 2013

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 various disciplines.

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. *See Details*

Please visit our website for more: click here

Also discover the Apeejay Edge: click here

Partnership

Dear Partners,

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

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

Editor

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh

WISHING YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR – 2013

All-India Dr. Stya Paul Essay Competition 2012

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All-India Dr. Stya Paul Essay Competition 2012

ASPECT

Wealth does not lead to world-class institutions'

Finally, the debate everyone wanted to have, has kicked off: Deloitte, a consultancy, has started this round with a new report, India's Higher Education Sector: Opportunities Unlimited, Growth Aplenty, recently, and called for increased foreign investment in the sector.

There is little to disagree with many of the observations made by Ajay Gudavarthy and Nissim Mannathukkaren in their article "Comparing Harvard apples with JNU oranges" (The Hindu, Op-Ed, December 27, 2012) that: world rankings of universities do not give us an accurate picture of higher education in India and elsewhere, an overwhelming majority of top-200 universities are in rich countries and that the solution does not lie in emulating Western models.

They are right in asserting that there are different ways to evaluate higher education institutions. They mention "intangible features" such as access to education and give the example of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) as an institution which has served this cause for students from backward regions. Caste-based reservations in our institutions have served a similar purpose. At the same time, they concede that representation has come about at the cost of quality.

However, they evade or downplay several troubling issues and take up somewhat frivolous ones. Let me begin with their complaints about the problems and unfairness of the U.S. higher education system. They lament the commercialisation of education and growing student indebtedness in the U.S. First, it is not our problem. Second, India has done very well in commercialising higher education without emulating the U.S. model. They claim that American students are not trained to become "critical thinkers" but "foot soldiers of the establishment." Agreed. Now how about asking this: what are we training our students to become?

Issue of context

Their biggest omission is context. They mention "different material realities" and "different starting points" of different countries but do not consider the same for India.

It is certainly true that 21st century India is still a poor country whether we use the "Third World" label or some other. At the same time, India, like China, is not just another poor country. It is certainly not Somalia (not my example) even though in parts of the country, people live in worse than Somalia-like conditions. The country has witnessed high rates of economic growth for over three decades so that it now counts among the largest economies in the world. At least some of that growth has occurred due to the country's ability to tap into the global knowledge economy. The country and its peoples have also become more connected to the outside world — whether through trade, travel, technology or other means — over the past two-three decades. India has the world's largest pool of college-age young women and men, and more women are taking to higher education. The country loses immense amounts of foreign exchange as thousands of affluent and meritorious students head abroad each year and far too few of the meritorious ones return.

It makes little sense to discuss higher education in India within the old frameworks of "rich," "poor" or "Third World" countries. China and India belong to a different category of nations not just because they

are growing economies but because they are large and populous. They are rich and poor, developed and underdeveloped, modern and traditional and everything else in between in different ways. They are countries that have arrived as global players or will do so in the coming future. Clearly, they are quite different from other low- and middle-income countries.

Given this context, the higher education sector has immense relevance and issues of quality and comparison of India's institutions with those in rich countries is more than a matter of "time pass." Further, substantial improvements in the quality of higher education are necessary for India's economic growth and further development in ways that are both interdependent and less dependent on rich countries. It is only with a solid base of higher education that India will be able to design and develop more of its own technologies and prioritise invention and innovation to move forward.

Then and now

India's higher education needs to aim much higher than a typical poor country. If global comparisons are not fair, other measures of quality — independent of government-created evaluation bodies or the print media — need to be devised. If it is not fair to compare India's universities with those in rich countries, how about comparing them with what they were like two or three decades ago? Have the same universities become better over time?

Other than providing access to higher education, have there been improvements in their quality? If the majority of engineering colleges or management schools are as bad as employers say they are, why not rank them in comparison to our own leading institutions, whether JNU or others?

If one takes their reasoning — that vast disparities in wealth between the West and the rest explains why third-rate institutions are found in poor countries — to its logical conclusion, India must wait to get rich before dreaming to build world-ranked institutions. This reasoning flies against the commonsense view that a larger number of world-class institutions, whether ranked globally or not, can contribute enormously to India's economic growth and dynamism in the coming decades. Instead, Gudavarthy and Mannathukkaren apply a version of the age-old modernisation theory — which posited a positive link between wealth and democracy — to higher education: that wealth leads to the creation of world-ranked institutions. Wealth has not brought democracy or world-class universities to oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. Arguably, precisely because these countries are not democratic, it is unlikely that their universities will ever, with or without the help of NYU or American University, reach the heights of western universities.

Source: January 24, 2013/The Hindu

NEWS

China recognises more higher education institutions

There has been a 10-fold increase in the number of Malaysian higher education institutions recognised by China, enabling the country to attract more Chinese students. Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Hou Kok Chung said that China had formally approved 71 local institutions, writes Priya Kulasagaran for The Star.

"Previously, only around five or six of our universities were recognised by China. There are now about 10,000 Chinese students here. Hopefully, this number will grow by at least 50%, if not 100%, in the future," he said last week.

Dr Hou said the recognition was based on the Malaysia-China mutual recognition agreement signed by both countries in April 2011 and only covers institutions offering degree courses.

Malaysia has recognised 820 higher education institutions in China under the agreement. There are now about 3,000 to 4,000 Malaysian students studying in China.

Source: 19 January, 2013/University World News

Political interference demeans education

His comments against the rise in political violence across the state had stirred up a hornet's nest recently. But 'yellow carded' or not, Bengal governor M K Narayanan is not one to mince words. On Saturday, speaking as chancellor at the 15th annual convocation of Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu), Shibpur, he cautioned that political interference in colleges and universities demeans education.

Narayanan was referring to the turnaround that Besu has achieved over the past few years, transforming itself from an engineering college plagued by student violence to a science university that can compete with the best in the world. The Times of India was the first to recognise Besu's turnaround in its January 14 edition.

In the presence of President Pranab Mukherjee, Narayanan expressed hope that by the time the next convocation is held, Besu would have become an Indian Institute of Engineering Science and

Technology. "It will no longer remain a state university and this is the last time I am addressing you as chancellor. Besu has served the state for so many years... After its upgrade, it will play a larger role and the university will become more impressive," Narayanan said.

He commended its "departure from unrest". "The institution faced a lot of trouble and there was a period of unrest. Political interference demeans education. It is good that Besu has managed to come out of all that," the governor said to loud applause from students, teachers and academicians.

Narayanan's statement is relevant at a time when violence has become a rule at students' union elections. The culture of violence and intimidation has trickled down to schools and was seen in the recent spate of gheraos by failed school students demanding to be passed. In 2006, the J M Lyngdoh Committee had also recommended that political parties stay away from students' union elections.

The President, who was chief guest at the programme, urged students to adhere to the principles of tolerance, mutual respect and inclusiveness to achieve a common goal. "Students have done very well in many fields. It is good that a lot of work is being done in strategic areas like aerospace engineering, remote sensing and medical technology. Sometimes, the country faces a shortage of researchers in strategic fields as well as areas in green engineering.

Modernisation has to be a continuous process. I would urge you to build up a symbiotic relationship with industry so that complex technology can be put to daily use," Mukherjee said.

Noted classical singer Girija Devi was conferred a D Litt (Honoris Causa) by Besu. Bimal Kumar Bose, an authority and pioneer in power electronics and professor emeritus at the University of Technology, Knoxville and renowned cardiologist Marthanda Varma Sankaran Valiathan were conferred DSc degrees (Honoris Causa).

Source: 20 January, 2013/ Times of India

Cyber security to be taught in university

On the recommendation of the task force on National Security System constituted on the direction of the cabinet committee on Security, University Grants Commission (UGC) has written to vice-chancellors to introduce cyber or information security as a subject.

The UGC letter states, "The Task Force has made the following recommendation - UGC and AICTE would ensure that Cyber Security/Information Security is introduced as a subject in the universities/technical institutions at the under-graduate and post-graduate levels".

"Therefore, I am directed to request you to take appropriate action on the above recommendation. This may also be brought to notice of the colleges, if any, affiliated to your university", it added.

Source: 20 January, 2013/ Times of India

CBSE launches assessment training programme

Central Board of Secondary Education's Centre for Assessment, Evaluation & Research (CAER) has launched an assessment training programme.

CBSE had established CAER through public private partnership with Pearson Foundation.

The purpose of the Centre is to develop global capabilities and resources for schools, teachers and key functionaries of school management.

It is envisaged through this endeavour that a symbiosis of the expertise and experience of the board and the partner organization, Pearson Foundation, will help in bringing about an overall improvement in the quality of learning, assessment, research and professional development.

It is important for all the stakeholders in the CBSE affiliated schools to know that the Centre which has taken strides to formulate the first of a series of professional development programmes for teachers and principals will roll out its Assessment Training Programme (ATP) in February 2013.

The ATP comprises four modules â€" constructing quality multiple choice items to assess the scholastic skills of the curriculum, constructing quality constructed-response items to assess the scholastic skills of the curriculum, formative assessment and the use of performance standards for assessing scholastic and co-scholastic skills and classroom-based research.

"Participation in all four modules and the fulfilment of the required follow up activity will allow those attending to submit evidence for a qualification. Whether or not delegates opt for the qualification, successful participation will create a pool of assessment experts in the country as well as build assessment capacity of teachers in India. All CBSE schools may consider participating whole heartedly in the aforesaid programme", CBSE circular to schools state.

Source: 27 January, 2013/ Times of India

Teacher education programme: State departments to discuss panel recommendations

The government has convened a meeting of state education departments here tomorrow to deliberate

upon a panel's recommendations on improving teacher education programmes which include pre-entry testing of candidates for admission to training institutes.

The Supreme Court-appointed Justice J S Verma Commission on improving teacher education system had submitted its report last August, with the suggestion of also exploring possibility of engaging teacher educators as visiting faculty in schools.

It had suggested development of a framework on school audit and teacher performance and increased investment in establishing teacher education institutions.

Underlining the sad state of affairs of preparing teachers in the country, the commission said, "The government should increase its investment for establishing teacher education institutions and increase the institutional capacity of teacher preparation, especially in the deficit states."

Besides, it stressed for pre-entry testing of candidates for admission to teacher education programmes.

The commission proposed strengthening regulatory powers and functions of National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

Justice Verma has also recommended that teacher educators could be considered as visiting faculty in school.

The rationale was that e school environment as also the expectations of the school system from the teachers.

The Supreme Court was of the view that the recommendations of the Commission deserve to be accepted and has requested the Centre and NCTE to file an affidavit in the implementation plan.

Source: 28 January, 2013/ Times of India

Harper Collins launches education business in India

HarperCollins is launching a new education publishing division in India which will mark its "largest ever" investment in international education publishing.

Collins India, as the new division will be called, hopes to provide its first range of books to Indian schools in 2014. Colin Hughes, m.d. of Collins Education, said: "This major new initiative is HarperCollins' largest ever investment in international education publishing, aiming to open up new opportunities in the rapidly growing market in Indian schools, where upwards of 90,000 schools teach in English."

Collins said that the business will make use of HC's current materials across subjects including English, maths and science, but will also start to develop local content, aiming first to produce books to match India's Central Board of Secondary Education Curriculum. It will also aim to be fully digitally supported from the outset, making partnerships with other platforms.

The m.d. of the new division will be NS Krishna, who has most recently been employed as sales director of HarperCollins India. He will be supported by Manzar Khan, the former m.d. of OUP India, who will be chief advisor for business development.

Collins India said the English-language schools textbook market in India currently stood at more that £150m, more than the market size in the UK, and is expected to grow further.

A HarperCollins spokesperson said: "India also represents an exciting future with online and mobile learning, in school and at home - and HarperCollins' strong trade experience will enable a powerful link between home and school purchase."

Source: 29 January, 2013/ The Bookseller

IIM Indore Wish to Enhance Quality Of Higher Edu'n

IIM Indore (Indian Institute of Management-Indore) will now help in order to enhance the quality of 'Higher Education' in India. And hence, it is all set to train educationists from across the country through its management capacity enhancement programme.

These initiatives come under the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development's plan (HRD) of enhancing quality of Higher Education across the Nation. The plan shall be funded by the World Bank.

Under the ministry's plan, IIM-Indore shall train deans, head of departments and professors of various colleges and universities in India. The pilot session of the programme was held at IIM-Indore starting from Jan 16 to 26 which was attended by 24 selected educationists from the higher educational institutes in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

The programme was proposed by the HRD Ministry and IIM Indore is now executing the programme and Professor Prashant Salwan is said to be co-ordinating it.

According to IIM-Indore Public Information officer Akhtar Parvez, topics like strategic planning in Higher Educational Institutes, people skill and interpersonal effectiveness, campus management system, financial planning and budgeting innovation in teaching and research, IT, web-content,

management etc were included in the pilot programme.

Professors from MANIT-Bhopal, Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology- Nagpur, Sardar Patel College of Englineering (Mumbai) and others participated in the Pilot session.; he added.

Source: 29 January, 2013/education.oneindia

Data Wind Prepared $20 Tablet Computer for Indian Market

A Canada-based company believes it can revolutionize education in India by rolling out a $20 tablet computer.

What can you buy for $20? A lunch for two? A new shirt? A few groceries? For India's 220 million schoolchildren, $20 may soon buy a tablet computer.

Not a cheap toy, but a fully operational tablet computer running on Android or Linux, more powerful than the first generation iPad and with the capability to build its own computer programs. Suneet Singh Tuli, CEO of the tech firmDataWind, told The Daily Beast that he's confident his tablet, the Aakash 2, is set to revolutionize the developing world's education system. The company's testing ground is certainly not modest: India, the world's most populated country, where 80 million students don't complete elementary education; where only 17 percent of students enroll in college; where 20 percent of teens and young adults are illiterate; and 95 percent of the population doesn't own a computing device.

Montreal-based DataWind has partnered with the Indian government to begin providing its low-cost tablets to the country's estimated 220 million students. The real cost of the tablet is $40 but the Ministry of Education is subsidizing half the price. The partners hope the money local governments will save on printing textbooks (which are currently provided to students) will be redeployed toward the tablet, making them free for young generations who are being disenfranchised by an overloaded and undermanaged education system.

Twenty-thousand tablets are already in schools in across India—only 19 percent of which currently have computers. By March 31, 100,000 Aakash 2 tablets will be in the hands of students and teachers. A $4 keyboard and $1 solar-powered charger are in the development stages. The next order, of the third-generation Aakash, is expected to be at least 50 times larger than the last, around 5 million tablets. It will probably also have SIM-card capacity, so it can be used as a mobile phone as well. Within five or six years the government hopes every student can be a proud owner of the low-cost tablet.

"I believe that it is going to be a game changer for India," said Kannan Moudgalya, who has spent 25 years as a professor of control systems and education technology at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, and has been leading the development of software for the Aakash tablet. "The processor that powers Aakash is more powerful than the computers we used not too long ago," he says.

Moudgalya outlined the programs his team have created for the device, each more intricate than the last. The first is converting textbooks to e-books, which will save local governments large sums of money in printing and revising annually. Next, educational videos are being developed in 32 Indian languages. They have even used the Aakash to operate a robot thousands of miles away in the U.S. and figured out a way to turn it into a diagnostic cardiac machine that would make health checks cheap and routine in rural areas. Finishing his overview, Moudgalya declared: "Yes, it's a fairy tale."

The tablet can be a machine for creation, not just for consumption. As the information technology sector grows in India, many students focus on technologically geared careers. On the Aakash, they can build computer programs--something you can't do on the iPad or Surface. "These children can only dream of having such a device to practice some of the things they learn in school," Moudgalya said. "To connect to the internet we make our bandwidth free, but how do these children access the rich educational content, if you don't give them a connection device?"

Reimagining the education system in India is no small feat. As one of the world's burgeoning economic powers, India has resources and manpower at its disposal. But despite government efforts the education system remains sprawling, frequently chaotic, and difficult to manage. The country boosts around 1.5 million schools, according to the District Information System for Education. But a 2005 World Bank study found that 25 percent of teachers are regularly absent from school—the second-worst turnout in the world. Even more problematic, of those who did attend, around half were actually teaching. The poorer areas had much higher absentee rates, up to 42 percent.

Urmila Sarkar, the chief of education for UNICEF in India, noted that teacher absenteeism isn't the only challenge facing the Indian education system. She names a few: shortage of age-appropriate textbooks, untrained teachers with no support structure, and high dropout rates within the most disadvantaged groups and strife-torn areas. "I think

having that access for every student around the country definitely has the potential to revolutionize education," she said. "The only point I would say is to make sure it doesn't replace the role of the teacher in the early years and that kind of face-to face interaction." But in India, as in most of the developing world, many qualified educators are flocking to urban centers, where salaries are higher, leaving rural areas with a teacher drought of sorts.

"How do you deliver quality education if quality teachers aren't going to those places?" Tuli asked. "The question is not, 'Can we replace teachers?' I don't think that anybody is audacious enough to suggest that. But it is, 'Can we improve the quality of what teachers deliver? Can we take learning beyond the classroom and allow students to have access to it everywhere?' "

Enter the Aakash. Moudgalya foresees a generation of Indian youth lifted up by this platform. But he has highest hopes for that young boy or girl in a rural classroom who could have been a valedictorian if born into different circumstances. "I believe it is through them we are going to see profound changes in our education system," he said. "No matter how ineffective we may be in our pedagogy or conceptional methods, these 10 percent who are craving access will latch onto it and achieve great things."

If all goes according to plan and the Aakash boosts continuing education among India's younger generations, there will be another issue. The Indian government hopes to ramp up college enrollment to 30 percent in the coming decade, which will require 1,500 new schools to handle the influx. Distance learning, which the Indian government began to regulate in 2009, is being recognized as a plausible solution to the problem. Tuli cites online offerings from prestigious schools from Harvard to Stanford as free resources that can be utilized through the Aakash. IIT, Bombay has been testing distance learning programs via its remote learning centers, some of which are as far as a four-hour drive from the nearest railway station.

Sarkar anticipates that UNICEF might be involved in helping implement the tablet in India's most out-of-reach areas in the future, which will be a delicate process. "If you've ever visited these villages in these remote areas, it will be such a change that cultural acceptance of technology would have to be looked at in a planned way, and it might be something the private sector can work with the public sector on," she said.

The idea of a personal computer for each school kid is hardly groundbreaking. Multiple companies have tried, and failed, to get their price point to the level that's affordable for the millions making under $2 a day. DataWind believes it has found both the happy medium, and the perfect testing ground for it. "It's a market that I call the forgotten billion," Tuli said of the number of Indians who subsist on around $200 a month and are clearly without the means to purchase existing low-cost tablets and laptops.

DataWind is the third company started by Tuli and his older brother, Raja Singh Tuli, who is based out of Montreal. For Suneet, who lived in India before moving to Alberta, Canada, when he was 8, working in his homeland has proven to be a natural fit and as the project ramps up he's been spending two weeks a month in India. But the early stages haven't been all smooth sailing. In late November, controversy arose over whether the company was buying pre-made Chinese tablets and passing them off as its own. Tuli vehemently denies these claims, explaining that while the parts were sourced across the world (the touch screens are actually made in DataWind's Canadian factory), the tablets are fully assembled in India, where he hopes more of the production can be centered in the future.

For DataWind, success is timing. "It's the perfect storm," Tuli said. Five years ago, broadband accessibility across the country was scarce. Just two years ago a gigahertz processor cost $18 to $20—today it's $4. And the prices will continue to drop. While DataWind isn't making much of a profit, the company says it is not operating at a loss. They get $3 in profit per tablet, but a higher percentage for add-ons like apps and software.

With such a daunting task ahead, how can Tuli be so sure of his success? For the entrepreneur there's one undeniable sign that his product will be utilized. "My kids use it, and to me that was my proof. I know I can't force them to prefer one versus another, but the kids actually do use it." He told his kids they can view it as a toy and hopes that others do as well. In rural schools, Tuli says, textbooks are often locked up after school, to keep them from being lost, stolen, or ruined. Tuli's goal for the Aakash is the opposite, he wants to see his product roughed up, used so frequently it gets dropped or broken. After all, it only costs 20 bucks.

Source: 30 January, 2013/ The DailyBeast

IIT-M Joins US Varsities To Boost Students Profile

IIT's (Indian Institute's of Technology) have got the best Undergraduate students across India. When compared to the world top institutes their PhD Programmes were not going at that good level.

Most of the IIT Undergraduates left for high-paying jobs or management education after their degree and the remaining went for PhD in overseas universities. Hence, IIT's are working on this to bring out the change. IIT Madras had found its own unique way to come over this issue. Two people named Ramamurthy and Nagarjan had visited 20 American universities, which were not picked at random.

IIT Madras had its alumni as a senior faculty who could be used to execute the relationships. Though IIT Madras had number of collaborations between the faculty in many universities, Ramamurthy wanted to take the collaboration to a deeper level terminating in a joint PhD programme in the future.

IIT Madras also had a programme with National University of Singapore which did not really result too good because only one student had used it in six years. Meantime, the Machigan State University was very much interested to get a joint PhD Programme as soon as possible in this year. Including this other two institutes, Purdue University and the University of Maryland were also eager to get into a deeper relationships principal in a joint PhD Programme. IIT Madras is further expecting more US Universities to join this list soon which should expand to include universities from other countries.

Source: 30 January, 2013/education.oneindia

How to Apply For US Student Visa: Study Abroad

These days, we see many Indian and South Asian students migrating to US for their Higher Studies because the country is also known for its top ranking universities and colleges. But, traveling might not be as easy as in India. It involves dealing with the legal and government hurdles to travel to US. Yes, as an Indian student you need to get a student visa from the US embassy situated nearby.

The visa approved to you will be an F-Class student visa which covers your plan to pursue full-time education at the graduate or undergraduate level. Here are a few details you need to follow when you apply for a student visa. Please go through the below details, which shall be useful for you to apply for an Visa.

The Immigration and National Act is very specific with regard to the requirements which must be met by applicants to qualify for the student visa. The consular officer will determine whether you qualify for the visa. Applicants must demonstrate that they properly meet student visa requirements including the following: Acceptance at a school; Possess sufficient funds to pursue the proposed course of study; Preparation for the course of study; and Intend to leave the United States upon completion of the course of study.

You need to ensure that you complete the following details in Form DS-160 before the interview for your student visa. After filling Form DS-160, print out the confirmation page with the barcode and pay the visa application fee in an approved bank. You should make an online payment for the I-120 form, which is issued by the American institution affirming your enrolment and you should pay the I-901 fee online through the US Immigration and Customs enforcement website.

Finally, fix an appointment for a student visa interview through the VFS website. This will necessitate you to have your DS-160 barcode and your bank fee receipt. When interviewing for your student visa, make sure that you are present on time carrying the following documents with you: A valid undamaged passport and previously issued passports if any Latest passport size photo (50mm x 50mm) DS-160 confirmation page with barcode Bank receipts (visa application fee $200.00/ Rs. 10726.00) VFS appointment letter Original education, identity and address proofs I-120 Form Apply Online For VISA.

A student visa will be rejected for the following reasons: When there is discrepancy in information provided When documents submitted are discovered to be fake When important information is denied to the interviewing officer When you don't answer to questions properly When not dressed appropriately (dress code: formals and business casuals) and exhibiting lack of personal hygiene When failing meet financial standards to fund education and living costs When your academic scores are poor When you don't know enough about the institution you are accepted for. When your GRE/GPA/IELTS/TOEFL scores are bad Please Note: Always cross check with your nearest American embassy for updates and changes.

Source: 30 January, 2013/education.oneindia

Indian students treat UK visa as 'marriage dowry'

Student visas were used so extensively by Indians to gain the right to work in the UK that they became known as "marriage dowries", the head of migration policy at the Home Office has said.

At a conference in London on 22 January, Glyn Williams argued that the visa route had become a "vehicle for abuse" before the government tightened the rules.

"In India, UK student visas became known as the 'marriage dowry' because female Indian students

were able to bring over their partners to work in the UK," he said.

The coalition's introduction of "educational oversight", its inspection regime for institutions looking to sponsor international students, had resulted in around 500 private colleges withdrawing from the system, Mr Williams added.

"This action would have been taken by any government," he told the conference, Improving the International Student Experience.

His comments come after figures released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency earlier this month showed a 24 per cent drop in the number of Indian students attending UK universities in 2011-12.

But the overall number of overseas students grew slightly because of a rise in the number of entrants from China.

Mr Williams said that the prospect of working in the UK was a greater draw for Indian students than for their Chinese peers.

He also tried to strike a more conciliatory tone with the sector and said that there would now be a period of "policy stability" in relation to international students.

But he warned that this would have to be a "two-way street".

"Hardly a week goes by when I don't open a newspaper...and find some attack has been launched on an aspect of the government's migration policy. I think people need to reflect on whether that's a productive use of their time," he said.

Asked about the revocation in August 2012 of London Metropolitan University's licence to sponsor international students, Mr Williams said that "lessons can be learned on both sides in terms of the way these things are managed".

Source: 31 January, 2013/Times Higher Education

Moscow could be new business education hub

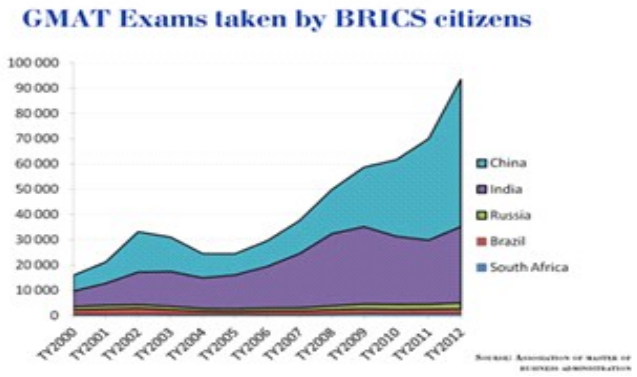
Experts suggest that Russia may become the global business education hub for Eastern Europe. The topic was discussed at the "BRICS Management Model and Challenge of Training Multifunctional Managers" roundtable discussion at the recent Gaidar Forum.

Business education in the BRICS countries has substantially increased in the last 12 years. Back in 2000, BRICS accounted for only 8 percent of the GMAT exams taken around the world, but that figure has risen to 33 percent in 2012. China and India lead the way, accounting for 95 percent of all tests taken by BRICS residents.

President of the Association of MBAs, Sir Paul Judge, notes that, rather than general MBA programs, developing nations are more interested in specific training programs for entrepreneurship, family business, diversified conglomerates, state corporations and marketing in rapidly growing economies.

Adizes Institute founder and president, Ichak Kalderon Adizes, believes that new training models are also necessary in developed nations. "Does the world – do the BRICS countries – require a new model of business education? Should we reinvent the wheel? We should if the old wheel is broken, and this is what we have now. Business schools teach us how to make decisions, but they fail to provide the toolkit to carry out these decisions," says Adizes.

"Those who manage people but hate them are not managers, but tools to make money. We cannot turn a blind eye to social problems, because business education has a potential to address them," he adds.



"The growth in business education in the BRICS states attests to the strong demand for manager training, which will inevitably result in new training formats and bring about new specialized centers," says the dean of IE University (Spain), Santiago Iñiguez. He believes that existing training models in their current state are not suited to developing economies, noting that this could be a critical factor for the young BRICS economies and inexperienced managers. Iñiguez is sure developing economies require a different model that can be individually tailored for each economy.

"BRICS unites several countries whose economic indicators behave in a similar way. However, we should remember that these are different countries," says Iñiguez. "China will benefit most from the adjusted U.S. model, while Russia should focus on the modified European model."

Based on the Financial Times' Global MBA ranking, there are several global business education hubs:

London, Boston, Singapore, Madrid and Hong Kong. Iñiguez believes that Moscow, Berlin and Dubai will soon be added to this list. The Russian capital will become the "capital" of business education in Eastern Europe, Berlin will be responsible for Central Europe, and Dubai will become the education hub of the Middle East.

"Russia has all the requisite factors to become the business training hub for Eastern Europe," says Sergei Myasoyedov, president of the Russian Association of Business Education. "If you look at media reports, you might be forgiven for thinking that the attitude towards Russia in Eastern Europe and the CIS is not really positive.

However, when it comes to business education, it is different. We are growing stronger, and the quality of Russian education is recognized internationally. Furthermore, Russia can offer many benefits to these countries that other states cannot. These include a common culture and similar languages, mentality and methods of business communication."

Source: 31 January, 2013/Russia & India Report

Passage to India for Havering College of Further and Higher Education

HAVERING College of Further and Higher Education (http://havering-college.ac.uk) is proud to be part of a new project which will help deliver vocational skills training in India.

The college is one of 30 UK colleges participating in an Association of Colleges (AoC) hub for training expertise. Sally MacPherson - the college's Assistant Principal Faculty of Enterprise – returned from Delhi this week after attending the AoC in India launch.

Havering College of Further and Higher Education's International Department already works with partners across the world, including India, with the aim of promoting strong educational links. The AoC in India project will help colleges involved in the initiative to explore opportunities and expand their operations in India.

Mrs MacPherson said: "I believe that UK colleges such as Havering College of Further and Higher Education have a lot to offer our Indian partners as they set up their vocational training systems. We have over 65 years of experience of delivering high quality vocational education both here and abroad. We are looking forward to building new links with industry in India."

The AoC India team will be based with Indian market specialist Sannam S4 Consulting Pvt Limited and will act as a hub for sharing best practice and forging strong ties between UK and Indian training providers and employers. It represents the largest collective attempt by UK colleges to contribute to India's strategy to improve the skills of 500 million people by 2022.

AoC International Director John Mountford said: "This marks a great opportunity, not only for our member colleges in the UK, but also for a huge variety of education and training providers in India. AoC in India will be a way of sharing educational best practice that has been developed in colleges in the UK over many decades.

"AoC in India represents a strong partnership of UK further education colleges that will work together to effectively engage with leading Indian training, education and industry partners and develop programmes which, due to the scale of the skills drive in India, may involve training local people to train others and 'cascade' skills down to the wider population. India has a huge and growing economy and this joint initiative aims to ensure employees and companies have access to the formal training needed to sustain such expansion."

Adrian Mutton, CEO and founder of Sannam S4, said: "The skills challenge in India is immense and the Association of Colleges and its members are well positioned to contribute to tackling this. Our local knowledge and expertise of the education and skills markets in both the UK and India will help the AoC team identify training opportunities."

Source: 31 January, 2013/PRWeb

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Three higher education trends to watch for in 2013

International higher education by its very nature sits at an intersection of socio-cultural, economic and geopolitical variables. Over the years, we have seen the complex interaction of the factors that influence patterns of student mobility, institutional strategies and national policies.

What key trends can we expect for 2013 that will prove influential in international higher education? Here is my take on three trends to watch for this year related to university funding, regulatory environment and technology.

Funding: More institutional self-sufficiency and competition

The reverberations of the global financial crisis are still being felt on the campuses of many public institutions around the world. In the US, post-recession budget cuts in state universities and colleges have prompted many to increase their

recruitment focus on international students who pay higher, out-of-state tuition fees.

For example, at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA), new international undergraduate student enrolment grew seven-fold – from 142 to 1,012 – between 2008 and 2012.

While institutions like UCLA have a stellar reputation to attract and absorb international students, many other institutions are finding their internal capacities to be inadequate for this sudden shift towards a more proactive recruitment model.

In addition, "weakened pricing power and difficulty in growing enrolment are impeding revenue growth at an increasing number of US colleges and universities", according to Moody's Investors Service.

The US is not alone in facing budgetary challenges. Recognising the "background of an increasingly competitive environment and reductions in public capital funding", the Higher Education Funding Council for England warned about the financial health of Britain's universities and said they may need to increase their surpluses, for instance, through fee hikes.

Australia also adopted a 'demand-driven' model by abolishing the enrolment quota system and replacing it with Student Entitlement Funding.

This scenario has spurred more competition among universities for government-funded students, because increased intake of students can bring in additional revenue. Moreover, Australian universities will face $500 million in cuts in research funds over the next four years.

Overall, governments in many countries are facing fiscal challenges – and drastic improvements are unlikely in 2013. As the World Bank noted: "The prospects for the next two years continue to be challenging, fraught with major uncertainties and risks slanted towards the downside."

These budgetary issues will continue to trickle down to the higher education sector in 2013, resulting in a scenario of greater expectations of self-sufficiency from institutions.

Regulations: An increasing focus on managing risk and assuring quality

Another consequence of the global financial crisis has been the toughening of the regulatory environment for higher education institutions.

In the US, rising debt levels and default rates continue to increase scrutiny of the for-profit sector and still there are reports of emerging malpractices in the sector. The stock prices of two leading for-profit providers – Apollo Group and DeVry – are hovering close to a 52-week low, reflecting pessimism towards the sector.

In 2012, both Apollo and DeVry announced job cuts, with Apollo shutting down some campuses to manage costs and switching students to online education.

Likewise, leading destinations for international students have become more vigilant about visa abuses and have been responding with more stringent regulatory measures.

For example, in an effort to prevent 'bogus students' from entering the country, the UK plans to interview 100,000 prospective international students and Canada intends to tighten its regulations on acceptance of foreign students by career colleges.

In the US, a previous announcement about the accreditation of intensive English programmes and conditional admissions requirements also indicate intentions to mitigate immigration-related risks.

Overall, the student visa-related scandals have created immigration dilemmas for some countries in protecting the integrity of their immigration system without tarnishing the welcoming image they want to provide for genuine international students.

In 2013, regulatory environments are not expected to loosen due to increasing demand from stakeholders to justify the costs and benefits of higher education. This will result in increasing expectations around quality assurance and risk management of students and the immigration system.

Technology: Maturation of MOOCs to offer credible academic pathways

The most talked-about educational innovation of 2012 was Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs. Coursera, which started in April 2012, already has two million student signed up for its courses.

At the beginning of 2012, MOOCs were virtually unknown. By the end of the year, they had compelled many leading universities worldwide to voluntarily or involuntarily integrate them in their strategies.

The most recent entrant in this frenzy is Future Learn – a partnership of 12 UK universities led by the Open University (OU). With more than 250,000 students, the OU is the largest academic institution in the UK and a pioneer in distance learning. Even an established player like the OU could not remain immune to the competitive threat from MOOCs and had to find a way to respond.

As The Economist states: "MOOCs clearly mean upheaval for the cosseted and incompetent. But for

those who most want it, education will be transformed."

In 2013, MOOCs will continue to confront many barriers. However, they will also mature from an irrational exuberance to a more viable and credible alternative for earning academic credits.

They are unlikely to influence the traditional segment of international students going abroad. However, the unique confluence of content, delivery, technology, quality and cost could transform expectations of a particular segment of 'glocal' students and bring into question the sustainability of infrastructure-heavy branch campuses.

In my opinion, 2013 will be a year in which the higher education sector, under increasing pressure to justify its value, will face more regulations and greater expectations to become self-sufficient. At the same time, it will see the opportunities and challenges presented by technology-enabled models like MOOCs.

Adaptability to do more with less will be the hallmark of success in 2013.

Source: 19 January, 2013/University World News

Why the state of India's primary education is shocking

Do you expect a steady migration of students from government to private schools and a rapid fall in quality of education in a country where education is a constitutionally guaranteed fundamental right?

Then, that is the story of rural India, where 70 percent of the country's population live. Its present and future generations are in a royal mess: poor families are spending a lot of hard-to-find cash to get half-baked education for their children.

Sooner than later, India's education sector will resemble its crumbling public health system.

Even as the government undertakes to educate all its children under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, private schools are mushrooming in rural India and attract 10 % more students every year, compared to the previous year.

It is such a tragedy that by next year, when UPA seeks fresh mandate for all its welfare schemes, 41 percent of the primary school children will be paying for their education and there is no guarantee that what they learn is of any quality or consequence.

At this rate, sooner than later, India's education sector will resemble its crumbling public health system in which three-fourth of the people pay for their health expenditure.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2012) for rural India, released a few days ago by PRATHAM, an NGO, exposes the shocking mess that our school education is in. With longitudinal data from 2008, the report shows how the country is falling into dangerous lows both in terms of quality and the invasion of the private sector.

Let's look at some key facts of the ASER.

First, on the quality of education:

In 2008, only about 50 percent of Standard 3 students could read a Standard 1 text, but by 2012, it declined to 30 percent – a fall of 16 percent. About 50 percent of the Std 3 kids cannot even correctly recognise digits up to 100, where as they are supposed to learn two digit subtraction. In 2008, about 70 percent of the kids could do this.

Not only that the country is unable to improve the learning skills of half its primary school children, in the last four years, it has fallen to alarming lows. Similar deterioration in standards of education was also noted among Std 5 students.

Importantly, the report notes that the decline is cumulative, which means that the "learning decline" gets accumulated because of neglect over the years.

The poor quality of education from Std 1 pulls down their rate of learning progressively so that by the time they are in Std 5, their level of learning is not even comparable to that of Std 2.

The private schools are "relatively unaffected" but their low standards remain low. They have also shown a "downturn" in maths beyond number recognition.

The poor quality of education and rate of decline are however not uniform across India. Some states are low in quality, but are staying where they are (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh) while some have higher levels of education, which are neither improving nor deteriorating (Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Punjab).

It also says that the decline is more noticeable since 2010, when the RTE came into effect, indicating targets of blanket coverage compromising quality and standards.

Second, on privatisation:

The report notes that the private sector is making huge inroads into education in rural India. By 2019, when the RTE would have done a decade, it will be the majority service provider. The private sector involvement will also be strengthened by 25 percent quota of the government (under the RTE Act).

Quoting DISE (District Information System of Education) data, it says that Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Goa have more than 60% of private

enrollment in primary schools. Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnataka are at 40 percent, while UP is at 50%. Ironically, the highest private sector enrollment is in Kerala, where successive governments claim commitment to welfare policies, particularly on education and health.

Besides private schools, parents also spend considerable amount of money on private tuitions, making quality education more inaccessible to people without money.

What do these findings tell us?

That the country is in a serious crisis – its quality of school education is startlingly low and is in free fall, while the private sector is exploiting this weakness even in rural India. Although the study doesn't throw considerable light on the reasons of the decline and possible corrective steps, it does indicate a correlation between the acceleration of the deterioration and the implementation of the RTE Act.

If the correlation is correct, it is clear yet again that a populist and insincere political instrument does more harm than good. When the Act was passed, there were misgivings by many – particularly on the haste, lack of appropriate consultation with all stakeholders and also on the logic of applying a uniform principle across states with huge disparity in coverage and quality of education. In some states such as Kerala, Himachal and Punjab it was evidently superfluous.

Even after two years, it's still not clear, how the finances are met and if the states are committed at all. The estimates in 2010 for the implementation of RTE was pegged at about Rs 210,000 crores with centre shouldering 68 percent of the burden.

Whether the RTE is being implemented or not, it's abundantly clear that it is certainly not working. "There has been a feeling that RTE may have led to relaxation of classroom teaching since all exams and assessments are scrapped and no child is to be kept back. Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation(CCE) is now a part of the law and several states are attempting to implement some form of CCE as they understand it," says the report.

"Does CCE catch this decline? Are teachers equipped to take corrective action as the law prescribes?

Is corrective action going to be taken? Given the magnitude of the problem, it will be a good idea to focus just on basics at every standard and not treat it as a "remedial" measure. At this stage, teaching-learning of basic foundational skills should be the main agenda for primary education in India."

As the report notes there is a national crisis in learning. The quality of education and performance of the students in both government and private schools have to improve and the government has to check the invasion of the sector by private capital.

Higher education has long since been sold out and today it is only the preserve of those with money. With or our without RTE, even the primary school education is moving in the same direction.

If markets are to run the country, why do we need governments?

Source: 19 January, 2013/FirstPost

Forget students, Indian teachers and leaders need a refresher course

We don't need no education' sang Pink Floyd defiantly in Another Brick in the Wall. Ironically, education in India is itself a collapsing wall. With few educational institutions to harvest our demographic dividend and minimal seats leading to spiralling cut-offs, India's educational report card shows big black stars.

A recent ink-blot comprises former Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala convicted with son Ajay for the illegal recruitment of 3,200 teachers. Accused of cooking the books by changing qualifying marks, the Chautalas are in jail where they`re hopefully learning A`s for apple, B for ball and C not just cash but also cell.

But this scam simply reveals how black this board has become with thousands of aspirants and few teaching jobs, many are willing to buy themselves a guru`s seat. It adds up considering 99% aspirants recently failed the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET), it`s clear how their homework landed in Haryana Bhavan. But why are so many flunking this test? It must be hellish hard, right?

Wrong. The CTET tests the English, maths and environmental science for classes one to eight. Considering that aspirants are BEd graduates, this should be easy as Pi. Apparently not â€" in 2011 too, only 9% passed. What were the rest doing through their BEds â€" or school?

This is not to say they played hookey over school hockey most parents have realised a good education leads to a good life. Thus, school enrollment numbers are hitting new highs, applicants across diverse sectors willing to do what it takes to learn. But you don`t need to know how E equals MC {+2} to see student numbers far exceeding schools. A smart government would urgently push thousands of fresh schools â€" but our netas feel the existing sums add up, thank you.

So, facing new cut-offs about expanding their facilities, many private schools might soon be forced

to shut shop. For those that survive to mark another day, providing real education is getting increasingly hard. A survey found learning levels at an all-time low, over 53% class five students unable to solve simple maths or read a class two text.

With education so squeezed, the sight of parents and aspirants harried from kindergarten to post-grad has become disturbingly routine. As have hair-raising tales of ever-rising cut-offs. Considering the numbers, even 100% doesn`t always make the university grade.

Maybe that`s why Delhi University has begun awarding 102%. But its magnanimity just made students reel some more, one denied admission to an advanced course after her mark-sheet generously gave higher scores than the total of her exams. So, here`s a question which means pass or fail for us all â€" between hardworking students and a dim-looking sector, unable to grow or even properly administer, who needs quick education and much better results?

Source: 19 January, 2013/Times of India

Focus on learning outcomes

MM Pallam Raju, Union minister of human resource development, in an exclusive interview, talks to vatsala shrangi on the future vision and challenges for higher education in INDIA

As a new minister, what is your vision for higher education in India?

The broader vision aims at improving the quality of research in educational institutions in the country. A nation's strength lies in its intellectual property. We have to improve higher education in terms of quality of our innovation and research. We will focus on increasing linkages as well as building stronger relationship between industry and academia. This will involve greater recognition of Indian scholars worldwide and matching up to the standards of international institutions. Another area to be covered is to create a workforce that can find solutions for domestic issues, for example, urban congestion, waste management, etc. Besides, the long-term objectives of increasing the gross enrolment ratio (GER), increasing the number of teachers, will remain part of the plan.

What are the challenges and how do you propose to overcome them?

One of the basic challenges is in the way we conceive education. Institutions of higher education â€" colleges and universities â€" have to evolve beyond imparting education and handing out degrees. Education has to mean greater social conditioning of individuals. Another major challenge is to meet the shortage of qualified faculty across schools, colleges and universities. Building educational institutions is easy, but filling them with qualified teachers is a task to be accomplished. Also, we need more funding from Indian companies. Till now, it is mostly the multinationals from whom funds flow. We are working on all these issues, which is also the focus of the 12Five-Year Plan.

What would be the key priority area in higher education?

The key priority area would be on learning outcomes. Under the 12Five-Year Plan, we intend to focus on the quality of learning outcomes and building a capacity of qualified teachers. At present, there is an overall 30% shortage of teachers in new institutions and we have to bridge this gap. This also involves initiatives for the differently-abled children. We are creating a capacity of teachers as well as training the already existing faculty to cater to the needs of special children. Also, we are looking at stronger interventions to send back all the dropouts and out-of-school children to school.

Do you agree that there is a wide gap between education and employability in india? if yes, how

Do you propose to plug the gap?

Ithink , today, there is a bigger canvas of opportunities for students. However, I'd agree on the fact that there is a definite gap in certain sectors, like technical education. The number of people who are industry-ready after having received technical education is dismal. However, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has been focused on setting standards. In order to plug this gap, accreditation of all institutions will go a long way in improving the quality. Also, we will have to strengthen our labs, which is critical to all educational process.

Several bills on higher education are pending. what is your plan of action and which of these will get priority?

The three pending bills, on the basis of priority, with the focus of the 12Plan, include Education Tribunals Bill, 2010; Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical and Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010 and National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010. I am hoping to discuss these bills in the coming Budget session.

In your view, what has been the biggest achievement in higher education in india in the last few years?

The capacity that has been built in the 11Five-Year Plan in terms of building new institutions - eight IITs, seven IIMs, and several central universities, is

unprecedented. This has given a fillip to the cause of higher education.

Source: 21 January, 2013/Times of India

Higher education in India: Challenges and Strategies

According to a report released by MHRD, the country's Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) has grown to 18.8%. Encouraging as it may seem, experts at a panel discussion organised by Delhi School of Business believe that there is still a long way to go in attaining excellence in higher education and a number of loopholes still need to be plugged in.

Talking about the current state of higher education in India, Dr. D.K. Bandyopadhyay, Vice Chancellor, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, said that on some areas we have performed well but there are areas where we are still lagging behind. He believes that one of the major crises faced by the country in terms of development in higher education is the crunch in faculty members.

Dr. Deepak Pental, Professor, Department of Genetics, South Campus, Delhi University and Ex Vice Chancellor at Delhi University, believes that there exists a major policy deficit in the country that is curbing the development in higher education. He adds that even though there are a number of committees and commissions set up like the National Knowledge Commission and the Yashpal Committee, the implementation of the recommendations of these commissions happens at snail's pace. He also agrees that the major issue is the shortage of trained faculty. He believes that the country should train the faculty and researchers from the best institutions in the world. "I calculated that at the cost of one IIT's brick and mortar you can train around 400 PhDs in Caltech and MITs of the world," he says. He claims that the inertia in people is the problem behind this. "We are not aspiring for excellence," he adds.

Dr. Bandyopadhyay says that we are ready to collaborate with some of the best institutions in the world but we do not want to collaborate within ourselves. He agrees that there is a lack of synergy between institutions within the country. Researchers performing outstandingly well abroad, lose their willingness to perform as soon as they land in India. The system's lack of reward and recognition initiatives for performing researchers in India could be a contributing factor behind the dip in performance, according to him.

Swami Jitatmananda Ji of RamaKrishna Mission believes that value based education is absolutely essential for the development of higher education in India. According to him, meditation or any other spiritual culture should be incorporated in all our curricula.

Dr. Rachel Davis, Dean, Delhi School of Business, believes, the nature of research that is required for faculty hiring should be carefully looked into. She believes that there are very little incentives for researchers in India to publish their work in reputed journals that are double-blinded. According to her, this is one of the major issues hampering the quality of higher education in India.

According to Dr. S.C Vats, Chairman, Vivekananda Institute of Professional studies, the three action points for developing higher education in India are:

1. The churning of researchers and doctoral research candidates should be regulated.

2. The Vice Chancellors of universities should be provided with enough flexibility to fix the pay scale of these researches and scholars.

3. Fast track sanction of funds for research in newer areas.

Dr. Pental suggested that better research, better faculty and better mathematical background to the students of science and technology, computational learning and good language skills are required for upgradation of higher education in India. He believes that even though private universities are doing well, they would require some government support. Good researchers working on good projects should be provided with public fund to support them as well as the national knowledge network should be made available to these researchers, he opines.

According to Dr. Bandyopadhyay, there should be a single national policy for higher education in India in order to achieve excellence in the same. He believes, the journey towards excellence in higher education has begun and we are on the right track but there's still a long way to go.

Source: 25 January, 2013/The Economic Times

A degree of frustration

THE first batch of 60 undergraduates at the New College of the Humanities in Bloomsbury, London's main university quarter, occupy a spacious Georgian house. Opening doors on the way up a grand staircase, your reporter eavesdropped on tutorials on ancient Greece, Romantic poets and economic theory. It feels like a dinky version of an august academic institution. Yet it is a for-profit organisation with a chief executive huddled over spreadsheets downstairs.

The college's founder is Anthony Grayling (shown above), a philosopher who wants to introduce a bit of diversity to a largely state-funded higher

education system. A new high-end entrant in the marketplace also helps fill the gap in provision for students with good qualifications who lose out by a grade or two in the brutal race for places in the Russell Group of top universities. Degrees are awarded through the University of London, but at £18,000 ($28,550) fees are double the maximum that state-subsidised universities can charge. The syllabus is broader and more akin to an American liberal-arts college than a traditional English university.

This kind of disruptive innovation earns a mixed reception. The coalition government welcomes it. But Terry Eagleton, an outspoken Marxist academic, describes the venture as "odious" and divisive. Other critics have pointed out that courses at Mr Grayling's New College closely resemble what is on offer, more cheaply, at the existing London university colleges. Two-thirds of the first intake of students come from private schools and just 22% from state schools (the rest are foreigners and mature students). Mr Grayling hopes to counter the "too posh" charge with outreach initiatives and generous bursaries for poorer students.

The newcomer epitomises a broadening of higher education, aided by a rise in maximum fees to £9,000 that makes students (and their parents) look around for value for money. The government has also eased rules on what qualifies as a university. The newly named University of Law, an outfit with several regional centres, is backed by a private-equity firm and offers two-year degree courses for highly motivated or cash-strapped students. Its hard sell stands out among more conventional university branding: the college's website touts a graduate legal qualification as if it were a soap powder—"Now with Masters included". Other institutions such as BPP University College, which bestows professional qualifications from accountancy to chiropractic, were given degree-awarding powers by the last Labour government, but now want full university status.

And the line between private and state-funded higher education is blurring in other ways. Established institutions including Imperial College, London and University College are also thriving businesses, cross-subsidising studies and research which do not make money. Oxford has initiated a joint Master's course in law and finance, crammed into nine months and costing a hefty £21,000.

Much has changed since the independent University of Buckingham (a non-profit operator) launched 30 years ago, teaching mainly business and economics. Today it has more British undergraduates than foreign ones and offers a range of subjects, including medicine. But the revolution is unfinished. One anomaly that makes life harder for independent providers is that students can take out government-backed student loans at a favourable rate for only the first £6,000 of their fees. At subsidised top universities, they can borrow the full yearly fee of £9,000.

The level playing field promised when the coalition came to power in 2010 remains a work in progress. David Willetts, the universities minister, failed in a bid to allow for-profit education firms equal access to state funding. Many senior academics opposed the move, citing "derisory graduation rates, crushing levels of debts and degrees of dubious value" from some for-profit American companies. The issue has been shelved until 2015 at the earliest. When it comes to changing higher education, even small innovations can provoke a noisy backlash.

Source: 26 January, 2013/The Economist

How open online courses revolutionizing education

Lord knows there's a lot of bad news in the world today to get you down, but there is one big thing happening that leaves me incredibly hopeful about the future, and that is the budding revolution in global online higher education.

Nothing has more potential to lift more people out of poverty - by providing them an affordable education to get a job or improve in the job they have. Nothing has more potential to unlock a billion more brains to solve the world's biggest problems. And nothing has more potential to enable us to reimagine higher education than the massive open online course, or MOOC, platforms that are being developed by the likes of Stanford and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and companies like Coursera and Udacity.

Last May I wrote about Coursera - co-founded by the Stanford computer scientists Daphne Koller and Andrew Ng - just after it opened. Two weeks ago, I went back out to Palo Alto to check in on them. When I visited last May, about 300,000 people were taking 38 courses taught by Stanford professors and a few other elite universities. Today, they have 2.4 million students, taking 214 courses from 33 universities, including eight international ones.

Anant Agarwal, the former director of MIT's artificial intelligence lab, is now president of edX, a nonprofit MOOC that MIT and Harvard are jointly building. Agarwal told me that since May, some 155,000 students from around the world have taken edX's first course: an MIT intro class on circuits. "That is greater than the total number of MIT alumni in its 150-year history," he said.

Yes, only a small percentage complete all the work, and even they still tend to be from the middle and upper classes of their societies, but I am convinced that within five years these platforms will reach a much broader demographic. Imagine how this might change US foreign aid. For relatively little money, the US could rent space in an Egyptian village, install two dozen computers and high-speed satellite Internet access, hire a local teacher as a facilitator, and invite in any Egyptian who wanted to take online courses with the best professors in the world, subtitled in Arabic.

You just have to hear the stories told by the pioneers in this industry to appreciate its revolutionary potential. One of Koller's favorites is about "Daniel," a 17-year-old with autism who communicates mainly by computer. He took an online modern poetry class from Penn. He and his parents wrote that the combination of rigorous academic curriculum, which requires Daniel to stay on task, and the online learning system that does not strain his social skills, attention deficits or force him to look anyone in the eye, enable him to better manage his autism. Koller shared a letter from Daniel, in which he wrote: "Please tell Coursera and Penn my story. I am a 17-year-old boy emerging from autism. I can't yet sit still in a classroom so your course was my first real course ever. During the course, I had to keep pace with the class, which is unheard-of in special ed.Now I know I can benefit from having to work hard and enjoy being in sync with the world."

One member of the Coursera team who recently took a Coursera course on sustainability told me that it was so much more interesting than a similar course he had taken as an undergrad.

The online course included students from all over the world, from different climates, incomes levels and geographies, and, as a result, "the discussions that happened in that course were so much more valuable and interesting than with people of similar geography and income level" in a typical American college.

Mitch Duneier, a Princeton sociology professor, wrote an essay in The Chronicle of Higher Education in the fall about his experience teaching a class through Coursera: "A few months ago, just as the campus of Princeton University had grown nearly silent after commencement, 40,000 students from 113 countries arrived here via the Internet to take a free course in introductory sociology. ... My opening discussion of C. Wright Mills's classic 1959 book, 'The Sociological Imagination,' was a close reading of the text, in which I reviewed a key chapter line by line.

I asked students to follow along in their own copies, as I do in the lecture hall. When I give this lecture on the Princeton campus, I usually receive a few penetrating questions. In this case, however, within a few hours of posting the online version, the course forums came alive with hundreds of comments and questions. Several days later there were thousands. ... Within three weeks I had received more feedback on my sociological ideas than I had in a career of teaching, which significantly influenced each of my subsequent lectures and seminars."

Agarwal of edX tells of a student in Cairo who was taking the circuits course and was having difficulty. In the class's online forum, where students help each other with homework, he posted that he was dropping out. In response, other students in Cairo in the same class invited him to meet at a teahouse, where they offered to help him stay in the course.

A 15-year-old student in Mongolia, who took the same class as part of a blended course and received a perfect score on the final exam, added Agarwal, is now applying to MIT and the University of California, Berkeley.

As we look to the future of higher education, said the MIT president, L. Rafael Reif, something that we now call a "degree" will be a concept "connected with bricks and mortar" - and traditional on-campus experiences that will increasingly leverage technology and the Internet to enhance classroom and laboratory work. Alongside that, though, said Reif, many universities will offer online courses to students anywhere in the world, in which they will earn "credentials" - certificates that testify that they have done the work and passed all the exams.

The process of developing credible credentials that verify that the student has adequately mastered the subject - and did not cheat - and can be counted on by employers is still being perfected by all the MOOCs. But once it is, this phenomenon will really scale.

I can see a day soon where you'll create your own college degree by taking the best online courses from the best professors from around the world - some computing from Stanford, some entrepreneurship from Wharton, some ethics from Brandeis, some literature from Edinburgh - paying only the nominal fee for the certificates of completion.
It will change teaching, learning and the pathway to employment. "There is a new world unfolding," said Reif, "and everyone will have to adapt."

Source: 28 January, 2013/ The Times of India

Sex education in schools

No more beating around the bush, we have to tell the kids about the birds and the bees, the Justice JS Verma committee has said in its report, recommending sex education in schools. School experience has a direct bearing on the extent to which gender violence can be reduced, said the committee in a chapter titled 'Education and Perception Reform'.

"There should be introduction of sex education in a clinical manner in schools since the absorption of knowledge has increased. The children and young people have to be prepared in order to be able to transition into adulthood," the committee noted. School is the place to begin with as it is a crucial institution where femininity and masculinity is attributed, the report said.

Academia believe that Justice Verma committee has rightly favoured sex education in schools specially with its broadened definition taking it beyond biology lessons taught in schools from class 8 onwards.

"The biology lesson is merely an answer to the CBSE exam. In the backdrop of the surge in crimes against women, we have to see sex education in a larger canvas. It concerns moral and ethical issues," Dr Jyoti Bose, Principal, Springdales school in Delhi, said.

Dr Bose also highlighted the information students were bombarded with on the Internet- a factor which also finds mention in the committee report.

"With the kind of exposure kids have with the Internet and media, the current curriculum of sex education, also know as life skills in some schools, is not of much relevance. Children know far more facts then we knew when we were of their age," she said.

Atiya Bose, director of Aangan, a Mumbai based NGO which works with vulnerable children, says while there is an urgent need to impart sex education in schools, it should be ensured that the mindset of teachers is in sync with changing realities.

"Teacher education is going to be the key. They also come from the same society in which you and I live and. They might have formed certain opinion about sex education and its consequences," she said.

Over 12 per cent unmarried males and 3 per cent unmarried females in 15- 25 group reported pre-marital sex in a survey conducted by Population Council and International Institute of Population Sciences in 2006-07. However, social norms have not kept pace with changing circumstances.

"Despite evidence that relevant and correct information delays sexual initiation, social norms discourage discussion on issues related to sexual and reproductive health. Lack of communication with parents and trusted adults keeps young people ill informed and unlikely to receive parental support in relation to sexual matters. Information on issues related to growing up remains inadequate and irrelevant to young people's needs," notes United Nations Population Fund- India.

The Department of Psychiatry, Armed Forced Medical College, Pune, conducted a cross-sectional study of factors associated with adolescent sexual activity. More than 600 students of class 9 to 12 from two private schools in Pune participated in the study. Average age at first sexual contact for boys was 13.72 years and for girls was 14.09 years when sexual contact was described as having touched private parts, kissing, or sexual intercourse. The average age of first intercourse in those who had it was 15.25 years for boys and 16.66 years for girls.

The first official acknowledgment of the need for sex education in India was made a decade ago. In 1993, the CBSE conducted a national seminar where parents, teachers, educationalists, psychologists and sexologists discussed modalities of the adolescent education programme (AEP).

The module, finalised in 1999, was circulated among educational bodies. But all hell broke loose in 2005 when the material was updated to attain the government of India's objective "no new HIV infections by 2007". At least six states approached the Ministry of Human Resource Development rejecting AEP as the updated module was found too graphic for students. Detailed it was, but the offensive material in question was part of teachers' tool-kit and they could change the same depending on local factors, reported *India Today*.

In March 2009, the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, after consulting various stakeholders for 18 months, rejected the very proposal of sex education, on the pretext of culture.

"Our country's social and culture ethos are such that sex education has absolutely no place in it. Basic human instincts like food, fear, greed, coitus etc. need not be taught, rather control of these instincts should be the subject of education… To focus Indian education on 'instinct control' should the important objective and for that the dignity of restraint has to be well entrenched in education,"concluded the committee.

As an alternative, it suggested that "the new curriculum should include appropriate material on the lives and teachings of our great saints, spiritual leaders, freedom fighters and national heroes so as

to inculcate in children our national ideals and values, which would neutralise the impact of cultural invasion from various sources."

The following year, CBSE revised the adolescent education curriculum. According to the evaluation report of UNFPA India country programme (2011) teachers from 3500 CBSE schools, all 919 Kendriya Vidyala schools and 583 Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti schools have received oriented on adolescent education issues.

It remains to be seen if the government will shun the moral brigade and introduce sex education in schools, as recommended by the panel.

Source: 28 January, 2013/Firstpost.com

Tablets poised to see higher adoption in Indian schools

With a slew of new devices and interactive educational content being launched, tablets may soon emerge as an important tool in India's education system and help bring quality content to rural areas.

Tablets to help bring quality education to rural India.

The Indian tablet market has been growing, with over 50 models of Android tablets available in the market today, as well as Apple's iPads, RIM (Research In Motion) BlackBerry, and several new models running on Linux. Several are affordable, priced in the US$50 to US$500 price range.

Education and healthcare are two sectors touted to gain from an increase in tablet penetration. Several initiatives are already underway in the education space. For instance, in November 2012, Pearson Education announced the launch of a new tablet-based education application for schools in India. Known as the MX Touch platform, it promises school children access to more effective, personalized, and collaborative digital learning, with rich digital content, 3D animations, quizzes, and videos.

Similarly, HCL Infosystems launched two products--HCL My EduTab and HCL MyEduWorld-which offer a learning ecosystem packaged with curriculum mapped digital content, educational applications and games, educational videos, and e-books.

"The products facilitate detailed understanding of concepts, revision, doubt clarification, and self assessment, and broaden the students' understanding of real-world application of theory and concepts," Rothin Bhattacharyya, executive vice president of marketing, strategy, corporate development at HCL.

Similarly, Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) launched Aakash iTutor, an education tablet targeted at students preparing for various medical and engineering entrance exams, as well as foundation-level examinations, such as the National Talent Search Examination and Olympiads. In addition, AESL launched iTutor Labs, which offers schools and students educational content available for view 24/7.

According to a study by MAIT, an industry body representing India's IT hardware, training, and R&D services sectors, the tablet market is predicted to see growth rates of 40 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over the next five years. It expects 1.6 million units to be shipped this year, increasing to 7.3 million by 2016.

Tablets are growing as a medium due to both its accessibility and reach, noted KG Purushothaman, managing director at Protiviti Consulting.

The Indian government is also promoting tablets as an effective medium for learning. "We have seen strong interest among various educational institutes for adopting My EduTab as a part of their learning ecosystem," Bhattarcharyya said, noting that HCL is in the process of partnering over 30 institutes across India for MyEduTab.

According to Aakash Chaudhry, director at AESL, technology-enabled teaching is a major contributor to the success of a child.

Bhattacharyya concurred, adding that digital technology is one of the most important methods to draw the interest of students.

Schools are increasingly adopting digital teaching products to engage with students in order to make the learning experience a more enriched one. He pointed to the tablet as an important component of this digitization, helping students learn at their own pace.

Chaudhry said: "Often, students are unable to understand a concept due to the teacher's poor communication skills or the pace at which the teacher is teaching." This is where digital educational content comes in handy, he said.

Pearson Education, which offers both digital and printed educational content, also provides digital content for classes 3 to 8. "We are working on six to seven pilots at schools. The idea is to make education more interesting and help the child learn at his own pace," said Naveen Rajlani, Pearson Education's vice president of schools division. The content is priced at around US$28 (INR 1500) per student.

Language support needed to take tablets to villages

Tablets can help bring quality content to rural India and improve the education system at the grassroots level. However, Purushothaman does not see tablets penetrating rural areas in the next three to five years. "Tablets still have not reached villages. We need broadband connectivityin rural India and better power supply in villages for that to happen," he said.

There are also other reasons why tablets are not making their way into villages. For one, the state boards are not as forthcoming.

Rajlani said: "If we get an opportunity from the state government [to introduce MX Touch in schools], we will definitely take it up. We are still at the discussion stage with various state governments."

Moreover, most of the content created for tablets is in English, and the lack of keyboards in Indian languages has been a huge challenge. Only 11 percent of the Indian population knows English.

With growth in the market and availability of better devices, tablets may find their way into the rural education system. Such a scenario has the potential to create a positive change in the education system in our rural areas.

However, things are changing. On January 28, Mumbai-based technology and electronic manufacturing company WishTel introduced a new range of BSNL IRA ICON tablets loaded with Hindi OS interface. The device enables Android users to type in Hindi, as well as read and access all functions and icons in Hindi.

Bhattacharyya said: "With growth in the market and availability of better devices, tablets may find their way into the rural education system. Such a scenario has the potential to create a positive change in the education system in our rural areas."

According to Chaudhry, AESL has sold hundreds of units of iTutor in rural and other areas that are not as well connected. "These are the areas where there is a dire need for quality education," he said.

Without controls, tablets can be counteractive

While there are no studies to determine the actual benefits of using tablets in education, Rajlani believes that these will be multifarious. Parents can monitor the academic progress of their children more accurately with easy access to assignments, difficult lessons covered at school, as well as archived assessments and tests, he explained.

Technology, however, can be misused by students. Chaudhry said that the Internet is akin to fire: "If misused, it can destroy the student's learning abilities and focus."

He stressed the need for both parents and teachers to monitor the content coverage and usage of the device.

"To ensure tablets are used effectively and for education purpose alone, school authorities should not let the students download malware and other illegal content on the devices," he added.

"The power of its use and coverage cannot be underestimated. With lack of quality teaching staff across the urban and rural areas of the country, it can serve as a good means of imparting standardized education," Chaudhry said.

Source: 30 January, 2013/Zdnet

Role of Accreditors in Student Learning

Accreditors of institutions of higher education should assume greater responsibility for ensuring student learning, an education professor and author of a provocative 2011 book that slammed universities for lack of academic rigor said Wednesday.

"I'm not blaming accreditation," Richard Arum, Professor of Sociology and Education at New York University and co-author of "Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses," told attendees here at the annual conference of the Council of Higher Education Accreditation.

"But you have to assume that the existing accreditation system hasn't been up to the task of ensuring academic rigor and learning," Arum said.

Arum spent a good portion of his presentation revisiting some of the key findings of "Academically Adrift," a treatise that found that disturbingly low numbers of college students were being required to do any substantial reading or writing in their college courses and that, consequently, large numbers of students showed no significant improvement on the Collegiate Learning Assessment, an instrument he described as imperfect but "the best we have."

He also presented a series of recommendations that accreditors should pursue to turn the situation around. Those recommendations included:

a. Ensure that assessments being done at a college allow comparisons across departments. "Because if you allow every unit to come up with their own way of figuring things out, you can't identify" which programs are doing well and which ones aren't.

b. Check to see if administrators are emphasizing learning and academic rigor. This includes looking at whether they're making investments based on academic rigor and not just "chasing student-consumers with new dorms, student centers and athletic facilities."

c. Search for evidence that faculty is taking responsibility for student learning.

d. Search for evidence that students are subjected to meaningful assessments where they get "real information on their performance."

Arum said lack of learning on campus cannot be remedied by accreditors alone, or any one group, for that matter.

"I don't think it's accreditation's problem to solve because it will never get solved that way," Arum said, adding that higher education administrators are very adept at "symbolic compliance."

"In higher education, they're all smart people," Arum said. "The institutions themselves have to take on the issue. They have to believe in it themselves."

He said the problem also belongs to boards of trustees.

"Trustees have to also take responsibility and, if an administrator can't answer questions (about student learning), hold them accountable," Arum said.

He also lamented that tenure, promotion and compensation are all tied to research and scholarship and that, consequently, "learning becomes a smaller and smaller part of the faculty incentives, and, when learning is used at all, it's just the course evaluation, which are student satisfaction surveys, 'did you like the professor'?

"The more entertaining and the more lenient you are, the more they like you," Arum said. "These incentives are not set up to get the outcomes we want."

Finally, Arum said, students must also be held accountable.

"We have at least the responsibility to tell them you're doing less than an hour a day of studying; that's substandard. That's not a B-plus. That's a C," Arum said. "If we don't tell them and take their money, which borders on criminal in my estimation. We have an obligation to signal to them" when they are performing well.

He also recommended including a course's average grade on student transcripts to show if students are "gaming the system" by taking easy courses.

Arum was one of several speakers who presented ideas for accrediting agencies to foster student success.

Others included Stan Jones, president of Complete College America, who called for, among other things, strategies to get more students to attend full-time instead of part-time because of research that shows full-time students have higher rates of completion, and more "guided pathways," such as eAdvisor at Arizona State University, to make sure students take the right courses to graduate in a timely manner.

Jones, who spoke at a session titled "The Completion Agenda: What Does This Mean for Access," was joined by William Scroggins, president and CEO of Mt. Saint Antonio College in Walnut, Calif.

Scroggins stressed the need to view completion more in terms of how well colleges and universities are meeting regional workforce demands as opposed to how many graduates they produce.

"Completion isn't a number. It's not an IPEDS piece of data," Scroggins said, using the acronym for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, a federally-maintained education database.

Scroggins said lack of completion emanates from poverty.

"On my campus, it's more an effect of poverty than anything else," Scroggins said. "The issues they bring are tremendous" and require a lot of support, he said.

The CHEA conference also explored the historic and future role of for-profit colleges.

Andy Rosen, chairman and CEO of Kaplan Inc., a for-profit company that provides higher education, said the higher education community should welcome a healthy and vibrant private sector in higher education because for-profits have spurred much of the innovation being embraced by colleges and universities today.

"A lot of the change has come in emulation of the for-profit playbook," Rosen said. He cited online education as an example—something he said was looked at with suspicion and disdain when for-profit colleges launched online learning programs more than a decade ago.

Kevin Kinser, an assistant professor of education at State University of New York at Albany, shared statistics that showed the dramatic increase the number of for-profits that reap federal funds.

For instance, he said, in the 2000-01 school year, there were just three for-profit institutions among the top 20 recipients of Title IV grants, and just two in the top 20 for loans, and none had major online programs.

But by the 2010-11 school year, they represented nine of the top 10 institutions in Title IV loans and seven of the top 10 institutions in Title IV grants, and all of them had "substantial or exclusively online programs."

He said for-profit capacity "cannot quickly or easily be replaced" and that "we need a diversity of institutions with a range of distinctive missions."

Kisner also noted that for-profits face a number of challenges.

One challenge is to deal with the tension between trying to increase enrollment versus increasing graduation. "This is more than inputs versus outputs, but refocusing the business model to emphasize that students graduating is really what the product is," Kisner said.

This will require convincing investors that a lower profit margin "has to be acceptable." "One student graduating has to be more important than two enrolling," Kisner said.

Kisner also suggested that for-profits must be more open and transparent, citing how he once had virtual free rein to research for-profit programs but that as of late this openness has been "clamped down." He suggested that for-profits have the potential to make a "huge contribution" if they find a way to bring down the cost of education so students don't have to spend as much.

"If they were able to do that, it would move us light years ahead," Kisner said.

Source: 30 January, 2013/Diverse Education

How Can Parents Help Their Wards during Exams

Parents, your children seriously need your help during this testing time. May it be class 10, Class 12 or any entrance exam.

To be more clear your wards may need your help and support in all test and exams they face during their education time. At this crucial turning point, parents need to be their children's pillars of support, on which they can lean for all their needs.

Be it in solving academic problems or dealing with the psychological and emotional duress that accompanies the entrance tests, parents have varied roles to play, experts say. Be for them 24X7. Parents want to help, but sometimes they don't think they know enough about the subject matter or think they've been out of school too long to help.

But you don't need to be a subject expert to give your child support and guidance through exams. Here are a few advice that parents can follow in order to help their wards prepare for exams.

1. Don't pressure students to perform well in their exam, as it only stresses them out. Parents also have to take the lead in creating a conducive atmosphere at home, to help children concentrate on their studies.

2. It's an opportunity for parents to build friendship with their children and be a guide. Be a source of encouragement, help them build confidence and beat the exam blues.

3. Children absorb parents' feelings. If the parents get worried and stressed out over their performance, the children sense their feelings and adopt them. Expert advice: Stay calm and relaxed.

4. Even if your are doubtful about the result, make sure the children don't sense that. Sometimes, there might be a crisis in the family during this crucial time, let it not affect the child's studies and performance in the exams.

5. As a parent, pay special attention towards your child and encourage him/her to overcome their worries and gain confidence to go through their exams successfully. Having someone to talk to about their work can help. Support from the parents can help children air their worries and keep things in perspective.

6. Also, it must be ensured that the child is sleeping well for about 6-8 hours. This helps in increasing the thinking and concentration power of the child.

7. The child must be reminded that nervousness is a common phenomenon for every student. The child must be explained that nervousness can make him/her lose confidence and the key is to set these nerves to activist use.

8. Parents must focus on their kid's activeness. They must encourage their child to follow an exercise routine, as it helps enhance their energy levels, ease stress and increases concentration and memory power. Below are a few simple steps you can follow:

Know the exam timetable Provide a suitable study environment Double check students' preparation Balance study with free time Speak to teachers about your wards progress time to time.

Source: 30 January, 2013/education.oneindia

Towards an online-educated rural India

Online learning can go a long way in propelling rural India towards empowerment, writes Siddharth Chaturvedi

The development of technology has influenced every field known to man, including the educational system. India has an enormous appetite for quality education and the introduction of online learning has changed the entire face of the Indian educational system, so much so that the advancement in the education system is not just restricted to providing education, but also includes professional skill-based training for out-of-the-box career options. Quite evidently, the online learning

program has reached to the most mature level of methodological learning.

India's online education market size seems to grow with a rapid pace, which could result in fetching a sea change to the country's educational landscape. India, like any other economy, depends on the development of its educational sector because of its critical role played in any economic and social growth of a country.

Therefore it becomes even more important because it not only increases the productive skills of an individual but also enhances his earning power. Gladly, since the last decade when internet knocked our doors, we have moved a long way from conventional learning, and now, people can access knowledge online to keep pace with the latest developments. Although, India had woken up to the online learning trend quite late because of misconceptions like qualification certificates acquired online will hold no value compared to a certificate earned in a customary manner, but this was gradually proved baseless. In this present technologically advanced society, students who shaped their career by joining distance education classes have attained employment in top-notch companies.

One of the major problems faced by India is that almost all highly skilled professionals are based in bigger cities thus depriving the rural population from getting educated through them. But now tremendous opportunities exist in the untapped rural areas as online education is at its nascent stage in India. There is a huge student segment in India in the age range of 16 to 35, who are willing to learn online. Online learning simplifies this process by taking the knowledge to masses through internet connectivity available in their neighborhood.

There is a great demand for skilled labor from India's industries. But workers from rural areas often lack the skill sets required for these upcoming job opportunities. Hence, the Indian Government is targeting to train 500 million people by 2022 and is encouraging participation of entrepreneurs and private organizations in the space. On the other hand, the rural India is embracing online learning in a big way. Moreover, several corporate, government, and educational organizations are taking up a plethora of endeavors to educate, train, and generate skilled workers. They are also creating a paradigm impact on employment generation with growth of a significant industry around it. Job oriented vocational courses are offered online and enable the students to complete their learning in a stipulated time. Since online courses are student centered and not time bound, it enables blended learning.

In my opinion, the time has come when, instead of segregation, integration of the education and career options shall take the front seat in rural India.

Sometimes the rural regions of India face the basic issues of accessibility and affordability of quality education and training. Studies have shown that rural youth face multiple challenges in migrating to urban areas.

This included poor net income in urban area due to high cost of living, social isolation from family and village life, and difficulties in adjusting to the urban way of life. This led to poor retention of trainees in the jobs in which they were placed in urban areas. But fortunately, in this increasingly interconnected world, technology no longer allows geography to pose a barrier in terms of education, skill development, and job opportunities in rural India.

During 2012, online education enrollment witnessed a considerable growth rate against a poor growth rate in overall higher education. This trend can be expected to continue in near future as the technological services become easier to distribute. And, there are no second thoughts on the fact that online training possesses tremendous potential to improve the lives of many people, and bridge the existing educational and cultural gap.

Source: 31 January, 2013/Deccan Herald

Personnel 'can't be chosen on citations alone'

Universities should not depend solely on citation statistics when making personnel decisions, the new head of Thomson Reuters' Scientific and Scholarly Research unit has said.

Gordon Macomber, who was appointed the unit's managing director earlier this month, described citations as a "wonderful methodology" to analyse research because they are generated entirely by researchers themselves "based on their need to produce the best research".

But he said his company - which owns the widely used Web of Knowledge and Web of Science citation databases - had no control over the quality of the decisions its customers make, and admitted that over-reliance on citations in judging individual academics' performance had led to some "bad decisions".

"There are a lot of other variables on the table when you are making personnel decisions," he said.

Mr Macomber also unveiled plans to set up a customer advisory board and user forums to help co-create future products. He said this reflected a cultural shift whereby the company now regarded its products as belonging to its customers.

He said Thomson Reuters was monitoring the rise of article-level metrics and altmetrics - such as the number of mentions a paper receives on blogs and in social media - "trying to tease out what looks right for us to become involved in".

But his unwillingness to jeopardise the Web of Knowledge's reputation as the "gold standard" of metrics meant he would not be "quick to make adjustments".

That reputation also justified the platform's exclusivity in terms of the journals it indexed; critics have claimed that this makes it less useful to large, emerging research powers such as India, whose academics often publish in non-indexed journals, than its rivals.

He did not regard his company as being in competition with other platforms such as Google Scholar and Elsevier's Scopus, insisting that they were complementary.

"We do a lot of human curation, whereas Google Scholar is more algorithmically generated. The Web of Knowledge is relied on for consistency and transparency," he said.

Source: 31 January, 2013/Times Higher Education

Reviving India

Structural reforms will do more than a rate cut.

The Indian government is seeking ways to revive the country's slowing economy. National output is expected to have expanded by 5.5 per cent in 2012. This is not only a 10-year low. It is also a fraction of the speed of travel of other regional giants such as China or Indonesia.

In an attempt to boost the economy, this week the Reserve Bank of India cut its key policy rate by 25 basis points to 7.75 per cent. On balance, this was the right decision. The headline wholesale price index fell to 7.2 per cent last month, down from 8.1 per cent in September. Yet with food prices still rising, there will be little space for monetary easing.

Nor would expansionary fiscal policy be the right answer. The government has set itself an ambitious target of keeping its deficit at 4.8 per cent of gross domestic product in 2013. This will be impossible if New Delhi opts for populist measures such as higher subsidies when it unveils its budget next February. A fiscal boost could also stoke inflation, losing the government votes ahead of next year's general elections.

It is therefore welcome that India's finance minister, plans to pursue a fiscally prudent strategy. Rather than simply spending more, he should reassess how the government spends its money. Too much cash still goes into poorly targeted fuel subsidies, which benefit the middle class as well as the poor. While Delhi has made some reasonable steps in reducing diesel subsidies, it can go further. The resources that are freed up should be spent on education and the country's ailing infrastructure.

The biggest challenge, however, is to lure back private money. The decision last March to impose retroactive taxes on foreign investors and the resulting $2.6bn tax dispute with Vodafone sent the wrong signals to the international business community. Mr Chidambaram's desire to settle the stand-off with the telecoms group quickly is promising. He should do everything in his power to achieve that goal.

The government should also continue opening up protected sectors. After reforming aviation and retail, Delhi intends to give out more banking licences. This will create jobs and foster competition in a sector that is heavily dominated by state lenders.

Structural reforms will take time to affect growth, but are the only way to get India back on track. Had Delhi not waited so long to implement them, the slowdown would have not been so sharp.

Source: 31 January, 2013/Financial Times

India's pathway to reform

UAE students have long flocked to Indian universities. But with the sector in desperate need of an overhaul, is the degree worth the paper?

How would you feel if world-class universities were accessible, just a few hours away from home, instead of having to travel halfway across the world? If the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill 2010 had been passed in India, this would have been a reality for UAE and Indian students. However, this bill, whose first version was tabled way back in 1995, has been held up even today.

That the Indian education system is in need of a complete overhaul is no secret. Even Shashi Tharoor, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, has stated that India is failing to produce "well-educated" graduates.

The numbers speak for themselves. Ninad Karpe, MD and CEO of IT institute Aptech Limited, says, "Presently 33,023 colleges and 700 universities cater to 4.5 million of the 18 million students who need university education every year. This demand can't be met with local capital (both private and public) and resources alone," he points out. But with the increase in digital learning, can't we do away with physical classrooms? Karpe disagrees, "Even

though internet learning's popularity is increasing, it cannot currently address all market segments. At educational levels, there is a need for a blended model that involves classroom-, technology-, and project-/experience-based teaching. Hence, physical campuses from foreign institutions are definitely required."

Dr Meenakshi Rajan, Director, International Relations, Somaiya Vidyavihar, a Mumbai-based educational trust that has been in the sector for more than two decades and encompasses 34 institutions, 27,000 students and 2,000 faculty, seconds it. "The available quality of higher education in India is unable to meet the demands of a growing youth population. The strategy for ramping up the education infrastructure immediately needs to include a framework for the participation of private educational institutions — domestic and international," she says.

Industry experts also point out how this move, by virtue of much needed competition in the sector, will bring depth to the curriculum, apart from giving global exposure to students. Jayanti Ghose, an award-winning career and education consultant who has been working in the sector for almost three decades, says, "Many students wish to move to foreign universities on account of the wider variety of courses and programmes as well as quality of curriculum and method of teaching and learning, but are unable to do so due to the high cost of living and studying abroad. Allowing foreign universities to set up campuses in India would be a positive move for the students as well."

Sanjay Dhingra, Manager, Market Research, Eli Lilly and Company (India) Private Ltd and an Indian School of Business (ISB) alumnus, batch of April 2012, explains, "While the quality of education offered at the ISB is top-notch thanks to its curriculum, which draws a lot from its global partner schools (Wharton, Kellogg, London Business School and others) and manages to attract top faculty, the presence of foreign institutes in India would have given me access to a better pedigree of education, throughout. Even though a few institutes such as ISB and the top IIMs are able to match the quality of education provided by top foreign universities, their number (and seats) is really miniscule compared to the demand for such education. Not having top foreign universities in India also limits the interest of top global faculty to come teaching in India. The cost of education at these (foreign) institutes though would need to be reasonable and justify the return on investment," he says.

Several academicians, including those from Ivy League colleges, have shared their concerns about the rigid regulatory framework that threatens to take away their autonomy. A 2012 PwC study, India — Higher Education Sector: Opportunities for Private Participation, lists some of the barriers that would decrease the Indian education sector's attractiveness to foreign players. They include the not-for-profit entry barrier for private capital, multiple approvals, inconsistent policies, limitations on intake of students and a lack of availability of trained faculty.

Industry bodies such as Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India have also rued the fact that India isn't producing enough employable graduates. Rajan explains why: "It is estimated that the percentage of Indian college graduates readily employable in the market is only 15-25 per cent of the total talent pool. The economic growth has created jobs in various sectors, which require a different sort of skilled manpower. With vocational training separated from higher education, the current education system is not equipped to cater to this demand, while the vocational education sector suffers from poor demand due to low prestige and quality," she adds.

Karpe adds another dimension. "The recruitment criteria typically rejects a good candidate with necessary skill certification from a private/vocational institute but without an academic degree," he states. "Hence, even the industry shares part of this blame."

Points of caution

Jayanti Ghose: "Examples of foreign campuses of reputed universities/institutions running successfully in China, Singapore, Hong Kong, etc. could be used to understand how India could attract the same.

If a foreign institution is unable to offer what we lack in terms of effective teaching, encouragement of individual thinking, research, analysis, proactive learning, assessment and evaluation systems, then their presence would be pointless."

Ninad Karpe: "While all the necessary measures to prevent fly-by-night and low-quality foreign operators should be in place, it would be too optimistic to assume that only the top foreign universities will be able to meet our need for increased capacity and quality, since it's not very apparent that these top universities are desperate to set up their campuses in India.

We can initially open up courses where there is a critical shortage and then subsequently open up others."

Source: 31 January, 2013/Gulf News

Stemming the rot in higher education

All the hopes built round the legislation to give effect to the Right to Education will come to nothing without remedying the ills plaguing higher education in India.

Going by the widely prevalent perceptions of discerning observers, there has been a sharp fall in the quality of higher education in India. Already, there is a cry among industry associations and business firms about the abysmally low percentage of graduates, post-graduates and professional degree holders measuring up to the performance expected of them as employees. Figures about the employability of notionally-educated candidates have not been more that 10-15 per cent of the lakhs of graduates churned out on the assembly line mode by the various universities in India.

Some recent media reports reveal a really scary scenario. In a recent teachers' eligibility test, conducted by the Tamil Nadu Recruitment Board, it was found that as many as 42,000 out of 6.5 lakh teachers who took the test did not know how to fill the application forms and committed a variety of mistakes, including omission to fill their names in the allotted column. Even if this could be excused, when the answer sheets were evaluated, only 2,448 could be declared to have passed.

I am sure that the situation in other States is equally disturbing, if not even more so. If this is the quality of teachers who act as feeders for institutions of higher learning, one shudders to imagine the snow-balling effect of the extensive damage being done to the minds of young students who are taught by them and the potential danger it poses to the future of the country in terms of the quality of citizens, standard of governance and conduct of public affairs.

At the other end of the spectrum, the procedures, topics for research, and credentials of guides/advisors, with respect to conferment of Ph.D.s have become a cause of intense alarm for anyone with a modicum of awareness of what is going on. At one time, as a member of some University/College bodies to select faculties, I found a Ph.D. on a subject pertaining to English literature not knowing who the Lake Poets were and a Ph.D. in Law not being able to recall the writs mentioned in the Constitution and the purposes they were intended to serve.

SEVERE INDICTMENT

As per Srilata A Zaheer who has become the first Indian woman to head the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, "In the past 15 years….we have seen a decline in the numbers of high-quality applicants from India into US business PhD programmes. This does not bode well either for more Indian-origin deans in the future or, of greater concern, to meet a growing need for research-trained faculty both in India and worldwide."

Another write-up by Careers360 published on November 11, 1012, is more severe in its indictment: "…. a PhD should be the easiest degree to earn in India. No screening tests and interviews, no coursework, and no rigorous assessment of research work. Just a Master's degree in hand and a pre-determined waiting period will lead you to a doctorate!"

GREASING PALMS

It quotes Sushil Upadhyay, Assistant Professor at Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, as saying: "… anyone can virtually buy a PhD degree. You just need to pay two to three lakhs to the right person."

The general purport of his remarks is that in many universities, registration, coursework, thesis and viva-voce can all be "effectively" managed by greasing the palms.

Things will head downhill with Ph.D.s now being offered through distance education mode also, without any guidelines being set by the University Grants Commission.

And finally, the incubus of falling standards seem to be slowly spreading to IIMs and IITs, thanks to the cumulative effect of the malaise afflicting higher education.

(Even in industrial countries, as an article, 'The University's Dilemma' published on November 27, 2012 in the strategy+business Web site points out: "Today, many academics invest their efforts in relatively narrow research, writing papers read only by other academics, with relatively little time spent teaching and training students. …..the research simply offers alternative perspectives on long-standing, foundational knowledge such as the writings of Aristotle.")

All the hopes built round the legislation to give effect to the Right to Education incorporated in the Constitution will come to nothing without remedying the ills of commercialisation, quotas, constant lowering of bars such as pass marks, grades and the like, and the poor quality of the faculty and infrastructure in higher educational institutions.

Source: 31 January, 2013/The Hindu Business Line

India's Education System Fails to Make the Grade

Children between the ages of six and 14 belonging to the economically weaker sections of society in India are entitled to free education under the Right to Education (RTE) Act. But going by the Annual

Status of Education Report (ASER) for 2012, which was released earlier this month, it may take a lot more to ensure that the quality of education imparted to those children is of acceptable standards.

ASER is the largest annual household survey of children in rural India focusing on the status of schooling and basic learning. Facilitated by Pratham, a Mumbai-based NGO, ASER 2012 covered over 330,000 households and about 600,000 children in the age group of three to 16.

According to the report, around 13% of children in grades one to five could not read at all and around 11% were not able recognize numbers from one to nine. Only 46.8% of all children in grade five were able to read a grade two level text. This number, in fact, has been declining over the past two years from 53.7% in 2010 and 48.2% in 2011. In mathematics, too, there has been a significant drop. In 2010, 70.9% of the children enrolled in grade five were able to solve simple two-digit subtraction problems with borrowing. This proportion declined to 61% in 2011 and 53.5% in 2012.

The report also points out that the decline in reading levels is higher among children in government schools as compared to those in private schools. At present, over 90% of schools in India are either run directly by the government or are government funded. But according to ASER 2012, in the six to 14 age group, enrollment in private schools across the country has increased from 18.7% in 2006 to 28.3% in 2012. The report adds: "If this trend continues, by 2018 India may have 50% of children attending private schools even in rural areas." In contrast, in the U.S. more than 80% of children attend public schools and in U.K., this number is over 90%.

Talking to the media, Pratham Education Foundation CEO-president Madhav Chavan said that RTE has come to mean "the right to schooling and not to learning and education." A statement by ASER 2012 notes: "The guarantee of education is meaningless without satisfactory learning. There are serious implications for India's equity and growth if basic learning outcomes do not improve soon."

Meanwhile, the quality of teacher training in India is also a matter of huge concern. According to the Central Board of Secondary Education, last year, 795,000 candidates took the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET). More than 99% of these candidates failed to pass the test. CTET certification is mandatory to become a teacher for grades one to eight in central government schools.

Commenting on the shortage of trained teachers, a recent report by Mumbai-based rating agency India Ratings and Research titled, "2013 Outlook: Indian Education Sector," covering both primary school and higher education notes that "most organizations will find it challenging to comply with the prescribed student-teacher ratio (STR) in the coming years." The report also adds that although the government's spending on education in financial year 2012 increased to 3.35% of GDP from 2.62% in 2005, "the infrastructure for both school and higher education needs to be upgraded to provide better quality education and absorb new enrollments."

Pointing out that quality of education provided by schools is directly related to the quality of its management, T. V. Mohandas Pai, chairman of Manipal Global Education Services and formerly head of human resources at Infosys says: "The quality of leadership in government schools is inadequate and they are very poorly managed. Over the past 20 years, due to political [pressure] poorly educated teachers have been recruited, often with no relevant qualifications. Post recruitment training too is inadequate."

According to Pai, the fundamental flaw in India's schooling system is the controls and restrictions implemented by the central and state governments. "It is very difficult to open a new school in the English medium across India, [and the existing ones] are subject to regular harassment and unable to expand freely." Pai suggests that the only solution to stem further decline in India's education system is to open it up. "Stop funding government schools and fund the child so that parents have a choice of schools."

Source: 31 January, 2013/Knowledge Today

RESOURCE

Right to Education Act may be behind falling school learning: ASER survey

School-level enrolment rates continue to rise, the Right to Education Act (RTE) seems to be helping develop better school infrastructure and there are more toilets for girls in schools — these are the few encouraging findings during 2012 in what otherwise is yet another alarming Annual Status of Education Report (ASER).

The ASER findings, published by NGO Pratham, underscore the declining reading levels and learning outcomes across states, with indications that the trend worsened last year.

More than half of all children in class 5 are at least three grade levels behind where they should be in terms of learning levels, says the report. And the blame must partly be attributed to the UPA's flagship Right to Education Act, ASER 2012 seems to suggest.

Pratham CEO Madhav Chavan blamed this on relaxed classroom rigour and the no-exam format ushered in by the RTE Act. Only 30 per cent of class 3 students could read a class 1 text book in 2012, down from 50 per cent in 2008.

The number of children in government schools who can correctly recognise numbers up to 100 has dropped to 50 per cent from 70 per cent over the last four years, with the real downward turn distinctly visible after 2010, the year RTE came into force, Chavan said.

"There has been a feeling that RTE may have led to relaxation of classroom teaching since all exams and assessments are scrapped and no child is kept back. Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation is now a part of the law and several states are attempting to implement some form of CCE as they understand it," Chavan has written in ASER 2012.

"Does CCE catch this decline? Are teachers equipped to take corrective action as the law prescribes... Given the magnitude of the problem, it will be a good idea to focus just on basics at every standard and not treat it as a 'remedial' measure. At this stage, teaching-learning of basic foundational skills should be the main agenda for primary education in India," he has said.

Human Resource Development Minister Pallam Raju, who released the report Thursday, however, said he would not attribute the declining learning levels to CCE. But at the same time, he admitted that ever since he has taken over the ministry, parents have been coming to him requesting that CCE be scrapped.

Aimed at reducing stress levels of students, the CCE replaces marks with grades and evaluates a student's performance on co-curricular activities besides academics. The no-detention policy up to class 8 under RTE and CCE was attacked last year by several state governments and a Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) committee is looking into the issue.

ASER 2012 shows that school enrolment stands at over 96 per cent for the fourth consecutive year but the proportion of out-of-school children is slightly up from 3.3 per cent to 3.5 per cent, and it is more for girls (11-14 years) at 6 per cent from 5.2 per cent in 2011.

Private schools are clearly becoming more preferred with an enrolment of 28.3 per cent in 2012 from 18.7 per cent in 2006. ASER predicts that India is likely to have 50 per cent children studying in private schools if this trend continues.

The core problem remains poor learning levels. In 2010, 46 per cent of class 5 students could not read a class 2 text. This has risen to 53.2 per cent in 2012.

Understanding of arithmetic remains dismal - 46.5 per cent of class 5 students could not solve a simple subtraction sum of two digits without borrowing in 2012, up from 29.1 per cent in 2010. In fact, barring Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, every state registered a drop in arithmetic learning levels, ASER 2012 says.

Source: 18 January, 2013/Indian Express

Indian education sector market size to be $110 bn by FY15

The sector grew at a compounded annual growth rate of 16.5% during FY05-FY12

India Ratings expects the Indian education sector's market size to increase to Rs 602,410 crore ($109.84 billion) by FY15due to the expected strong demand for quality education. Indian education sector's market size in FY12 is estimated to be Rs 341,180 crore.

The sector grew at a compounded annual growth rate of 16.5% during FY05-FY12. The higher education (HE) segment was at 34.04% ($17.02billion) of the total size in FY10 and grew by a CAGR of 18.13% during FY04-FY10.

India Ratings, a Fitch Group Company, said that it has a stable outlook on the Indian education sector which includes both school and higher education.

Despite a high demand for education within India, India Ratings has concerns of the sector. In 2012, the sector faced liquidity issues due to a fall in enrolment growth and delays in HE students' fee reimbursements by a few state governments.

"Some segments in the education sector face enrolment slowdown due to macro-economic factors, lack of industry appeal and employability issues. Management institutes with less or no industry association witness low enrolment and revenues leading to loan defaults or closures. India Ratings does not expect enrolments for these entities to rebound in the short term," said the report.

In the recent past several education institutes have discontinued programmes due to fewer demand. A case in point is Mumbai-based Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) which has decided to discontinue the MBA programme in actuarial science.

This fall in enrolment growth and delays in HE students' fee reimbursements by a few state governments has created liquidity issues for many. "Fee ceilings in HE institutes (both for the government and management quota) and schools curb the financial prowess of the entities. Even though the fee reimbursements scheme (applicable only to HE) propelled enrolments and made education affordable to certain educationally disadvantaged sections of the society, delays in reimbursements by a few states tightened the liquidity for education institutes," said the report.

Irrespective of an institutes' size, loan repayments depend on its relationship with lenders. Due to tightly-regulated operations such as restrictions on student intake, fees and infrastructure, an institution's autonomy is restricted, leading to weak finances and credit indiscipline. In India Ratings' opinion, the upcoming regulatory changes could possibly provide autonomy and enhance the credit quality of the issuers.

The stipulation to keep education as a not-for-profit structure is seeing evolution of new structures. "Although the institutes were formed as 'not-for-profit', they plough back profits through associates. Associate companies provide facilities management and charges management fees, lease rentals and other fees. India Ratings views the structure evolvement as a positive," said the report.

Although, foreign investment is allowed under automatic route in education, there are regulatory issues. Nevertheless, twining programs with foreign institutions are recognised by the regulators.

The other key positive for the sector is the federal government's 12th Five Year Plan to propel the gross enrolment rate across levels, establish new entities, liberalising the sector (allow private universities and foreign players) and take other measures including access enhancement, might revive the demand for the sector. These measures, combined with adherence to contractual provisions, would result in a positive outlook.

Source: 21 January, 2013/Business Standard

Enrolment in schools rises 14% to 23 crore

In a significant leg up to the government's literacy initiative, a national survey has revealed that almost 23 crore children are studying in 13 lakh schools across the country.

There were 228,994,454 students enrolled in different recognized schools of the country with a 13.67% growth in student's enrolment from Class I to XII. This is an increase from 20.30 crore students enrolled in 2002. Encouragingly, there is a 19.12 % increase in girl's enrolment.

However, one-fifth of the total primary schools in rural areas still do not have drinking water facility, three out of 10 are without usable urinal facilities and about half do not have playgrounds.

This is part of provisional data from the eighth All India Education Survey (AISES) conducted by NCERT covering the school education system with respect to access, enrolment, retention, teachers and availability of basic facilities. The survey indicates trends from 2002 to 2009.

Despite the overall growth in enrolment, there is cause for worry. A comparison of enrolment data from 2002 to 2009 for primary schools shows a drop in enrolment in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu. "The decline in enrolment indicates that students at the primary level are shifting from government to private schools," a NCERT official said. The decline in total enrolment between class I to XII, however, is less sharp.

The data confirms the disquieting fact that girl's education continues to be interrupted after primary school with the percentage of enrolment declining at the higher secondary school stage. While there is a maximum increase of 48.13% in girl's enrolment in primary schools, the figure dips to 42.56% in higher secondary schools. Similar trend is observed in percentage of girl's enrolment in schools in rural areas.

There was 26.77% increase in total number of schools in the country during 2002-09. Maximum growth rate was seen in upper primary schools (49.15%), followed by higher secondary schools (46.80%), secondary (28.95%) and primary (16.68%).

The survey captures more than 13 lakh (13,06,992) recognized schools across the country in each habitation, village and urban areas, out of which more than 84.14% are in rural areas.

There is also 30% increase in number of teachers in the country. The total growth of teachers in higher secondary school increased by 34% with a 50% increase in number of teachers at higher secondary schools in rural areas. Consequently, the pupil teacher ratio (PTR) has also improved since the last survey. PTR in primary schools has declined from 42:1 to 32:1.

Source: 22 January, 2013/Times of India

Student enrollment up, dip in pupil-teacher ratio: All India Education Survey by NCERT

It may be too early to ascertain the impact of Right to Education (RTE) Act on the school education

system but the provisional data of the 8th All India Education Survey released by NCERT points to new trends in the sector.

During the survey period 2002-09, the overall student enrollment levels have gone up along with a dip in pupil-teacher ratio (PTR). But on the flip side, the dropout rate of girls from higher classes and the poor state of rural schools continue to be causes of concern.

The survey covered 13 lakh recognised schools across the country, of which more than 84.14 per cent were from rural areas. It attributes the fall in PTR across primary, upper primary and secondary levels from 42:1 to 32:1 to the overall 30-per cent increase in number of teachers. This rise, the survey said, is fuelled by a 50 per cent increase in number of teachers at the higher secondary level in rural areas.

The student enrollment from Class I to XII witnessed a rise of 13.67 per cent while the total number of schools increased by an overall 26.77 per cent. With 49.15 per cent, the upper primary schools witnessed the maximum growth. Private unaided primary schools too continued to grow at fast pace registering 37.32 per cent increase from 49,667 in the seventh survey to 68,203.

While there is an overall increase of 19.2 per cent in girls enrollment, the survey points out that the share of girls enrollment to the total enrollment in higher classes has decreased. While at the primary stage, girls enrollment percentage is 48.13, at the higher secondary level it has fallen to 42.56 per cent. This indicates that a considerable number of girls dropout from formal schooling as they move to higher classes. The trend is the same in rural areas too.

The survey revealed that schools in rural areas are not equipped with basic amenities like drinking water, playgrounds and usable toilets. While one-fifth of the total rural primary schools do not have drinking water, three out of 10 schools do not have a usable toilet. Half of them have no playgrounds for children.

Source: 23 January, 2013/Indian Express

B-Schools loosing its shine in India-Assocham

Barring graduates from IIM's, the B-schools are losing fast shine of attracting corporate India Inc. for campus recruitment and are increasingly facing their survivals, only 10% of the graduates are actually employable despite the robust demand for MBAs, adds the ASSOCHAM paper.

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) paper on "B-schools and Engineering colleges shut down- Big Business Struggles" reveals that since 2009, the recruitments at the campus have gone down by 40% in the year of 2012 as a result the B-schools and engineering colleges are not able to attract students, more than 180 B-schools have already closed down in 2012 in the major cities Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bangalore, Ahemdabad, Kolkata, Luknow, Dehradun etc.

Another 160 are struggling for their survivals. Mr. D S Rawat, Secretary General ASSOCHAM said that there is no quality control, the placements are not commensurate with fees being charged, the faculty is not good enough and there is no infrastructure. "The biggest reason for the gap is the rapid mushrooming of tier-2 and tier-3 management education institutes that has unfortunately not been matched by commensurate uplift in the quality of management education.

The most of students prefer to choose cheaper AICTE approved programs rather than B-schools", said Mr. Rawat "The need to update and re-train faculty in emerging global business perspectives is practically absent in many B-schools, often making the course content redundant", adds the paper.

Mr. Rawat further said that the quality of higher education in India across disciplines is poor and does not meet the needs of the corporate world. About 160 schools offering Master of Business Administration (MBA) courses are expected to close this year. Only 10% of graduates from Indian business schools excluding those from the top 20 schools get a job straight after completing their course, compared with 54% in 2008, highlight the paper. Some students expressed that the business schools promote their brands only on placement and by boasting about high salaries.

They offer theoretical courses which lacks practical skills required by the corporate sector today, mentioned the paper. In the last five years, the number of B-schools in India has tripled to about 4,500 amounting to as many as 3,60,000 MBA seats, collectively. The demand has begun to deflate now, as economy growth rate hit its slowest in the last nine years and the quality of education provided by B-schools came under the radar.

The paper also stressed that nowadays students are not concerned about the quality of education in an institute, they only want to know the placement and salary statistics and discounts offered on the fee structure and this has spoiled the entire education system, adds Secretary General. Similarly, the Master of Computer Application (MCA) course, nearly 95 colleges stopped offering the programme this year and only 25 started MCA courses. MBA seats in India grew almost four-fold from 95,000 in

2006-07 to 3,60,000 in 2011-12-resulting in a five-year compounded annual growth rate of 30 per cent.

Unfortunately, job opportunities for MBAs have not grown in the same proportion. The MBA capacity in the country was built based on the projection of a 9 to 10 per cent economic growth rate. ASSOCHAM has advised to improve the infrastructure, train their faculty, work on industry linkages, spend money on research and knowledge creation, as well as pay their faculty well in order to attract good teachers. Around 10% to 12% of MBA graduates are getting jobs in the market in which they are earning Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 salary per month. For in case of MCA graduates after finishing their courses, around 8% to 12% of students are getting jobs and earning Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 salary per month.

Source: 31 January, 2013/Education.oneindia

Depleting youth keeping job growth slow, says ILO

The country has been recording improvement in labour productivity without job creation since 2000.

The number of youth in the labour force in South Asia and in India has been decreasing over successive years. A recent report of the International Labour Organisation attributes this withdrawal of youth from the labour force for the stagnation in employment rates in the region in general and in India in particular.

India has been recording improvement in labour productivity without job creation since 2000, with just 2.7 million jobs created from 2004-05 to 2009-10 in comparison with 60 million jobs during the previous five year period.

The ILO in its latest Global Employment Trends report 2013 suggests that one of the key reasons for this stagnation in employment rates is the withdrawal from the labour force by young people and women. It says that even where jobs have been created, a large share of workers remained in agriculture, in the urban informal sector or in unprotected jobs in the formal sector.

Thus, like many regions, growth has failed to deliver a significant number of better jobs in the formal economy in South Asia.'' Most notably in India, the share of formal employment has declined from around 9% in 1999–2000 to 7% in 2009–10, in spite of record growth rates."

Using a comparable definition for the latest year available, the share of workers in informal employment in the non-agricultural sector is 83.6% in India (2009–10), 78.4% in Pakistan (2009–10) and 62.1% in Sri Lanka (2009).

The report does not make any predictions about the future of job growth in India in particular and South Asia in general saying that ultimately, while the process of structural transformation in South Asia has begun, its scope and direction is uncertain.

"In particular, it remains unclear whether the manufacturing sector will be able to absorb large numbers of job-seekers in countries like India. The share of employment in agriculture is still large in India (51.1% in 2010) and Nepal (65.7% in 2001), while the service sector represents a major share in most countries, particularly in the Maldives (60% in 2006) and Sri Lanka (40.4% in 2010). The share in industry does not exceed 25% in South Asia, and is in fact much lower when looking at just manufacturing workers. For example, in India, the share of workers in manufacturing was just 11% in 2009– 10, no higher than a decade earlier,'' it points out.

A senior ILO official said that the withdrawal of youth from the labour force in India could be due to positive reasons like more and more people being engaged in education.

Source: 31 January, 2013/Business Standard

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

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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