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*

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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

All-India Dr. Stya Paul Essay Competition 2012

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All-India Dr. Stya Paul Essay Competition 2012

ASPECT

How India can overtake China in the battle for higher education and economic growth

There is a battle taking place between India and China not for today's economic growth, but for economic growth a decade from now. The field of battle is higher education, and India is losing. Big time.

World Bank statistics show that higher education enrollment is a leading indicator of economic growth. When a country substantially increases the number of university students it educates, that country tends to enjoy a spike in economic growth in the decade that follows. It happened with Japan and Korea in the early and late 1980s respectively.

China will soon reap the rewards of its annual $250-billion investments in higher education. Since the turn of the millennium, China has doubled the number of institutes of higher education and increased enrollment five-fold. It has been the greatest expansion in university education in the history of mankind.

As a result, 26% of China's university-age population is enrolled in an institution of higher education, versus 18% in India. It was not always so. In 1990 and 2000, India bested China in

university enrollment rates. Until China decided to make higher education a policy priority.

A New Medium

Do not let India's outliers the IITs and IIMs fool you. The key battlefield is in higher education for the masses. And on this China wins hands down, on both quality and quantity. Sure, India's IITs and IIMs offer top-notch education. But they reach a scandalously small proportion of Indian students.

The annual intake of the IITs currently amounts to about 10,000 students, a fraction of India's 12-crore-strong university-age population.

So what is India doing to catch up? Not much. The University Grants Commission's 12th Five Year Plan (covering 2012-2017) is short on ambition and long on vague laments ("considerable challenges remain" it says). While China has ambitious plans that it executes, India has un-ambitious plans that it fails to execute.

In 1995 the Indian government introduced in parliament a bill to allow foreign universities to operate in the country. The Foreign Education Providers Bill, a successor to the 1995 bill, is still languishing in parliament nearly two decades later.

With India incapable of rapidly building higher-education infrastructure, and stubbornly refusing to let foreign universities in to help, the situation would be hopeless but for one fact: technology is coming to India's rescue. American universities, led by Harvard and MIT, have decided to put their courses online for free. Any Indian with access to a computer and an internet connection (whether in his home or in the next village) can take a class taught by a Nobel laureate in Boston. Or Princeton. Or Berkeley. Some 200 American universities are interested in joining the Harvard/MIT not-for-profit venture.

Education, a Click Away

The implications of free online content for Indian higher education and for India's future economic growth cannot be overstated. This revolution knocks down in a single blow the historical barriers to Indian higher education: uneven quality, overall lack of supply, and the high cost of sending a child overseas for study.

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The availability of free online content will lead to an entirely new model for higher education in India. Forget the sprawling university campus with faculty developing their own course content. Now is the time for India to invest in a new higher-education model built around content in-sourced from top American institutions.

No one can pretend that free online content is a panacea for India's education woes. There are countless other shortcomings in the Indian system, including insufficient preparation for university studies beginning at primary school and through to secondary.

Vocational training (for those better suited to learning a trade than attending university) is another huge gap. And outside of the urban elite of Tier 1 cities, English-language skills among university-age Indians are limited, as is access to the internet.

Despite these complex challenges, the new reality of this revolution is quite simple. The demand in India is there. So is the brainpower. And the content is now available for free. The only thing required is a system to connect the content with the students.

Can real-time translation technologies be used to convert Harvard's classes into Hindi, Telugu or Malayalam? Will the new model be solely distance learning, or will students come together to discuss the material? Can existing village school facilities be leveraged after school hours?

Joining Hands

India's entrepreneurs will find the answers to these questions and others. As the revolution in free online content takes hold, Indians should ask only one thing of their government: stay out of the way. The government had its chance. It did not deliver. Now technology is calling NGOs and the private sector to do what the government could not: offer high quality higher education to the masses.

Ultimately there is a role for the government in setting standards for this new type of education, and for certifying institutions. But that is all for later. The need of the hour is to get new university students learning by the lakh and then by the crore.

China's investment in higher education, while impressively executed, may have been poorly timed. For China invested in an old and costly model of higher education. There is a new model out there, one uniquely well-suited to India.

By investing in this model, India could yet win the higher education battle today, and the battle for economic growth tomorrow.

Source: 03 Feb, 2013/Economic Times

NEWS

Govt. to review university education system

Four years after the government revamped its central university system by bringing in several such new centres of higher learning to provide access with quality, there is little to show in outcomes and a concerned government is set to review its growth strategy.

President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will review the bottlenecks in infrastructure, research, curricula and teachers crunch on Tuesday, according to officials in the human resource development ministry and central universities.

"Both the high offices of Indian government may put in place a mechanism to improve their interface with the central universities," said an official of the HRD ministry, who declined to be named. "The quality of our current education system leaves much to be desired. During the 12th Plan (2012-17), the focus is on quality, the review meeting will dwell on it in detail."

There are 42 central universities in India, including 16 set up in 2009-10. All the new universities have poor infrastructure and don't have permanent campuses, the curricula is not contemporary and attracting the faculty is a challenge. As a result, they are not attracting sufficient number of students. Most of the new universities don't even have 1,000 students each and the faculty shortage is as high as 30-50%, official data show.

"None of the universities in India right now are in top 200 list of best universities in the world and this is a worrying point. The universities need to change their approach and become contemporary, from just learning to research and be industry-ready," said Abdul Wahid, vice-chancellor of the Central University of Kashmir.

As per the Times Higher Education Rankings 2012-13, published from the UK, the top ranked Indian institutions are IIT Kharagpur (234), IIT Bombay (258) and IIT Roorkee (267). The top ranked institutions as per the Quacquarelli Symonds System 2012 were IIT Delhi (212), IIT Bombay (227) and IIT Kanpur (278).

"Apart from the fact that none of the Indian institutions ranked are in the top 200, interestingly, no university finds a place in these rankings," according to an HRD ministry document. "In such a structure, quality enhancement can only be brought about by reducing the burden at the university level and giving greater autonomy and accountability."

Somnath Dasgupta, vice-chancellor of Assam University said the President is keen on improving interaction with universities. "Extending the reach of central universities is part of the agenda. Research and how to build society through it, too, will be discussed," he said.

Dasgupta said central universities in northeastern states have a problem of access and virtual learning in this context needs attention.

Wahid said that for new universities, operating from rented buildings is a key bottleneck and with both Singh and Mukherjee "taking stock of the situation, we can expect a better outcome". He said good information technology infrastructure, laboratory, library and handholding to make curricula relevant to the market are issues that need to be given attention and will be discussed in the meeting.

Source: 03 Feb, 2013/ Live Mint

US official visiting India to enhance educational partnership

With the focus on helping India build up its community colleges, a senior US official is visiting the country to enhance educational partnership between the two countries.

The US Under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, Tara Sonenshine, during her three-day visit beginning today will highlight the breadth and depth of the India-US people to people relationship, particularly the strong educational partnership, the state department said.

In New Delhi, Sonenshine will lead the US delegation to the conference 'Mainstreaming Skills in Education' on February 6-7, where she will deliver remarks on US support for India's development of community colleges and the expansion of skills development education.

In a statement, the state department said, the US delegation to this conference will include representatives from twelve community colleges.

During her travel, Sonenshine will meet with India officials to discuss US-India education collaboration.

She will also meet with Fulbright-Nehru scholars and will tour Indian historical preservation projects that receive funding from the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation.

Source: 05 Feb, 2013/ Times of India

Plan panel push for higher education reforms

With Kapil Sibal out of the HRD ministry, the Planning Commission has pushed for more reforms in higher education to tackle the "deteriorating quality" and "eroding public confidence" in country's public education system.

The panel has asked the HRD ministry to shift its focus from country's exemplary institutions — Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management —and try to revamp the state and private sector institutions which enroll over 97% of total students in higher education.

"The strategy to improve quality should be based on national initiatives that benefit a wider range of institutions by creating a strong performance culture through effective use of competitive grants, focus on evaluation and feedback of both teaching and research and ensure transparency through information disclosure to enhance student choice," plan panel deputy chairperson Montek Singh Ahluwalia said in a letter to new HRD minister MM Pallam Raju.

Country's national objective is to double enrollment in higher education by 2020.

The plan panel has identified 15 strategic issues which need ministry's immediate attention in the next five years including increasing the capacity of existing institutions to enroll more students rather than starting new institutions.

It also wants the ministry to significantly increase in budgetary support for equity related measures through targeted, integrated and effective equity related schemes to replace the existing maze of diffused schemes.

The panel also wants the HRD ministry to give more autonomy to institutions and focus only on evaluating their performance. It also wants more transparency in fee determination, placements and faculty appointments.

Source: 06 Feb, 2013/Hindustan Times

International Conference on Community Colleges

HRD Minister Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju opened in New Delhi today the international conference on community colleges. In his speech the Minister said that 200 community colleges will be started from the next academic session 2013. He said his ministry realizes the role of education in capacity building of youth. Pointing decline in quality of education, he said out of 30 lakh people are added every year only 1/4th of them worth giving jobs as per the industry requirement. He said there is shortage of skill people in critically areas including IT, because of mismatch between the outdated syllabus and the changing need of the industry. Stressing for more skill based education, Dr. Raju appealed to the educational institutions to make tailor made courses for industry. He advocated for flexibility to the education programmes. The Minister said industry, including business and service sector, would be associated at all levels viz., development of curriculum, training of trainers/teachers, supply of guest faculty, development/maintenance of laboratories workshops for 'hands on' practical training and evaluation so as to ensure employment of the learner. These Community Colleges would have short duration credit-based modules leveraging on the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) to facilitate mobility of learners into the employment sector and banking (accumulation) of credit leading to certificates, diplomas, etc.

Speaking on the occasion the advisor to the Prime Minister on skill development Mr. S. Ramadurai suggested that step should be taken to put up system where the learners give their best. Highlighting the role of community colleges in India he said that the model for the community colleges should be home grown and there should be clarity about its value with respect to other courses available in the country. He said quality should not be neglected at any cost.

The Minister of State for HRD, Mr. Jitin Prasada highlighted the changing need of education for migrating population and creating opportunities for 80 lakh people who join the work force every year. His colleague in the Ministry, Dr. Shashi Tharoor said India has a huge demographic advantage as its work force is young while of other major countries including China, South Korea, Japan have already peaked. But to take advantage of this factor we have to promote quality education by putting up infrastructure.

The US under secretary for public affairs Ms. Tara Sonenshine offered her country's idea and experience in promotion of community schools. Pointing similarity of challenges between the developing countries and the developed nations in promoting education, she said they are global in nature. Ms. Sonenshine said that community colleges provide education and skill to half of the students in USA at under graduate level.

The secretary for higher education Mr. Ashok Thakur said that 60 countries are participating in two days conference and as per the govt. priority vocational education will get top priority.

There are about 100 foreign participants coming from USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Australia and New Zealand. There are 400 Indian participants from the Central Ministries engaged in skills development, State/UT, colleges and polytechnics, Central Universities, regulatory bodies, autonomous

organizations, Sector Skill Councils, representatives of PSUs and private industry.

Source: 06 Feb, 2013/PIB

Foreign universities to receive direct Indian Rupee payments

Western Union Business Solutions, a unit of The Western Union Company, has announced a new service that will allow universities and higher education institutions around the world to accept tuition payments in Indian Rupee.

Over 2 lakh Indian students study abroad each year, making India the second largest market for international students in the world after China. Indian students who choose to study abroad grew by over 250% between 2000 and 2009, with overall numbers increasing from 53,000 to more than 189,000 during that period.

Western Union's new service will enable participating schools and universities to offer Indian students the option to pay tuition fees in their home currency. It will be offered by Weizmann Forex and Paul Merchants, the two largest Western Union agents in India. Both Weizmann Forex and Paul Merchants will make this product available to students at multiple locations across the country.

Students will also be able to pay from their homes by calling a toll-free number and requesting a house visit. In that instance, a trained representative of Paul Merchants or Weizmann Forex will come to the student to collect the relevant documentation and arrange the rupee settlement on behalf of the university. "Nearly a quarter of a million Indian students study abroad and this service will help them make payments to their international universities from the comfort of their homes in a transparent, fast and effective way," said Anil Kapur, Regional Divisional Director, India and Middle East, Western Union Business Solutions.

"Our aim is to improve and simplify the payments process for Indian students," he said. According to a recent study, the United States, United Kingdom and Australia are the top three destinations for Indian students. Students who go abroad are typically invoiced in the currency of their university which often makes the payment process cumbersome and expensive. In many cases, intermediary fee impact the final amount received by the university so the students still owe money before commencing their studies, Western Union, a leader in global payment services, said.

Source: 06 Feb, 2013/ Times of India

Conference debates India's education woes

Issues plaguing the education system were highlighted during the One Globe 2013 conference.

Mention the education system and the opinions start flying thick and fast. And so it was at the One Globe 2013: Uniting Knowledge Communities conference that took place in Delhi on 7-8 February. Participants at the event highlighted issues plaguing the education system—policy deficiencies, lack of quality and absence of vocational training.

"Tackling Indian education system and approaching its policies is like maneuvering a battleship," said Sherena Mistri-Yiannouka, founder and country manager of consulting and training company Dynargie Singapore.

Critics have carped often that the government-funded educational system is not in sync with the needs of the job market; recruiters say that they find graduates of Indian universities unemployable, requiring them to spend time and resources on training them in basic job skills.

In a speech to the vice-chancellors of central universities at a conference in New Delhi on Tuesday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh rued the lack of quality and poor global standing of Indian educational institutes.

"India is a difficult country because of its enormity and it faces multiple relapse in its education system", said panelist Khozem Merchant, president of Pearson India, the local arm of the British education company Pearson Plc. "What it needs most is open choices from the policy makers when it comes to education".

Shashi Tharoor, minister of state for human resources development, focused on female literacy.

"Educating girls and women is the only solution for a better world. An educated girl is more equipped to seek medical help, follow sanitary advice; also, children from an educated mother are known to have a better life than those of uneducated ones." he said.

Still, India's education system scores over that of China, reckoned Robin Lewis, professor and director of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA). That's because India is more open to foreign investment and partnerships in education. Lewis did criticize both countries for their exam-based evaluation system. "How can two hours determine a child's future," he asked.

Nancy Silberkliet, co-CEO, Archie Comics Publications, criticized text books for being boring and dull, and failing to hold a child's attention. She

suggested introducing graphic novels and comics in school curricula; many young people would love that.

Vineet Narain, chairman of the Braj Foundation, an NGO, said it's important to teach students about India's ancient heritage. "The west faced its hippie movement as they didn't know their culture and roots. It shouldn't happen with India," he said.

But all the culture and heritage will come to nought if there are no teachers to teach and no roofs to study under.

Chavvi Rajawat, a sarpanch in a Rajasthan village, said the system needs to change and there should be more accountability.

"There are schools where students of three standards sit under one roof and there is just one teacher teaching them," she said. "Also for girls, connectivity is a problem as much as lack of toilets in the schools. Where are the funds going?" she asked.

S.C. Arora, vice-chairman, Lotus Valley Group, sounded a contrarian note claiming that infrastructure is not as important.

"I have seen education happening under a tree, what more important is knowledge of teachers and their attitude of teaching," he said.

Source: 08 Feb, 2013/ LiveMint

Tablets, netbooks, smartphones become favorites for Indian education

Education market is becoming the hot destination for computing devices including tablets, netbooks and smartphones.

ABI Research says nearly fifteen million computing devices – mainly netbooks — will be shipped into the education market in 2013.

Media tablets and cheaper laptops with better performance capabilities and lower price points will soon begin to rout the netbook's appeal.

Several players are leveraging demand for Internet for education.

Vuclip, a mobile video and media company, has launched its new mobile video channel. Initially, the channel will provide educational videos for K-12 and higher education, which can be watched on any of the 5500 different types of internet-enabled mobile phones, including the most basic to the most advanced handsets. The channel currently supports educational videos in English but will include course material in other languages as well.

ABI Research says nearly six million netbooks will be shipped into the global education market this year. Earlier this month, Acer and Asus announced the production halt of netbooks in 2013, following a number of other hardware computing OEMs that include Dell, HP, and Samsung.

Global annual netbook shipments are predicted to decline by over 50 percent in 2013 from last year. The smaller, lower cost, lower performance laptop seems to have its days numbered.

ABI Research senior analyst Josh Flood says netbooks opened the door for education institutes and other organizations to purchase suitable computing hardware at a very reasonable price while also offering numerous advantages to young children.

According to a survey done by Vuclip, Indians prefer mobiles over computers as their choice of medium for education. Females prefer mobile twice as much as computers and males prefer mobile three times over computers. This was true across all age groups, though was more pronounced in respondents above 18 years of age.

Nickhil Jakatdar, CEO and founder of Vuclip, says more than half of respondents in India cited money as the biggest obstacle to getting an education of their choice. However, Indians are relatively more open to learning at home, with only 18 percent preferring to learn in a school, compared to the global average of 25 percent in favour of a school environment. At 82 percent, Indians are also more responsive to receiving education through phones, than the rest of the world (80 percent).

70 percent males and 53 percent females in India said they were very interested in education through their phone, which again is above the global average, indicating a higher propensity to mobile-based education among Indians.

Source: 08 Feb, 2013/ Telecom led

Education can strengthen India, Japan ties

Education could play a key role in further strengthening the age-old ties between India and Japan, Indian educationist Anand Kumar said on Wednesday.

"It will give the relationship between the two nations, which enjoy a deep-rooted Buddhist linkage, a new dimension by bringing the youth closer," 'Super 30' founder and mathematician Kumar said.

He was delivering a lecture on the topic 'Super 30 to Global 30- an inspiring journey' at the Sanjo conference hall of the University of Tokyo.

The executive vice president of the university Masako Egawa in his welcome address spoke highly

of Kumar's Super 30 programme and how it was making a difference in India.

Anand is on a week-long visit on the invitation of Japan government to explore the emerging prospects for Indian students in Japan and has visited several academic institutions.

Anand said, the ties between the two nations span across several areas ? from technology to religion ? but its time for educational collaboration.

"It took nearly 1000 years for the preaching of Gautam Buddha to reach Japan, but in the modern era distance hardly matters, though Buddha still does for the people of both the countries. What is today needed to spread the light of education for making enlightened world citizens," he added.

Maintaining that Indian students had immense potential and a strong craving for education despite limited means, he said Japan, with its state-of-the-art institutions and advancement in science education, could be an ideal destination for the talented students from India.

"The Global 30 programme launched by the Japanese government to attract more and more talented students from India will work as a catalyst for them," he added.

In a packed hall comprising professors, researchers and students, Anand said the journey of Super 30 got underway 11 years ago to help talented students from the poor sections of the society, who had the dream and potential of studying in India?s premiere institutions, but lack the resources.

"What started with a small initiative gradually became a global talking point due to its success rate, which is largely attributed to students' passion, hardwork and unflinching devotion. Global 30 has also been started with the objective of attracting students from India and it would certainly inspire more and more students," he added.

Anand said that Bihar, the state he belonged to, had an added attraction for Japan due to its Buddha connect. "It is the place where lakhs of Japanese visit every year to go to Bodh Gaya and visit Mahabodhi temple, under which Buddha had achieved enlightenment."

Source: 13 Feb, 2013/ Zee News

IIE Leads Higher Education Delegation to Build Partnerships between India and the U.S.

The Institute of International Education led eight U.S. higher education representatives on a partnership-focused study tour to India last week to learn more about the Indian higher education system and explore potential partnership opportunities. The study tour was part of the International Academic Partnership Program focusing on India, a major initiative of IIE's Center for International Partnerships in Higher Education, which seeks to foster sustainable partnerships between higher education institutions in the U.S. and India.

The delegation included representatives from five U.S. colleges and universities that were chosen in October 2012 to participate in the year-long IAPP program. The five selected institutions are: Arizona State University, Portland State University, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Washington & Jefferson College. The five institutions were selected due to their commitment to developing long-term, strategic partnerships with counterparts in India, with the goals of increasing student and faculty exchange, joint research, dual degree programs, study abroad, and other partnership activities.

To introduce the delegates to the diversity of the Indian higher education system, Center for International Partnerships staff, together with staff from the IIE New Delhi office, selected eight distinct institutions in Chennai, Ahmedabad, and New Delhi where U.S. delegates conducted site visits and partnership-focused roundtable discussions. The Indian host institutions ranged from large, public universities such as Anna University in Chennai and Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, to smaller private institutions such as the Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University in Ahmedabad. In addition, the delegates met with representatives from a few colleges that are affiliated with larger central universities, such as the Madras Christian College in Chennai and the Indraprastha College for Women in New Delhi. Other site visits included the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), the largest university in the world with over 3.5 million students; and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar, one of the newer IITs developed by the Government of India. In addition to site visits, the delegates also participated in a roundtable discussion hosted by the U.S. Public Affairs Section in Chennai, as well as the One Globe 2013 Conference in New Delhi.

The study tour highlighted a number of opportunities and challenges for developing U.S. – India academic partnerships. Whether looking to create dual degree programs, increasing study abroad, or exchanging faculty and students, the key to developing quality, sustainable partnerships is compatibility. This study tour helped the delegates to explore what makes a good partner, and to learn that compatibility does not necessarily mean the same institutional size, geographic location, or

governance. In fact, many of the U.S. and Indian institutions found they shared an emphasis on diversity and catering to the needs of first generation learners. Others found they have centers or departments working on similar global issues, such as energy, conflict resolution, and religious pluralism. While, historically, a major hurdle for potential Indian Master's students in the U.S. has always been the three-year undergraduate degree in India, some Indian institutions are beginning the transition to a four-year Bachelor's degree.

The challenges that arose are not necessarily new or specific to India, but represent common partnership issues that require significant forethought and creative solutions. For example, many Indian institutions raised the issue of visa issuance as a recurring barrier to student mobility. Many of their students have been denied visa not once, but twice; the main reason for denial being that there was not enough proof that the student would return to India after their studies. In a discussion with representatives from the U.S. consular section in Chennai, delegates were informed that formalized partnership agreements often help in these matters, such as- a signed Memorandum of Understanding, which can bolster a student's visa application.

Funding poses another major challenge, especially in light of the recent depreciation of the rupee. Increasingly, institutions in both countries are being asked to conjure up creative funding models, including tuition swaps, public-private partnerships, and joint funding proposals such as the Obama Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative. Finally, due to the vast and varied higher education landscape in the U.S. and India, the need for quality and widespread information about a large cross-section of institutions in both countries is of increasing importance.

The 2013 IAPP India delegation is the third group of U.S. institutional representatives to travel to India with IIE. Since 2010, IAPP India participants have utilized their time on the study tour to learn about Indian institutions' priorities for developing partnerships, models of successful partnerships, and common pitfalls. Upon returning to their campuses the U.S. participants will continue to refine their India partnership plan and proceed to engage potential partners in a strategic and focused manner. Past participants have gone on to develop new faculty-led study abroad programs, faculty exchange programs, joint symposia, and an on-campus India Center. Two alumni of the IAPP India program, Rutgers University and the University of Montana, also received Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative partnership awards in July 2012.

Source: 14 Feb, 2013/ Press Release IIE

Internet transforming higher education

The biggest disruption that the Internet may deliver to our world is just beginning: the upending of higher education.

Sound like so much hyperbole?

That's just the dismissive attitude that most newspapers took toward blogs in the late 1990s. From what I can see, the impact that online learning programs will have on higher education will be even more dramatic.

I've spent the past two years chronicling the emerging education technology industry at EdSurge, my startup devoted to helping educators and entrepreneurs find and use the best tools available to support learning. I had spent the previous 25 years in the national media.

Although the news media chronicled the rise of the Internet, we didn't appreciate how it gave voice to disgruntled customers - namely, our readers. Readers wanted to voice their thoughts in more than a wispy sentence or two in letters to the editor. They wanted more diversity in the news that got reported than teams of anonymous editors were serving up. The list goes on.

The parallels with universities are striking.

Universities have seemed largely indifferent to the complaints of their users. Tuition costs have skyrocketed, forcing students to take on staggering loans. Net tuition (the cost after deducting grants) rose from 2000 to 2010 by 33 percent at state universities and by 21 percent at private nstitutions.

The College Board estimates that tuition and fees at public institutions rose 5.4 percent annually above inflation in the decade since the 2001-02 school year, resulting in a whopping 72 percent growth in tuition and fees since 2000.

The benefits, meanwhile, of those degrees have been mixed. In an online "brawl," Internet writer and educator Clay Shirky battled UC Berkeley graduate student Aaron Bady over whether online classes represented an improvement over the current system. Some outstanding classes (and schools) aside, many institutions of higher learning have been trying to reduce their costs in ways that don't help students.

"In the academy, we've been running a grey market in unsupervised internships and larger and larger lectures for a generation already," writes Shirky.

Massive open online courses "threaten that market."

Worse, even degreed students have had trouble finding jobs. Job-placement firm Adecco asserts that as many as 60 percent of college grads haven't been able to find a job in their chosen profession.

And so just as we saw blogs rise up and offer alternatives to professional journalism, we're seeing plenty of online education experiments.

So far, they've fallen into a couple of buckets: Some efforts, like those of 2U (formerly 2Tor), are working with universities to extend their programs into the digital domain.

2U, which has worked with U.S. institutions, pledges to keep the brand of the brick-and-mortar schools strong; others, such as newcomer CourseGateway, which is designing and providing online curriculum for institutions in developing countries and the Middle East, promise significantly lower costs.

Massive open online courses take a step away from the traditional schools. The largest such classes sprang from Stanford University:

Coursera, which has more than 2.6 million registered users, and Udacity, which recently signed a deal with Gov. Jerry Brown to offer a few courses in remedial math for credit via San Jose State University.

The East Coast has its own version, too: EdX emerged from the nexus of MIT, Harvard and others. Startups, such as StudyRoom, are even doing their own experiments, namely creating virtual-world study rooms to help students study together and collaborate.

The Minerva project is a different approach, one that aims squarely at the heart of the elite schools.

It promises to let its students get most of their classes from the "best in breed" online programs. It will let them room together in dorms located in cities scattered across the globe and then will deliver special seminars - at about half the cost of going to an elite U.S. university.

Learning gets distilled even further: A growing number of organizations offer to teach, some in exchange for certificates, some just to convey skills. Want to learn to program? You're probably better off at something like Codecademy.

Need video editing skills? Lynda.com, which has long offered video classes, just got a infusion of funding to dramatically expand their programs. Need to know more social media? Check out HootSuite University, a program with a certificate developed by the tweeting platform.

Online programs will certainly experience gaffes and growing pains, such as Coursera's recent hiccup offering a program in "Fundamentals of Online Education," which suddenly went dark after launch.

We also have to be vigilant about building in protections - for students, for quality. That's why a recent proposal to create a "Bill of Rights" for online learners attracted so much attention. That document (which I helped create) was aimed at starting a conversation - of laying out that as education moves out of the hallowed offices of university leaders, we are unlocking great opportunities for learning and responsibilities for the future of learning.

Bill of Rights for online learners

In mid-December, a dozen educators, writers and entrepreneurs, including EdSurge, convened at Stanford University to talk about the future of online learning. The conversation quickly moved to students: What should students expect in the world of online learning? Did they have rights?

Here's an excerpt of what the group produced - intended to start an important conversation about learning:

We believe that our culture is increasingly one in which learning, unlearning and relearning are as fundamental to our survival and prosperity as breathing. To that end, we believe that all students have inalienable rights which transfer to new and emerging digital environments. They include:

The right to access

The right to privacy

The right to create public knowledge

The right to own one's personal data and intellectual property

The right to financial transparency

The right to pedagogical transparency

The right to quality and care

The right to have great teachers

The right to be teachers

To read the Bill of Rights in full, go to http://bit.ly/12B8D2m

To learn more

An Internet "brawl" over online learning revealed concerns about technology change in the academy and in the educational technology business.

Source: 15 Feb, 2013/ Safe gate

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

India vs China: Economic Growth and Higher Education

India and China are battling to overtake one another in terms of economic growth in the coming decade. However, higher education enrollment is the principal indicator of economic growth as per World Bank statistics. When a nation significantly increases the number of university students it educates, that nation is likely to see an increase in economic growth in the decade that follows, reports William H Avery for the Economic Times. The same was witnessed in case of Japan and Korea in the early and late 1980s respectively.

China is noted to have an annual $250-billion investment in higher education, which will reward them soon. China has increased the number of institutes of higher education two-fold and increased the enrollment by five times in the last decade.

26 percent of China's university-age population is enrolled in an institution of higher education, while it is just 18 percent in India. However, in 1990 and 2000 India had outdone China in university enrollment rates.

In India the IITs and IIMs are considered as the driving force of higher education, but they reach a ridiculously small section of students and higher education for the masses is not well delivered. On the other hand China provides quality and quantity in terms of higher education to the masses.So is India doing enough to catch up with China? In 1995 the Indian government had introduced a bill in the parliament to allow foreign universities to operate in the country. However, the Foreign Education Providers Bill, the succeeding bill to the 1995 bill, is still lying in the parliament even after almost two decades.

With India's inability to rapidly build higher-education infrastructure, and refusal to let foreign universities in, the situation is grim. But, technology is helping India as American universities, like Harvard and MIT, have decided to put their courses online for free. Students can now access the internet and can take a class taught by international lecturers in big universities. The availability of free online content is a boon for Indian higher education.

If the availability of free online content is harnessed, a lot can be solved in India as many students in rural and urban areas can have access to world class education, which in turn can help in the economic growth of the nation.

Source: 01 Feb, 2013/Indo Link

Pending education bills hampering Indian edu sector, helping Singapore, Doha, Qatar: Shashi Tharoor

We are looking at a country with enormous pressure in education, but not enough institutions to cope with the demand.

Indian higher education is losing good students, and revenues, to Universities operating in International destinations like Singapore, Australia and even Qatar and Doha. And if the long pending Foreign Education Providers (Regulation) Bill is passed by the parliament soon, many top universities are still willing to come to India, and the anomaly can well be rectified. Similarly, the other 10 pending education bills, if passed soon, will have a positive impact on the ailing Indian education sector. These are the views expressed by Union HRD minister Shashi Tharoor while speaking at a program organized by News Chanel Headlines Today.

"Yale was willing to come to India, but they went to Singapore. Our students are going to Qatar and Doha to study in foreign universities. And they go to Australia, where some were even beaten up. Why do they do that? This is because there's not enough capacity in India. Harvard takes about 10-11% of those who apply, but IITs admit only 0.01% because that's all the room they have. We are looking at a country with enormous pressure in education, but not enough institutions to cope with the demand," said Tharoor.

Tharoor also talked about another controversial bill, Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010, which is pending in parliament for approval. "There's a legislation pending in Parliament, Unfair Practices Bill, which will outlaw donations and capitation fee with severe criminal penalties. But again, this is a Bill that needs to pass. We will also make accreditation mandatory for universities. We will tell them that if they don't make the cut, then shut down. We will start taking tough measures," said Tharoor.

So what is preventing these education Bills to be cleared by the parliament? Is education low on the government's priority? "We have 11 Bills on higher education pending either in the standing committee or have been introduced, but yet to be voted. Parliament has been dysfunctional for the last couple of years. In the last session, the government listed 25 Bills, but only three were passed," the minister of state for HRD said.

When questioned on the ministry's abject failure to raise the quality of education in government schools, Tharoor accepted there should be a

paradigm shift in education policy, but put the onus on state governments. "Our focus had been on inclusion and promoting equity as literacy was low. And we have frankly left behind quality. This is the new emphasis. We are preparing a national curriculum framework that will help our children compete globally. But education is in the concurrent list and states have a task cut out for themselves," he said.

Tharoor emphasized that quality education cannot be provided without dedicated teachers. "I have gone to schools and asked how many students want to be teachers. Very few raise their hands. This is a shame for a country which had a culture of respect for teachers. Part of the problem is because the profession is not well rewarded and lacks a glamour quotient. But the recent pay revision has changed all that. Now, a DU professor makes more money than a minister," he said.

Source: 02 Feb, 2013/MBA Universe

Infrastructure must for good education'

Last year was a year of achievements for Ranchi University, claimed the vice-chancellor of the university, L N Bhagat, on Friday. "Quality education does not just mean teaching students. It also means looking into their overall development and providing them good infrastructure," said Bhagat.

More than 15 professors from across the country from prestigious universities like the JNU, BHU, AMU, Osmania University, Calcutta University and the University of Rajasthan were invited by RU to teach post-graduate students from 15 departments.

"Apart from special lectures, there were several national and international workshops, conferences and seminars on topics like 'English language teaching in Jharkhand', 'e governance in higher education' and 'Social justice in India'," said Bhagat.

"We also revised the syllabi of various courses at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels and introduced M Phil for all departments," added the VC.

Infrastructure was a key area which got a lot of support from the VC. "We started a new programme called 'University at your doorstep' under which problems of colleges were identified, examined, processed and redressed on the campus of the college itself on that very day. Funds were made available to principals for providing drinking water with coolers, toilets for girls and boys and repair of girls' common room and classrooms. The funds ranged from Rs 9 lakh to 19 lakh." The university also cleared arrears of its staff. "If a teacher is not paid on time he will lose interest in teaching,Students will suffer as a result of this. We cleared all dues to make sure teachers pay full attention to their teaching said Bhagat.

More than 300 promotions and three-fourth pending arrears were cleared. "I am doing everything possible to make RU one of the best universities in the country. I hope to bring more changes in future," he said.

Source: 03 Feb, 2013/Economic Times

Americans Value Higher Education but Question Its Quality, National Survey Finds

Americans overwhelmingly view a higher education as essential to landing a good job and achieving financial security, but they have doubts about its quality and affordability, according to a new report from the Lumina Foundation and Gallup.

They also favor changes in higher education that would make obtaining a degree more realistic for working adults. A majority of respondents to a survey underlying the report said they supported the awarding of credit for prior learning and skills acquired outside the classroom. Three-quarters, meanwhile, said that they would be more likely to enroll in college if they could receive credit for what they already knew.

"The demand for postsecondary education is as high or higher than it's ever been," said Brandon Busteed, executive director of Gallup Education, which conducted the survey. But civic and economic demands are driving more Americans to view higher education through a pragmatic, job-focused lens, he said. "They're asking for something very different from what we've done in the past."

The report, "America's Call for Higher Education Redesign," was released on Tuesday and is based on more than 1,000 interviews that Gallup researchers conducted in November and December 2012 on behalf of Lumina.

The findings suggest that Americans acknowledge the central role of post-secondary education in employment and financial stability—but hardly think the current model is perfect. Three-quarters said college is unaffordable. And more than half said the quality of higher education is the same as or worse than in the past.

Despite those concerns, the notion of earning a college degree appears to be powerful. Of those who do not have a college degree or certificate, more than four in 10 said they had thought about going back to college in the past year. More than one in five said they were "very likely" to do so.

Mr. Busteed said that enthusiasm could provide a critical boost to Lumina's college-completion agenda, which aims to restore the United States as the world leader in the proportion of adults who hold college degrees by 2025. Lumina's goal is for 60 percent of Americans to hold a "high-quality degree, certificate, or other credential." Currently, about 40 percent of American adults hold a two- or four-year degree.

Since the data set of those interviewed was statistically weighted to reflect the adult population of the United States, Mr. Busteed said, that means 55 million Americans said they had thought about going back to college. And 28 million are very likely to do it. About 23 million adults would need to earn college credentials to close the completion gap, he said.

But the quality of that education—and whether it results in a certificate or a degree that leads to employment—matters most. "A good job is now what Americans want out of college," Mr. Busteed said. "Not just a degree."

Calls for a Redesign

Several leaders in higher-education policy said the survey's findings should prod campus officials and policy makers to shed outdated notions of who students are, why they enroll in college, how to educate them, and how to assess what they've learned.

Breaking free of the credit hour, as currently defined, could liberate colleges to be innovative in delivering a quality education to students, suggested Paul J. LeBlanc, president of Southern New Hampshire University. Speaking during a panel discussion here following the report's release, he said that at his institution the creation of competency-based education has allowed for a more-direct determination of what students are learning. The approach, which has been approved by the university's regional accreditor, would allow students who pass a series of assessments to earn credits without attending classes.

For Michelle Asha Cooper, president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, a successful redesign of higher education means focusing more—and meaningfully—on adult students' needs. The survey findings, she said, indicate that nearly all adults think higher education is important—but only a quarter think it's affordable, and more than a third say that family responsibilities are a barrier to re-enrollment. It's time, she said, to "think about education in a different way."

"We have refused to allow ourselves to think creatively and act creatively about what college can be for today's students," Ms. Cooper said. "The model that we're using is a model that is based in a traditional notion of higher education, and now, when we look at today's student body, over 75 percent of the student body is nontraditional."

Collaboration across sectors, strong partnerships between campuses and industry, meaningful engagement from civic leaders, and better communication with policy makers for elementary and secondary schools—all are necessary approaches to recast today's higher-education landscape in a way that will benefit students for generations to come, the experts said.

"We've got to think about how to create more opportunities for a large number of people at a very high-quality level," said Jamie P. Merisotis, Lumina's president and chief executive. "Because that's what society demands."

Source: 05 Feb, 2013/Chronicle.com

Government to remove imbalances in higher education: Manmohan Singh

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday said the government will work to remove imbalances and streamline equity-related schemes in higher education.

"We will keep in view concerns for equity. We will work to remove imbalances across states, across regions and across sections of society. We will streamline our equity-related schemes in higher education, target them better and provide them with increased budgetary support," Singh said at a conference of vice chancellors of central universities being held here at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Asserting that he expected central universities to be quality-leading institutions, the prime minister said: "We envisage a very important role for central universities in setting standards for higher education. We expect them to become role models and contribute to strengthening other institutions of higher learning in their vicinity."

Some central universities in far-flung areas can also contribute to reducing academic imbalances in our country," he said.

The prime minister said the educational landscape of India had been transformed beyond recognition and that "this transformation has touched all levels and types of education - primary, secondary, higher, vocational and skill development".

"I believe our government has given education its due. We have expanded access to education as never before. We have increased investment in education as never before. The share of education in the total outlay went up from 6.7 per cent in the

10th Five Year Plan to 19.4 per cent in the 11th Five Year Plan," he added.

"We have endeavoured to take care of the concerns for equity, enhancing scholarships and setting up institutions. It is for this emphasis on education that I have often referred to the 11th Plan as an Education Plan," the prime minister said.

Listing the government's achievements in education, he said: "Our government established 51 institutions during the 11th Five Year Plan, the highest for any plan period. These include central universities, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs)."

"The number of central universities has more than doubled after 2004-05, from 17 to 44. Each state now has at least one central university, except Goa where the state government did not want one. Special financial assistance was provided to the existing central institutions to enable them to provide 27 per cent reservation for the other backward classes without affecting the number of general seats," he said.

"These efforts have shown results. The enrolment in higher education grew from 16.6 crore to 25.9 crore during the 11th Five Year Plan. The gross enrolment ratio for higher education went up from 12.3 per cent in 2006-07 to 17.9 per cent in 2011-12. However, this is still much below the world average of 26 per cent," Singh said.

Source: 06 Feb, 2013/IBN Live

India needs new policies to nurture science, research and technology

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh unveiled a new science policy, at the centenary session of the Indian Science Congress. India's economic progress will be determined to alarge extent by the capabilities of our scientific institutions and our efforts to innovate as a society to meet some of the major challenges that we are likely to face in the future.

Indeed, if we look at economic progress in countries such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, we find that rapid industrialisation and growth in exports have been driven by scientific innovation and a powerful coalition between government, industry and research and academia. Soon after Independence India's leadership realised the value of developing our science and technology (S&T) infrastructure, and it was with this in view that the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research was set up largely as an autonomous organisation but chaired by the prime minister.

Subsequently, organisations such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Indian Council of Medical Research were established to build up a solid programme of R&D activities in specific sectors. However, over time many of our institutions lapsed into bureaucratic structures and, most importantly, S&T in the university system has actually regressed over time. If India wants to attain its rightful place as a major global force that does not necessarily derive its strength from military power but rather the exercise of soft power and excellence in knowledge, then a repair of our S&T infrastructure and building R&D capabilities in our institutions of higher learning acquire great urgency.

And, this can only be achieved if a crucial linkage between knowledge-based institutions and industry is established for the benefit of both parties. The prime minister is obviously aware of the value of upgrading India's scientific establishment and the critical importance of research becoming an important part of higher education. At the Science Congress, he said, "The quality of our scientific institutions will depend upon the quality of the students we can attract into science, the freedom we give them in pursuing scientific research and the human resource policies we follow in selecting leaders.

We must select only the best and we must expand our search to the Indian scientists abroad." Teri has carried out a detailed assessment of the state of S&T in India and has come up with analysis that can be used to initiate a dialogue within the country among major stakeholders for reshaping policies and R&D programmes in our universities as well as industrial enterprises in a manner that establishes synergies for the benefit of all stakeholders.

While the prime minister has set a goal to raise the expenditure on S&T to about 2% of GDP by 2017, outputs will have to be produced that are adequate either in commercial value or social benefits. In his address to the Science Congress, the prime minister emphasised the need for new breakthroughs in water-saving technologies for agricultural activities, the enhancement of land productivity and development of climate-resilient varieties.

Given the fact that two-thirds of our population lives in rural areas, an upgradation of agriculture and its transformation into a far more resource-efficient enterprise acquires highest priority. This would require the agricultural research system in the country developing closstaer linkages with farmers as well as industry. The impression has got around that agricultural research has become isolated from practical realities and not linked with an assessment

of future challenges. For instance, climate change requires a clear assessment of options by which crop patterns, water-use technologies, the development and use of drought-resistant species as well as a totally different mix of crops may need attention.

Today, a number of seed companies are growing rapidly and pursue their own R&D. Utilising their strengths fully would be in the interest of agricultural growth in India. The most important innovation for upgrading S&T in the country, however, would arise from upgrading research capabilities in our university system. This would presuppose the replacement of the current seniority-based promotion system with a reward system that is grounded in the innovative capabilities and research outputs of professors in every university.

The government type organisational structure in our universities stifles the creation of a research culture. It is necessary to activate a funding mechanism similar to the National Science Foundation in the US. This has already been recommended by the Scientific Advisory Council to the prime minister that suggested the creation of a .`10-billion fund called the National Science and Engineering Research Foundation.

Industry has been quite effective in influencing government policy on issues that really have short-term benefits for this sector, but when it comes to longer-term issues such as development of an appropriate S&T infrastructure in the country, industry has not really taken a lead. If, however, the Indian economy is to grow in a fiercely-competitive global environment, then industry will do well to see that it becomes an active party in the debate that must now take place and that, hopefully, will lead to a progressive upgradation of S&T and research activity in the country.

Source: 07 Feb, 2013/Economic Times

Six research institutes tagged in top 150 global think-tanks

Six Indian research institutes, including Centre for Civil Society (CCS), are among the top 150 global think-tanks in the annual list released by the University of Pennsylvania for the year 2012. CCS has been ranked at 51st in the list.

Other Indian think-tanks featured in the list are: Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) (105), Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) (109), The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) (110), Observer Research Foundation (ORF) (115) and Development Alternatives (141).

According to reports, three Indian Think-tanks were among the list top 100 institutes that excluded the United States. Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology (ATREE) and Center for Science and Environment (CSE) were among the top 20 environment think-tanks. The list was topped by Brookings Institution (United States) followed by Chatham House (United Kingdom) and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (United States).

University of Pennsylvania invited 6,603 think tanks from 182 countries to participate in the process. 1,100 plus individuals from 120 countries participated in the nominations and rankings process. Think tanks were nominated, and subsequently ranked, in 38 categories.

Source: 06 Feb, 2013/Engineering Watch

Planning Commission pushes for reforms with Kapil Sibal out of HRD ministry

With Kapil Sibal out of the HRD ministry, country's top advisory body, the Planning Commission, has pushed for more reforms in higher education to tackle the "deteriorating quality" and "eroding public confidence" in the country's public education system. The panel has asked the HRD ministry to shift its focus from country's exemplary institutions – Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management – and try to revamp the state and private sector institutions which enroll over 97% of total students in higher education.

"The strategy to improve quality should be based on national initiatives that benefit a wider range of institutions by creating a strong performance culture through effective use of competitive grants, focus on evaluation and feedback of both teaching and research and ensure transparency through information disclosure to enhance student choice," plan panel deputy chairperson Montek Singh Ahluwalia said in a letter to new HRD minister MM Pallam Raju.

Country's national objective is to double enrollment in higher education by 2020. The plan has identified 15 strategic issues which need ministry's immediate attention in the next five years including increasing the capacity of existing institutions to enroll more students rather than starting new institutions.

It also wants the ministry to significantly increase in budgetary support for equity related measures through targeted, integrated and effective equity related schemes to replace the existing maze of diffused schemes. And, the allocation should be made foster excellence by improving quality of teaching and research.

The panel also wants the HRD ministry to give more autonomy to institutions and focus only on evaluating their performance. It also wants more transparency in fee determination, placements and faculty appointments.

Ahluwalia admitted that all resources needed to implement the reform package may not be available because of financial constraints but said that the fiscal limitations should not prevent the ministry from "pushing various high impact ideas" that requires less investment.

He, however, said that whatever money is available should be directly related to desired outcomes. The higher allocation could also be used for hiring foreign faculty, the panel said, adding that the institutions should strive for alliance with other institutions and industry.
The second higher education reform, the panel believes, is needed to compete with China and other emerging economies which have increased focus on higher education to leverage benefit of the growing economy.

Source: 07 Feb, 2013/Hindustan Times

Digital Textbooks Come to Vocational Education

As the reach of digital textbooks expands into various levels and stages of education, from preschool through medical school, one of the underserved areas of academic ebook publishing has been vocational education. Now, Pearson UK and Gutenberg Technology have teamed up to release digital textbooks in several areas of career education, while making the titles available on the Windows 8 platform. This newest app compatibility makes Pearson's products available for Apple, Android, and the even broader reach of Windows 8 consumer learners.

More importantly, Gutenberg's single workflow design means that publishers can create content without having to worry about the time delay of formatting it for different mobile devices. This is especially important in the vocational arena, as many US-based career training programs don't qualify for the grant funding to purchase technology; students will often provide their own, and dictating that vocational students must adhere to purchasing devices on one platform instead of allowing them use mobile devices they are already own can be cost prohibitive for the students.

"The flexibility of our platform, which was engineered for industrial use, allowed us to add Windows 8 to our output list in less than three months," said Francois-Xavier Hussherr, CEO of Gutenberg Technology, in a press release. "With such an innovative technology that masters the industrial creation of interactive multi-platform textbooks, Gutenberg Technology is now ready to offer Pearson mobile learning content on any device."

While the publisher is already known for its digital textbooks, which are in use by millions of students worldwide, this initiative marks its expansion into a whole new level of certification programs. Pearson UK's ActiveLearn Go, which it will launch at BETT 2013, already supports three vocational training programs, allowing students to access their learning materials on any mobile device.

Source: 01 Feb, 2013/Goodreader.com

Disruptive Innovation Needed in Higher Education

Disruptive Innovation" is a buzz phrase that is running wild through the world of entrepreneurship these days. There are Disruptive Innovators discussion groups on LinkedIn and Facebook. Though president of Southwestern College, Santa Fe, I am a card-carrying member.

What is disruptive innovation? It may be more elucidating to start by naming some of the disruptive innovators of our era. Apple's Steve Jobs, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Ebay's Pierre Omidyar and Meg Whitman. Then there's Facebook's Mark Zuckerman, Skype's Nikklas Zenstrom and Paypal's Peter Thiel. These guys (used loosely) never believed for one second that there is nothing new under the sun.

Disruptive innovators are insanely creative. They are, by definition, rule-breakers, and so almost invariably end up as entrepreneurs. They have to set their own rules, or create a world in which there are no rules. Richard Branson and his rocket ships. Like that.

Whether or not they are in it primarily for financial success, they do operate in a for-profit sector where that insane creativity, outrageous resourcefulness, unspeakable risk-taking, and staggering self-confidence can command riveted audiences with venture capitalists. They make things happen. To use Steve Jobs' words, they "put a ding in the universe." I like it.

I, on the other hand, work in higher education, in the Academy, where tradition and conservative policy (sometimes legit and sometimes the fear wolf in sheep's clothing) are everyday realities. While I "get" the twenty million reasons put for forth for this way-of-being-in-the-world, "tradition" and conservatism of vision and action can create potentially great procedural and energetic roadblocks, not to mention budget-blamed ones.

Paradigm shifts go somewhere else to be born. Sometimes even just simple change is impossible or so slow the pain of it will kill you. Or your spirit.

No wonder the disruptive innovators don't live in the Academy. They would go nuts.

So here's the thing. The world is moving a billion miles an hour. Fact. This habit of riding the Titanic of some academic traditions is sending many academics and institutions to the bottom of the wine-dark sea. Example: An esteemed professional colleague of mine, Adam Karwoski, is a social media consultant to institutions of higher education. He recently addressed forty administrators at a major state university, and upon ending his dynamic presentation, he was met with no questions. None. Zero. They were showered with data, shown competitors' social media sites, offered strategies for enhancing alumni and donor relations and generosity, and much more.

"Yeah, s'not in the budget."

$3500 to create a total social media campaign and provide a huge boost to recruitment efforts (read "ROI").

"Yeah, s'not in the budget."

Ok, then. Except as a president of a graduate institution, I know there is always room in the budget for great ideas and initiatives, just the way the totally booked Hyatt has no room for me and you, but miraculously finds a room for the president or the pope. They just do. And there is always money. Especially for initiatives that will add to a current income stream, and, for many institutions, create new ones.

Hello.

Of course there are a million such examples at every institution. But the fact is, disruptive innovators make a lot of people uncomfortable, especially those who like rules, predictability, order. Those folks do not want a lot of innovation, and they sure as hell don't want it to be disruptive. If they'd wanted that, they probably would not have gone into higher education administration.

Still, why does there seem to be fewer disruptive innovators in the administration of higher education? Is it perhaps as simple as the fact that there is no true profit motivation in higher education, so it both attracts and cultivates a certain conservatism that feels at home in the old traditions of the Academy? Many of the famous disruptive innovators didn't even have the patience to make it through University, let alone choose in it as their career path or soul's destination. Of course Bill Gates is the first name that comes to mind. Then Branson, Jobs, Walt Disney, Henry Ford, Frank Lloyd Wright, Michael Dell, Rachel Ray.

But in the face of true paradigm shifts, the central tendency of higher education is to naysay, pooh-pooh, denigrate, dismiss. It maintains the status quo. It's just easier.

Of course the for-profits were different, and of course they quickly snagged mad market share. They offered a disruptive learning technology (distance), which was viewed early on as a travesty, a joke, a fad, hardly worth acknowledging, Whoops.

What allowed these schools to both see the vision and act on it? Well, for starters, they were business guys, not academy guys. They saw a huge market that was being ignored, and while traditional universities were basking in smug skepticism, the University of Phoenix ate their lunch. They let Ohio State have all the 19-year-olds and took all the rest. Capella and Walden let all the APA approved psychology programs cherry pick their top ten students, allegedly the cream of the cream, and they took the remaining hundreds or thousands who had been, or knew they would be, rejected by the APA programs. They took the itinerant military family that could not commit to staying in the same city for four to six years. They took the moms who could not leave the house every day to attend classes on a campus, and they took the rural populations that had Wi-Fi, but no access to a major university. APA-approved Psychology programs, with their artificially deflated enrollment, had nothing to offer those populations.

That's a lot of leftovers.

The disruptive innovators saw a flawed system, or only partially effective system, which showed little interest in accommodating the outliers. The traditional academy railed against the low quality of the online educational experience and platform, even while simultaneously hiring a million IT guys and instructional designers in an effort to catch up, albeit with a loud harrumph. Even now, I suspect the traditionalists are grumbling happily at the hot water and black eyes some for-profits have experienced of late as greed and a keen eye for loopholes and profit opportunities in Uncle Sam's 150 billion dollar financial aid program were just too good to pass up.

So, ok, maybe disruptive innovation is amoral. That's ok. Most things are. I mean, you can use a bottle of Holy Communion wine to celebrate the mass, or you can hit somebody over the head with it and steal their wallet. The wine bottle is neutral. Disruptive innovation has changed the world in a

million great ways, and probably some less great ways as well. So it goes. It is neutral.

I have to say, when I read Inc. Magazine, Entrepreneur Magazine, Fast Company, and even the slightly stodgier Harvard Business Review, I get extremely energized by the ever-increasing world of possibilities the universe is manifesting. I skyrocket this energy into my graduate school, making some folks kind of nervous. Oh, hell, what big ideas does Jim have now?

But some leaders in the world of higher education know that social media is no fad, and that all of the crazy changes coming down the pike, created and driven by disruptive innovators somewhere, are going to end up being part of their world or part of their professional undoing, depending on how they choose to receive them. The digital natives are getting old enough to be the bosses of the older digital immigrants, and they will be any minute.

Source: 09 Feb, 2013/Huffington Post

Give quality education at school level

Teachers from institutions of higher education have a key role to play in preparing their counterparts from the school sector for imparting quality education to the first generation learners, said Ved Prakash, chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC). He was addressing the 106th convocation ceremony of the University of Pune (UoP) on Saturday. "This is also one of the key concerns before the commission," he said.

Vice-chancellor of UoP W N Gade presided over the ceremony that saw a total of 58,668 students getting degree and diploma certificates. This included 310 PhDs and 78 gold medals.

Prakash said, "The gross enrolment ratio, which refers to percentage of students from the relevant age group of 17 to 23 accessing higher education, has been on the rise due to the first generation learners joining mainstream education."

"It will be important to see that when these learners reach the institutions of higher learning, they are fairly capable of meeting the learning requirements of the higher education system. This can be ensured by imparting quality education in the school sector. Teachers from higher education can contribute a long way to meet this objective," said Prakash.

Prakash also highlighted the need for all universities to apply greater focus on student-centric initiatives and use of resources in education in an effective manner.

Earlier, presenting an annual report of achievements and plans, Gade touched upon issues ranging from accreditation, infrastructure, automation, innovation and research, among others. "The UoP has started an elaborate automation process in the examination, academic, administration and finance sections. We have proactively initiated the examination process audit to ensure extended transparency and compliance with the statutory and business processes."

On innovation and research, Gade said, "Adaptation to and application of a new technology has to be an integral part of the curriculum development for all stages of education. New methods and teaching aids must equip the younger generations to learn more, explore more and contribute more to the society."

"We will bring in skill development component in curriculum in association with the state government and the National Skill Development Corporation. To ensure undoubted research quality, we have adopted anti-plagiarism practices by introducing software-based verification," he added. Gade said, "We need to bring reforms in all areas and revise our curriculum as per the need of the credit system. Students have to be provided with facilities needed for learning."

Former UGC chairman Arun Nigavekar, former UoP VC Ram Takwale, registrar Dilip Dhawale, finance and accounts officer Vidya Gargote, controller of examination SampadaJoshi, director of board of college and university development V B Gaikwad and others were present.

Mangesh Bapu Pol of the Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana arts, science and commerce college, Wagholi, was presented the prestigious 'The President of India Shankar Dayal Sharma gold medal' for overall excellence in academics, sports and co-curricular activities. Amruta Prakash Marpakwar was presented the gold medal for topping the MA English exam.

Source: 09 Feb, 2013/Times of India

School education at uncertain crossroads

Professor Abul Khair Jalaluddin has donned many hats in his career. The eminent physicist had provided technical assistance to BRAC's Chandina Learning Improvement Project (CLIP) as a UNDP/Unesco international advisor to Bangladesh. He held responsible posts in top institutions like the Maulana Azad Center for Social and Elementary Education and the National Council of Educational Research and Training. Together with Manzoor Ahmed, he has authored 'Basic Education and National Development: Lessons from China and India'. But being the director of Sarba Shiksha Abhijan has been biggest challenge for him so far.

The Bengali bhadralok opens up to Krishnendu Bandypadhyay in a freewheeling chat, expressing his concern over the current state of school education in Bengal. Excerpts:

What plagues child education in Bengal?

A. Petty politics has ruined the administrative set-up of school education. I have found the headmasters here have no control over teachers and the non-teaching staff. The secretary of a school, who is invariably a political appointee, calls the shot. The teachers do not come to school. Even if they come, they do not teach. Since they have no accountability, they've lost interest. This has left a large number of students, particularly, from the backward regions, into the darkness of ignominy. If a larger number of youths come out partially or ill-educated, it'll reflect on the GDP of the state.

Moreover, funds under Sarbashiksha Abhijan are not utilized properly. When there should be one secondary school against two primary ones, it is one secondary school against 4.5 primary schools in Bengal. So many children do not get the chance to cross the boundary of primary education.

How does it affect the school education in general?

A. Many government-sponsored schools across the state, particularly in urban areas, have become unviable. There is ready infrastructure, but the failure of these schools' delivery system has led to mushrooming of private schools. Since majority of parents cannot afford the private schools, they are lagging behind. Private schools have a better delivery system, so students from financially well-off families are flocking there.

Is there any hope for school education in the state?

A. Some time back, the US went through a similar crisis. So the government had issued a special charter by which each school got a new trust, with least or no government interference. The board trustees, whose children study in the school, became the new stakeholders. This one policy changed the quality of education in those government schools. Here, the policy is framed by someone whose child goes to some elite school. The guardians of the students who study in government schools have no voice. In Rajasthan, an organization called Bodh now runs 200 such schools that became unviable. Bodh has involved parents to steer the schools. So parents there have greater voice than those in Bengal.

In Birbhum, I have started experimenting with 14 schools. I did the same for some Al Amin Mission schools in the state. I have devised a bridge course for students from backward regions so that they can catch up with mainstream students. At the school level, there should be a parents' body and a local body of trustees. When there will be pressure from both ends, school education is bound to bounce back.

Was withdrawal of English in schools a blunder?

A. The sentiment behind doing every work in Bengal was quite understandable. But the emotional upsurge was not backed by reason. Unlike Germany, Russia or China, where every research paper and book gets translated in no time, Bengal has no such luxury. So policymakers had framed a policy devoid of any pragmatism. They were completely oblivious to the world outside Bengal. This has left a generation with very poor or no English language skills.

Source: 09 Feb, 2013/Times of India

With Hollande visit, India's education diplomacy faces test

India's strategy of using education as a diplomatic tool faces a key test during French President Francois Hollande's visit this week, amid differences threatening an ambitious collaborative project both governments have cited to demonstrate close ties.

India is hoping France will finally ink a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) to jointly handhold the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jodhpur, five years after the two governments first announced the project. Though a consortium of French universities has already started research work with the IIT, the two countries are yet to sign a broader agreement covering promised assistance from France, because of differences in perceptions over how the project could help India and France.

Failure to reach an agreement on the MoU during Hollande's visit, starting Thursday, could force India to rethink its use of collaborative education projects as a tool of diplomacy, senior government sources have told HT.

"We need to re-evaluate whether this strategy is working," a senior official closely involved in the discussions with France said. "It's not just about France, our strategy as a whole is facing problems."

In 2007, India and Japan had announced plans to jointly sire IIT Hyderabad. But as with France and IIT Jodhpur, the collaboration with Japan over IIT Hyderabad has had a rocky journey. Japanese academic institutions and companies have begun exchange programmes with Indian students, but the two countries are yet to sign an agreement for a Rs. 1509 crore loan Japan promised the IIT. India has also asked Japan for an additional Rs. 100 crore grant for IIT Hyderabad, officials said.

The tie-ups with France and Japan are among the most high profile instances of what Indian officials call "education diplomacy" - this country's use of its growing demand for quality education to gain diplomatic leverage in a changing world.

The collaboration over IIT Jodhpur was a key element of the joint statement issued by India and France when then French President Nicholas Sarkozy visited New Delhi in December 2010.

Three years earlier, in August 2007, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his then Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe announced that the two countries would jointly set up IIT Hyderabad, the location picked by Japan after it first considered Bihar, the birthplace of Buddhism, Japan's most widely practised religion. The two countries set up a working group to draft a blueprint for the project. The team submitted a report in October 2008, when PM Singh visited Tokyo.

Students have long been New Delhi's favoured tool of education diplomacy. The sharp rise in the number of Indian students studying in the US has mirrored the growing strength in ties between the two countries over the past two decades. The UK, France, Germany, Spain, Australia and Canada have in recent years also stepped up efforts to lure Indian students.

India's attraction as a destination for students from many developing countries seeking quality higher education has helped it diplomatically build ties with many African and Asian countries. In countries like Ethiopia, generations of Indian teachers have helped strengthen diplomatic and people-to-people relations.

But when India launched 8 new IITs in 2008, it opted for a strategy from an earlier generation. In the 1950s, newly independent India had built its first set of IITs with help from foreign governments.

IIT Bombay came up in 1958 with financial and technical assistance from the Soviet Union and UNESCO. In 1959, IIT Kanpur was launched with American help and IIT Madras with Germany's support.

Half a century later, when India decided to turn back to that strategy in starting the new breed of IITs, some educationists and economists had questioned the strategy. As a fast-growing economy, India no longer needed funds or technical expertise from developed countries struggling economically themselves, critics argued.

"If the collaboration with France doesn't yield the results we had hoped for, we may be forced to conclude that we were wrong in our strategy," an official said.

Source: 12 Feb, 2013/Hindustan Times

Should India Re-Think Higher Ed for the Economy's Sake?

India's vast network of colleges and universities may need to reorganize to become more effective, says an Indian government Planning Commission adviser. Working with American professor Philip G. Altbach, Pawan Agarwal surveyed the state of higher education in India for The Hindu. Indian students are committed and enthusiastic, but colleges aren't preparing them enough for [...]

India's vast network of colleges and universities may need to reorganize to become more effective, says an Indian government Planning Commission adviser. Working with American professor Philip G. Altbach, Pawan Agarwal surveyed the state of higher education in India for The Hindu. Indian students are committed and enthusiastic, but colleges aren't preparing them enough for real jobs.

As many as 34,000 small colleges are spread out through the population of India, serving neighborhoods and towns under umbrella affiliation with large universities. Agarwal and Altbach point to this as the chief weakness of Indian higher education:

> *Many of India's 34,000 undergraduate colleges are too small to be viable. They are generally understaffed and ill-equipped; two-thirds do not even satisfy government-established minimum norms, and they are unable to innovate because of the rigid bureaucracy of the affiliating system that links the colleges to a supervising university. All this makes the system highly fragmented, scattered and difficult to manage. There is a strong case for consolidation and merging small institutions.*

At the same time, Indian business and industry is very supportive of reforming higher education to send better-equipped graduates to the work force. By decentralizing the university/college system, the government might free these small schools to start partnering with industry or trying new ways to teach. Perhaps some of the largest universities could be broken down into smaller regional universities, they suggest.

Rising salaries for college and university teachers should help to support these reforms. Five years ago, a pay raise to draw more qualified teachers was one of the top priorities.

Among 28 countries in a recent study, India ranked fourth in entry salaries for academics — better than

the other BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) nations. China scored near the bottom for average salaries. This good showing is the result of the major pay increase implemented in 2006.

India's college and university enrollment has risen steadily. As much as 18% of India's young adult population is enrolled in higher education. Agarwal and Altbach compare this rate with other nations whose education levels rose quickly during the 20th century:

While the United States had an enrolment rate of 15 per cent by the 1940s, most advanced nations reached that stage several decades later. The United Kingdom, Australia, France, and Japan had enrolment rates of 18, 23, 24, and 25 per cent in 1975; and Korea enrolled only 8 per cent in 1975, which rose to 13 per cent in 1980, and then rapidly rose to 34 per cent in 1985.

> *While India has targeted its desired enrollment rate, by 2018, to be as high as 25%, the nation faces some unique challenges. Although India educates and employs some of the most advanced scientists in the world, most of its adult population still works on low-technology farms. When over 50% of a nation's workers do not need to read or write in their work, many young adults who make the investment in education are taking a risk. 18% participation in higher education is a remarkably high rate for a mostly agricultural nation.*

India has always been a leader in sending its students abroad for study, too. Recently, the former British colony dropped from the top international feeder to British universities, giving first place to China.

Source: 12 Feb, 2013/Education News

Five Reasons the Government Shouldn't Subsidize Higher Education

When the government is in the business of handing out money, interest groups lobby to get it — or advocate to receive more than they are already getting.

So it is with spending on higher education.

As the Michigan Legislature debates the state budget for the upcoming fiscal year, more money for preschool, college and everything in between is being proposed. Over the long-term, the funding for those areas as increased dramatically. Taxpayers should be skeptical of the current reasons for subsidizing universities further.

Requests for more higher education funding is reported willingly in the media: It's the "most important investment" people can make. It "returns $17 in economic benefits" per dollar spent. It results in "lifetime earning power."

But the central arguments are dubious for five main reasons:

1. There is no link between higher education subsidies and economic growth, and none between college degrees and job creation.

Since 1980, Michigan has spent a much higher proportion of personal income on state government support for higher education than nearby states like Illinois and Ohio. According to Ohio University economist Richard Vedder, by the year 2000, the Mitten State was spending the sixth most in the country (2.34 percent of its personal income), double what Illinois was spending and much more than Ohio. This did not lead to higher growth as Michigan's economy performed among the worst in the country during that time period.

And states with a higher proportion of college graduates do not necessarily grow by adding more college degrees. A comparison of the number of state residents with a college degree with per capital income growth from 2000-2008 yields no correlation.

2. More subsidies equals more waste.

The number of administrators and service staff at Michigan's 15 public universities increased at a faster rate than full-time equivalent students. Administrators and service staff numbers went from 19,576 in 2005 to 22,472 in 2009, while full-time equivalent students increased from 250,030 to 257,230 over the same time period. At the same time, the compensation for the average employee increased 13 percent.

Michigan is not alone: A 2009 report from the Center for College Affordability and Productivity showed a 20-year increase in administration and support staff. And revenue for Michigan's public universities went from $4.2 billion to $5.0 billion, largely from higher tuition and fees. The average compensation for University of Michigan full-time faculty increased from $122,943 in 2005-06 to $141,753 in 2009-10. The University of Michigan-Flint now has more administrators than faculty.

Colleges set tuition rates relative to supply-and-demand, but government subsidies distort this process and inflate the cost. That's why schools like Grove City College (my alma mater) and Hillsdale College, which receive no government funding, do a much better job at keeping down the cost of tuition. Annual tuition at Grove City is $13,598, the cheapest of all institutions of higher education in Pennsylvania. Tuition at Hillsdale is $20,760 a year. Both are much cheaper than the average cost of

private colleges and universities in the country at $31,975 a year.

3. When comparing earning power between college graduates and non-graduates, correlation is not causation, and the actual cost of college matters.

Proponents of more funding for higher education almost always cite the same statistic as their main point: Overall, college graduates tend to make more money in their lifetime than those without a degree.

But this assumes that the degree caused the higher earnings, rather than the fact that those who complete college are already more likely to be financially successful whether they attend university or not.

The common figure cited is that a college degree is worth $1 million over the lifetime of a worker. Besides ignoring the point above, this is a poor exercise in statistics. The number is arrived at by taking the difference between the average pay of a college graduate and the average pay of a non-college graduate and multiplying it over a 40-year career.

First, that only tells us what the average is today, not what the actual future earnings are.

Second, this assumes that all college degrees have the same value. For example, it assumes that a Bachelor of Arts in art history is the same as a Bachelor of Science in quantum physics. Most significantly, it ignores many important factors: taxes, the real salary data of today's graduates, the opportunity cost of going to college (how much someone would earn during those years in school), the fact that a large proportion of students start school and do not finish, and, most importantly, student loan debt.

4. Ensuring that everyone has college schooling would not enhance the labor market — it would dilute a university degree.

The assumption among many is that every career should require a college education. This belief leads to subsidies for subjects with little practicality in the workforce and areas where a student may be better off doing an apprenticeship or working for four years than attending more school. Pushing for everyone to go to college does not automatically make those students university-ready, it lowers the overall standards of higher education. This has lead to a high dropout rate, more repeated classes for those in school and an explosion of marginal subjects in which many degree-holders are forced to work outside that field because of a lack of demand. In short, incentivizing degrees students do not ever use.

5. Higher education may be the next bubble to burst.

Much like the housing bubble, higher education is fueled by government subsidies, publicly-backed loans and incentives that say everyone should be doing something. As noted and expanded on by law professor Glenn Reynolds, economist Richard Vedder and writer Nathan Harden, tuition costs have skyrocketed well above inflation while colleges compete to expand into areas outside of their main purpose and taking on more debt to do so. At the same time, competition from other sectors, like online education, offer cheaper alternatives to the bread-and-butter of university academia.

It is important for citizens to be educated, both to learn a job and to better be able to respond to a changing marketplace. But there is a difference between education and schooling.

Spending more money to send people to get a specific number of degrees at a specific institution is different from education. Education comes in the form of apprenticeships, trade schools and time on the job learning.

And education is something you can't force on someone else. Just putting someone in college does make force them to learn anything. Education is a personal matter, and more subsidies will only influence a person's decision to learn or not to learn at the barest of margins.

Higher education can build new skills, enhance old ones and show prospective employers that students are able to put in the time to earn a degree. But the value of a degree varies — by the institution, the cost, the time and the subject.

From an individual's perspective, college may be worth the cost. But for a growing number, it's not. And state subsidies, where political incentives trump market realities, only exacerbate that problem.

Source: 13 Feb, 2013/3

Diverse Conversations: Supporting Underserved Populations in Higher Education

The field of higher education has changed completely in the past couple of decades. Unlike before, when only a few talented and intelligent students went on to get a college education, now it has become a necessity, as the jobs available in the new economy require more than just a high school diploma. Because of this, American institutions of higher learning are experiencing an influx of students that may not have been part of the college scene as early as a decade ago. Recently, I sat down with Dr. Stella M. Flores, Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Vanderbilt University, to

discuss how institutions of higher learning can better support underserved populations.

ML: How are first-generation, low-income, and minority students faring in the modern academy in relation to the past? How can we get things to where they should be?

SF: The trends show that we have more access to higher education due to increased options via the community colleges and now online learning programs. So the modern academy does not look like an older traditional academy. However, when we account for other characteristics, the demographic trends are less favorable. We are not doing as well with some groups such as Hispanics, while we've seen some improvements with other groups.

First-generation, low-income and minority students fare better when they have adequate access to financial aid, support programs that properly introduce them to and sustain them through the academy, and proper high school preparation that equips them to handle the rigor of college work. The reality is that many of the high schools that launch these students have not provided this preparation, placing the burden on the academy to make up for this lost ground.

ML:What can policy and decision makers do to help historically underserved students to succeed in college?

SF:First, policymakers and decision makers can come to the table as stakeholders in support of educating underserved students as a larger societal and economic mandate. Educational attainment is beyond an individual good, yet we behave as if it is a zero-sum game in almost every instance. Second, succeeding in college is largely based on succeeding in high school. While it seems that aiming for the high school diploma is no longer a problem, the new battle, it seems to me, is an equity fight for the courses that lead to reasonable and serious *college eligibility* for all groups.

Some states have enacted policies to make the college curriculum a default curriculum. This is a great step, but we have to know when policy is not enough. Stakeholders as a group can identify what levers will also have to be in place for the policy to work. Policy is an essential but insufficient step in helping students succeed in college. I would also argue it is also not only the responsibility of education policymakers as health care, family, and employment decisions are especially competing options in low-income and underrepresented student lives.

At the college level, I would suggest the funding and expansion of interventions we know work for students based on their institutional culture. Institutions that enroll a moderate to high percentage of students in need of remediation will require different interventions than an institution with innovative retention programs for students with the preparation and motivation to major in a STEM field.

Third, reducing time to degree to the extent possible, will likely be a key element in all of these programming efforts. Fourth, many highly successful historically underrepresented students will point to at least one minority faculty who made a difference in their pathway to greater achievements. That is not to say that non-minority faculty members don't play a role in this pathway to success. However, this is one element that seems to be consistent in the average underrepresented student success story. I know my life would have been different had I not seen the first Mexican-American female professor at my university.

ML: Historically underserved students are disproportionally burdened with student debt when compared to other groups. What can be done to close this gap and alleviate their burden?

SF: There is emerging research on financial literacy on how to plan for college, choose college based on options and loan debt, and the timing of the receipt of this information. One reality, however, is that many students faced with a "first" in completing college, specifically a selective college, take on more debt than they can handle in efforts to make family history. My advice would be to understand the tradeoffs in these decisions.

Second, there are many schools now that offer free tuition to high achieving, low-income students if parental contribution is under a certain amount. The lesson here is to tell the low-income eighth-grader that, if he or she is able to achieve at high levels, college may be reasonably affordable if not nearly free at a good school. This is of course dependent on the economy and institutional sustainability of programs. However, it seems we are providing incorrect information when we say a public school education will always be cheaper than a private school education.

One good formula to suggest to our younger students is to aim to be academically high achieving, get information on options across all institutions, don't "undermatch" yourself, and plan to finish in time if at all possible. For those of us with loan debt, I can imagine a new pool of teachers, professors, health care professionals with simple loan forgiveness programs administered at

the state or federal level. It seems to me this would be a relatively easy marketing campaign that could change the structure of the labor market in ways the labor market needs to stretch—stronger teachers in the professions, more nurses in our hospitals, etc.

ML: By 2050, Caucasians will no longer constitute a majority in the United States. What does this mean for higher education?

SF: This is an important demographic to keep in mind as we plan for a future. Will we respond with safeguarding stratification at institutions based on race, ethnicity, and income or will we prepare leaders from all groups for all institutions? In essence, this means state economies will likely thrive or die based on how they educate their least educated group. This will have even more dire consequences for states whose least educated group is also its most populous group.

ML: What is your vision for higher education in the 21st century, and what are the key opportunities and challenges suggested by this vision?

SF: My vision for the 21st century is to more profoundly understand the potential of our individuals and institutions in the context of historical and remaining challenges. By that I mean moving past stereotypes, fears, and anxieties to a place where we have the opportunity to see all groups as equals because we have seen leadership, research, success, and vision from everyone in our circles. In my vision, we won't second-guess each other's talents and contributions based on what we look like.

My vision is also to speak up for each other's educational well-being even if that person is different from ourselves. In sum, we create a vision in which all have an opportunity for a solid high school education that prepares you to succeed in college and a college education that prepares you for a job and dare I say the opportunity to attend a graduate or professional program. The challenge will be to do this in a world with exploding and evolving technology in which the "have-nots" will likely be the last in line to access the future.

Source: 13 Feb, 2013/Diverse education

Higher education is not an assembly line

Re "Higher ed too inefficient" (Capitol & California, Feb. 13): Good education cannot be mass produced. Students with critical thinking skills are not widgets on an assembly line.

One cannot peel back their skulls and put in knowledge the way one can fill cans or bottles. Online courses are fine for conveying basic information, but if students have questions, there must be people with answers. Good online education is not cheap. How much online education did the legislative analyst have to reach his exalted position?

Yes, the University of California is an elite institution. Students pay more for a UC diploma than a California State University diploma; they think it's worth more. Its cache comes from its faculty who do cutting-edge research. Tell them to do more teaching and they'll do less research, and the distinction between UC and CSU will disappear.

Source: 13 Feb, 2013/ Sacbee

MOOCs : A pivotal development in higher education – or a complete miss?

MOOCs, massive open online courses, are destined to change the face of higher education — for better or for worse. This may be particularly true for developing countries where access to higher education might be more challenging or costly.

According to a report from *Forbes*, MOOCs offered by elite universities such as Cambridge, Harvard, MIT and Berkeley provide a way for students all over the world to participate in online, quality and college-level classes.

lthough online classes are nothing new, the concept backing MOOCs finds courses that are designed entirely for the online world. Instead of offering a basic syllabus and a few reference materials for students to review in isolation, MOOCs offer complete content, link to other resources, discussion communities and the support of professors running the class – free of charge.

A report released at the end of 2012 and led by Moody's Investors Service, indicated MOOCs represent a "pivotal development" in higher education worldwide.

"Questions remain whether these online courses can be profitable and whether traditional colleges will award credit for them. But if successful, MOOCs could lead to lower costs for families and access to higher-quality instruction for anyone in the world who has Internet access," wrote Mary Beth Marklein from USA Today.

In fact, Coursera, an online platform of free MOOCs offered by a partnership of 33 world universities, says up to 74 percent of students enrolled in their classes come from countries other than the United States.

Affordable education for all? Who could possibly have a problem with that?

Some argue the main problem with MOOCs revolves around sustainability. MOOCs are mostly free or low-cost for students, but they pull revenue from brick-and-mortar schools. Mostly, MOOCs are currently funded by universities and private entities.

An associated concern is the impact that global education – at low costs – will have on local colleges in developing countries, and even in North America. So far, as MOOCs do not offer accredited degrees, this does not seem to be an urgent issue. However, it is one critics of MOOCs warn about.

Both for-profit and nonprofit MOOCs exist and while they offer a variety of online courses for international education, some feel students participating in those courses will lack some of the real-world interactions and credibility challenges offered by traditional college education.

"At this point, there is no reason to believe MOOCs, which have their fair share of flaws, can replicate a traditional education," says Daniel O'Brien from The Lamrom, adding:

"While students may benefit from the knowledge that they obtain through MOOCs, which will be entirely dependent upon their personal motivation – organization, desire to learn and time commitment – the skills they obtain, if any, are not actually connected to a degree, and in this material society, that piece of paper means a lot."

Source: 14 Feb, 2013/VOXXI

International Baccalaureate - 'It teaches you not to give up'

Make no mistake, an International Baccalaureate is tough, but that's when pupils really get going.

It's one thing to know what the International Baccalaureate (IB) might involve, but anyone enrolled on a programme or investigating the qualification for the first time may well be daunted by the prospect. The good news is that they won't be alone in those fears, as many students share them. They may also turn out to be largely unfounded.

"Before starting the IB I felt extremely intimidated," admits Josh Hammond, a student at St Clare's school, Oxford. "I had heard countless complaints about the difficulties of the IB. But, once you get going, you become more efficient at time management and the work seems less daunting."

There's plenty to think about when it comes to the day-to-day reality of following an IB programme and, like Hammond, many students and teachers highlight the importance of good time-management from the outset. "Your IB experience can become quite gruelling if you don't get on top of it," says Alex Bird, head of the theory of knowledge and world religions faculty at UWC Atlantic College. "If you've got a deadline in six months, don't wait until it's upon you. Chip away at it."

Although students need to sharpen their organisational and study skills, they needn't do it silently – or without support. "IB students are expected to be risk-takers and communicators," says Sarah Jinks, a biology teacher at St Clare's. "But the tasks we set are designed to help them develop those skills. You're not expected to have them when you arrive."

The IB emphasises dialogue and group work, she continues, which can initially be a stretch if you're used to a one-way flow of information from teacher to student. "Being willing to voice your opinions and participate may be intimidating at first," says Jinks. "The benefit is that you're forced to challenge what you think."

According to Bird, being exposed to other perspectives through group work as well as being required to carry on with a broad range of subjects can be both helpful and challenging for students. "They may struggle in one subject but be a master of another, and that can be very humbling," he explains. "But it's also really powerful, it will teach them not to give up and help develop their self-respect."

The IB's broad curriculum isn't its only selling point. At the core of the qualification are three elements – an extended essay, a series of creativity, action and service (CAS) activities, and the theory of knowledge course – that set it apart from other programmes and may seem alien to students at first. However, they clearly have a purpose. Former ACS Hillingdon student Oscar Croysdale, currently an undergraduate at the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, found that the extended essay gave him more confidence in his written work. "Students who last wrote an essay for their GCSEs have found it a big challenge," he says. "But because I completed the extended essay, I haven't found it so daunting."

Likewise, at the start of the course, the 150 hours of CAS activities students must undertake can seem intimidating. Not so, reassures St Clare's student Jonny Corrie: "CAS is the least intimidating part of the IB. It's an opportunity to do what you love the most and even try something you've never done before."

A wise choice of activities will stop it becoming a chore, he says, and the target isn't hard to reach

with regular work. "Provided you attend an activity in each area at least once a week you won't have any problems."

Tom Walsh, vice-principal, adds that a further benefit is the recognition of the students' efforts within the curriculum. The end result is personal satisfaction and development. "Whether it's through sports teams, expeditions, learning to play a musical instrument or helping care for people with learning difficulties," he says.

The final aspect of the IB, the Theory of Knowledge course, considers abstract questions such as "What is reality?", explains Bird. "I'll ask, 'if we close the classroom door, how do we know that the corridor outside is still there?' Some people find that frustrating but then you'll bring it back to the subjects they're studying. For example, in the natural sciences, what would you have to do to prove that the corridor is still there?"

Charlie Constable, a student at Whitgift School in Croydon, London, explains that the theory of knowledge course broadens horizons and helps students strengthen their ideas or beliefs by questioning them. "My experience has been enjoyable, if a little strange at times, but that's the purpose of the course. I would advise people to come in to theory of knowledge with an open mind," he says.

The IB clearly challenges students and, as a result, parents can expect their charges to be tired (several students mention a need for plenty of coffee). They may even need to step in to enforce some time off now and then, says Bird, while Constable's father would support him with encouragement, persistent interest and discussions of how things were going.

Jennifer Nadel, whose son is at UWC Atlantic College, adds that the academic step up from GCSE to the IB can be quite large, "so children have to find their own motivation, otherwise they simply can't keep up".

She notes that the high workload can also mean setting aside holiday time for coursework and essays, but points out that support is always available from staff and other students.

Michael Burns, a Whitgift student, would agree. "The worst parts of the course have been the occasional nights where work has continued into the small hours of the morning," he reveals. "But the best parts have been being able to laugh them off, talking about our shared struggles with fellow IB students."

While the realities of the IB may include multiple deadlines, hard work and the occasional late night, there are plenty of benefits too: developing a broad, inquiring mind; self-discipline; even language skills. They're all things universities and employers value, and Bird adds that IB graduates are often the most interesting people "to sit and talk to about the meaning of life".

But for those only just beginning their IB journey, UWC Atlantic College student Nicholas Olsen has one simple bit of advice: enjoy it. "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to continue education with a wide breadth of ideas and a lot of scope to try something new," he says. "Just have fun!"

Source: 14 Feb, 2013/Independent

Soul-search on future of Indian education

The Planning Commission's recent proposal in the draft 12th Five Year plan to promote 'for-profit' initiatives in higher education is likely to have an effect on the education system, felt speakers at a seminar on the 'Role of Higher Education in Building a Knowledge Society'.

The panel discussion was held on Monday by the O P Jindal Global University, Sonipat in Haryana. National Capital Region of Delhi, held the panel discussion on Monday at a city club.

It was attended by educationists, principals, teachers of city schools and colleges, lawyers and others.

The speakers were Asok Kumar Ganguly, the chairman of the West Bengal Human Rights Commission, Justice Kalyanjyoti Sengupta, judge, Uttarakhand High Court, Malabika Sarkar, the vice-chancellor of Presidency University, Sujata Sen of the British Council, C Raj Kumar, the vice-chancellor of the host university and R Rajesh Babu of IIM, Calcutta.

The speakers showed a new path to reframe and reform the standard of Indian academia and also suggested how the institutes can adapt to the changes that have taken place globally in the field of higher education.

President Pranab Mukherjee's recent observation at an event in IIT Kharagpur that India had gained independence for over 60 years but still did not have a university of world renown was one of the main reasons for organizing the panel discussion, Padmanabha Ramanujam, the assistant professor and assistant dean (academic programmes) of Jindal Global Law School, said.

"The objective of the event is to understand whether the institutions that offer higher education are on the right path. It is necessary to create a knowledge society for the uplift of human resources

and the institutes play a significant role in this regard," he added.

Ganguly defended the Planning Commission's proposal that welcomes commercialization in education and rued that the Right to Education Act was still not implemented properly throughout the country. Sharing his views he said, "Knowledge is power and in India, those who have knowledge have little power at their disposal. Having started my professional career as a teacher, I think schools, colleges and universities are more important than religious institutions."

"The majority of our countrymen are ignorant about several things including legal issues due to their illiteracy. It is time for the Indian institutes to gear up for the sea change in the academic field. Private institutes are demanding huge amount of money as fees every month, which middle class people cannot afford. To make a strong knowledge society, we need to keep the door for higher education open for all students, irrespective of their family backgrounds, caste and creed," he added.

Sarkar said that state universities were treasure houses of knowledge but could not beef up infrastructure because of a funds crunch. For international rankings, there are certain parameters, which seem to deter Indian universities from being marked in ther list to some extent. The policy makers should keep in mind that the education system entails revision and review. Her point was that awakening young minds is vital to create a knowledge society and basic facts about science and humanities should be encouraged, for these are the backbone of any social development.

C Raj Kumar discussed the critical challenges faced by the Indian institutes such as the lack of good faculty, infrastructure and resources. According to him, the Planning Commission has observed that the objective of their new proposal is to bridge the demand supply gap in higher education. A recent presentation by the HRD ministry reveals that central universities have 6,542 vacancies, 15 IITs have 1611 vacancies and 13 IIMs have to fill 111 vacancies. This year's rankings dominated Asian universties with those of China, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Republic of Korea.

"India should obliterate the discrimination between public and private institutions, rather there is a need to assess them on the basis of quality teaching, research and capacity building. Some of the world's top class universties like Harvard, Yale, Stanford and MIT are private. For the reformation of our academic standard, we need to develop some non profit institutes that aim to promote academic freedom. State universties are in a deplorable condition and the existing legal framework of the governance of Indian universities is based on a lack of trust on the part of institutions to be able to do the right thing. Our laws and regulations have reinforced the belief that regulatory control of varsities can only ensure quality and maintain standard."

He also added that Indian universities need to lure students from abroad and we ought to have an international outlook, discarding myopic vision that does not highlight global realities. Globalization and transformation of Insian economy created diverse career options for students and very few aspire to be teachers. Democratization of knowledge creation means giving freedom to faculty members the freedom to work in India regardless of their nationality.

Source: 15 Feb, 2013/ Indian Express

Accreditation in higher education why and how

India has witnessed a massive expansion of universities and colleges since 1950-51. While universities grew from 25 to 614, colleges grew from 700 to 33,023 with student enrolment increasing from one lakh to 169.75 lakh and teachers from 15,000 to 8.17 lakh, resulting in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 13.58 per cent as of 2012. With the 2011-12 student enrolment of 1,79,96,752, the GER is projected to swell to 30 per cent by 2020.

Despite rapid reforms in higher education, matching reforms in funding pattern, accountability, quality and excellence could not be achieved because of capacity constraints in government higher education institutions (HEIs). This resulted in private HEIs (60-80 per cent) gaining prominence; substandard infrastructure and inadequate faculty (average deficit of 51.36 per cent in universities and 41per cent in colleges, UGC 2009); and loss of ethics and values in administration of both government and private HEIs.

In order to authenticate quality and certify HEIs, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was set up in 1994. So far it has been able to accredit only 172 universities and 4,857 colleges as on September 15, 2012. Of these, only 35.38 per cent of universities and 10.03 per cent of colleges are graded 'A', lending force to the call that accreditation be made "mandatory" instead of "voluntary".

While the need is justified, the road map and methodology are contentious. In the West, accreditation is an integral component of both

government and private HEIs. Affiliation of new colleges, though uncommon in the West, happens only after Level I accreditation.

Besides, accreditation councils there are fully autonomous.

The scenario in India is skewed due to political and money-power interference right from the time a college is established. Affiliation is dictated by forces from outside as well as from within for pecuniary benefits by following farcical processes. Neither the existing NAAC nor the proposed state-level accreditation councils have full autonomy, structural stability and operational accountability. According to the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority (NARA) for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010, an accreditation agency has to be a non-profit organisation registered as a company under the Companies Act, a society or trust and controlled by the Central or State government; contravention of the Act or obstruction of any officer of the agency will be punishable. The pursuit of quality must be aimed at internalising and institutionalising it. A logically feasible quality cycle may consist of:

(a) Level I accreditation of any new HEI before it is provided affiliation to a university, using an uncompromising, robust methodology by that particular parent university.

(b) Level II accreditation is the establishment of a structured Internal Quality Assurance system within a year of Level I accreditation, as a self-regulatory mechanism.

(c) Level III accreditation is the mid-term assessment of the HEI through external academic, administrative, audit committee once in three years to be co-ordinated by the State councils for higher education.

(d) Level IV accreditation is the 'Grade' awarding mechanism by the State-level councils/non-profit private organisations/professional PPP organisations once in five years. These bodies have to be duly approved after an accreditation process by the NARA with the condition that they be insulated from multidimensional interference while being bestowed with accountability-linked autonomy.

(e) Level V is the national-level quality monitoring system by NARA to develop policies, instruments, approval norms, legal and incentivising mechanisms, besides imaging the national-level higher education quality enhancement to people, government and international agencies. It is high time we decided whether we require translatable and implementable programmes or policies with programmes only on paper!

Source: 15 Feb, 2013/ Times of India

RESOURCE

Only 11 in 100 Muslims take up higher education

Eleven of 100 Muslims in India take up higher education – the lowest as regards religion-based enrolment in higher education. In comparison, 20% Hindus and 31% Christians pursue higher education, states a draft report compiled by the union ministry of human resource and development.

The figure for other religions is above the national average pegged at 18.8% of the country's total population. The draft report, which is based on the National Sample Survey (2009-10) data, attributes the low percentage among Muslims to "various socio-economic reasons".

Higher education includes technical, vocational and professional courses at secondary and post-secondary levels.

The situation is worse in rural India – only 6.7% Muslims take up higher education.

The low enrolment among Muslims has prompted the national planning commission to propose a new scheme to open colleges in Muslim areas over the next five years.

On Sunday, economist Amartya Sen advised Muslim clerics to look into core issues of poverty, education and health within the community, instead of skirting them by organising protests against trivial issues like films or writer Salman Rushdie.

Chairman of the human resource department's national sub-committee for minorities' education, Dr Zahir Kazi, attributed the poor enrolment to low share at school level and lack of targeted efforts by state governments.

"In Maharashtra, where Muslims constitute 12.5% of the population, enrolment in elementary education rose from 6% to 12.8% between 2006 and 2011. But states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal need to do a lot," said Dr Kazi, also chairman of Anjuman-e-Islam Group of educational institutes.

Social activist Fareed Khan attributed the problem to wrong priorities of Muslim leaders. "The recent protest against a film will help the producer make money while common Muslims get nothing. I hope our leaders work seriously to uplift the community first," said Khan.

Source: 05 Feb, 2013/DNA India

Govt schools lag behind private institutions: Report

While the HRD ministry cries foul over budget cuts an independent report on education points out that despite significant rise in public spending, parents continue to opt for private schools with government educational institutions failing to offer quality education.

Central contribution to elementary education increased by 90% from Rs 203 billion in 2007-08 to Rs 383 billion in 2012-13, while secondary school allocation rose by 271% to Rs 98 billion. Allocation for higher education increased by 268% to Rs 148 billion.

Despite this significant increase the role of private sector in education has risen, says IDFC Foundation's India Infrastructure Report 2012. In 2011, 25.6% of all elementary students those in the age group of 6 -14 years who are enrolled in schools, attended private institutions, in comparison to 18.7% in 2006. Most institutions of secondary and higher education are driven by private sector. Private institutions make up 60% of all secondary schools in 2009-10, and 63% of all higher education institutes, with 52% of the share of students, in 2006.

Over the last two decades, there has been a significant rise in children receiving some form of private schooling, either through attendance in a private school or private tuitions. The rapid rise in private schools has been driven by 'budget schools'. These broadly refer to unregulated private schools that are accessed by low-income families as they charge lower fees than regular private schools. Budget schools keep costs low by having minimum infrastructure and resources, and teachers on contract who are paid a fraction of the salaries of their counterparts in government schools.

While HRD ministry data indicates that there are 26,377 unrecognized schools reaching out to 2.7 million students, the report says this could be gross underestimate with the recent ASER study estimating as many as 40 million rural children receiving assistance from private sector.

The report also portends bad news for the Right to Education (RTE) Act, saying that requirements for schools on various fronts like infrastructure, teacher qualifications and salaries will force a large number of non-government schools to shut down if they fail to comply with the norms by April.

"In effect, this means impending death for thousands of nongovernment schools around the country that do not meet these standards." the report said. ASER estimates that nearly 40 million rural children will be affected if unrecognized private schools are closed down.

The report, however, says that the education sector is embedded in a restrictive regulatory environment and suggests flexibility in laws and an overhaul of the education system. The report recommends that learning outcomes of school education should be improved through reform in pedagogy and curriculum, teaching children through their learning abilities and teaching carried out by professionally trained and motivated teachers.

Source: 07 Feb, 2013/Times of India

Over regulation hinders higher education: IDFC study

The Indian higher education sector is plagued primarily by over regulation and under governance, coupled with the poor quality of institutes owing to lose accreditation policy. According to the report, the higher education sector is characterized as over regulated and under governed

The Indian higher education sector is plagued primarily by over regulation and under governance, coupled with the poor quality of institutes owing to lose accreditation policy, a recent study report has rued. Low enrolment into higher education and inequality among genders and urban-rural divide in this regard are making things worse, IDFC's annual publication, 11th India Infrastructure Report: Private Sector in Education, said. Jitin Prasada, Union minister of state, human resource development, released the report in New Delhi on February 6.

The report discusses challenges in the education sector — elementary, secondary, higher, and vocational — and explores strategies for constructive change and opportunities for the private sector. It has suggested some immediate steps required to reform the sector to reap the benefits from 'demographic dividend' due to a rise in the working age population in order to enhance long-term economic and social growth.

Over regulated: Despite repeated government promises to free the higher education sector and encourage private sector participation, the ground reality is not at all encouraging. According to the report, the higher education sector is characterized as over regulated and under governed. Restrictive and cumbersome regulations and onerous tax and trust laws have queered the pitch for private participation.

Other restrictions on the use of financial instruments to raise fund, defining fee structure, offering courses and defining curriculum, and

defining the intake capacity have created large entry barriers for serious players. While the political economy is guided by the premise that corruption is prevented by curbing autonomy, but it breeds despite heavy regulation, the study has observed.

Pending education Bills: Several education Bills that could have changed things for the better have not been placed or passed in Parliament.

At an event of February 1, Sashi Tharoor, Union minister of state, human resource development, lamented that Indian higher education is losing good students, and revenues to universities operating in Singapore, Australia and even Qatar and Doha. According to Tharoor, if the long pending Foreign Education Providers (Regulation) Bill is passed soon, many top international universities will be able to enter India, and the anomaly could well be rectified. Similarly, the other 10 pending education Bills, if passed soon, will have a positive impact on the ailing Indian education sector.

Low employability: Low employability is a problem with Indian graduates. A report prepared by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) and McKinsey found only 25% of technical and 10% of non-technical graduates employable. The latest MeriTrac-MBAUniverse.com Employability Index showed that only 21% MBAs were employable in 2011-12.

According to the IDFC report, skill development is necessary to increase employability. However, many skill development initiatives are not focussed on the needs of the potential employer, and thus resulting in low employability, the IDFC study said. Also, low enrolment in skill-training courses arises from negative perceptions that skill training programs are for those who could not make it to the formal system. Funding skill development is difficult as the private sector is often not willing to pay because of various risk factors, and bank financing is not easy because of the poor credit worthiness of the candidates, the report said.

Making teachers more resourceful: The report says there is an alarming shortage of qualified teaching staff across the education spectrum. The recruitment process has been virtually frozen over a period of time. The IDFC report draws attention to a sorry state of affairs where limited or no effort has been made to build institutions for teacher training. The existing ones have a lack of faculty and outdated curricula.

Way forward: The state of education in the country is in disarray owing several reasons. There is thus an urgent need to overhaul the education system in a more holistic manner. The IDFC report suggests some steps, which if followed with purpose, can bring in some positive changes in the higher education sector.

a) Higher educational institutions should be allowed greater autonomy with accountability

b) There should be mandatory accreditation of higher education by independent agencies

c) Principles of ranking should be evolved in order to introduce competition on quality and encourage accountability

d) Vocational training should be designed with the active involvement of industry to ensure skill development matches industry needs

e) Criteria for recognition of higher education institutions should be based on programme outcome

The changes suggested in the report are, however, only the basic ones. A whole-hearted effort on the part of all the stakeholders is needed over a period of time to effect an overhaul in the system.

Source: 08 Feb, 2013/MBA Universe

Scoring higher on education

Effective spending, reworking the affiliation system and breaking academic bureaucracy are key to better universities

Although Indian higher education suffers from many dysfunctionalities and the system overall is characterised by "pinnacles of excellence in a sea of mediocrity", it does reasonably well by some international comparisons. Here are a few examples:

— India is a global leader in terms of GDP spent by public and private sources on higher education. India devotes a very high proportion of its national wealth on higher education. At 3 per cent of the GDP (1.2 per cent from public and 1.8 per cent from private sources), India spends more than what the United States (1 per cent public and 1.6 per cent private) or Korea (0.7 per cent public and 1.9 per cent private) spends on higher education. This suggests a limited scope for further increase, though more is required since in absolute figures, investment in higher education does not measure up to international terms. Further, there is an urgent need for effective and efficient use of funds to promote both equity and excellence.

— The gross enrolment rate — the proportion of the age group accessing higher education — of 18 per cent is among the highest for countries at India's level of development. This is particularly impressive

given India's size and complexity. The recently approved 12th Five-Year Plan aims at raising the gross enrolment rate to 25 per cent by 2017, which is both desirable and achievable.

— Finally, academic salaries, by accurate purchasing power parity comparisons, are quite good. Among 28 countries in a recent study, India ranked fourth in entry salaries for academics — better than the other BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) nations. China scored near the bottom for average salaries. This good showing is the result of the major pay increase implemented in 2006.

Value for money

Is India gaining value for its investment in higher education? Also, is more money the answer to the challenges? Most observers would agree that on average Indian colleges and universities do not do a very distinguished job and are definitely not "world class". A number of factors are related to the positive trends noted here. Though India invests significant sums in postsecondary education, with the funds increasingly coming from students and their families, it does not spend effectively. There is little coordination between the States and the Central government.

Many of India's 34,000 undergraduate colleges are too small to be viable. They are generally understaffed and ill-equipped; two-thirds do not even satisfy government-established minimum norms, and they are unable to innovate because of the rigid bureaucracy of the affiliating system that links the colleges to a supervising university. All this makes the system highly fragmented, scattered and difficult to manage. There is a strong case for consolidation and merging small institutions. But the affiliating system is vast and deep-rooted and, therefore, is neither feasible nor desirable to dismantle it. However, decentralisation of part of the curriculum holds great promise. With greater academic autonomy, the core courses could be retained by the university, while the responsibility for the rest of the curriculum could be devolved to the colleges. This would create a desired innovation culture in the colleges. Clustering and even merging colleges that are very small would also have to figure in this reform. In addition, universities that affiliate a large number of colleges would need to be reorganised into two or more universities, with each affiliating a smaller number of colleges to improve overall academic effectiveness.

While gross enrolment rates are not bad by relevant international standards, India, however, is about four decades behind most advanced nations in enrolments. While the United States had an enrolment rate of 15 per cent by the 1940s, most advanced nations reached that stage several decades later. The United Kingdom, Australia, France, and Japan had enrolment rates of 18, 23, 24, and 25 per cent in 1975; and Korea enrolled only 8 per cent in 1975, which rose to 13 per cent in 1980, and then rapidly rose to 34 per cent in 1985. All these countries have achieved a system close to universal higher education; but it must be recognised that enrolments have grown based on the rise in demand for qualified people, with agriculture contributing to less than 5 per cent of the workforce. Considering that over half of the people in India are still engaged in the farm sector with limited need for higher qualifications, current levels of enrolment in India appear to be adequate.

The bigger challenge is that the students do not choose to study in fields that will best contribute to economic growth — or to their own job prospects. Also, employers regularly complain that graduates are not adequately prepared for available jobs.

While it is true that Indian academics, by international comparisons, are relatively well paid, they are not necessarily effective. Academics, and especially college teachers, are constrained by rigid bureaucracy. Further, their work is not carefully evaluated — salary increases and promotions are awarded rather on the basis of seniority. Unfortunately, when salaries were increased in 2006, this boon was not accompanied by any reforms in the teaching profession or requirements for evaluation. A System of Academic Performance Indicators for promotion and appointment of professors and lecturers is yet to take roots. It appears that Indian academics want to do a good job and most are committed to their profession. However, structural impediments and an ossified culture get in the way.

Our general impression is that despite several areas in which India compares well, globally, deep structural and cultural impediments constrain the academic system as a while from performing effectively.

Conclusion

India has achieved some areas of accomplishment in higher education. The challenge is to capitalise on these plans and reform an ossified system. In the Indian case, expenditure does not necessarily mean effectiveness. In this way, Indian higher education may be compared to the American health care system. The United States spends the most per capita on health care, but expenditure does not yield results. The Obama reforms, like the 12th Plan in India, may finally improve an ossified system

traditionally dominated by special interest and conflicts between the federal government and the States. The 12th Plan provides a good framework for change. It seeks to align Central government investment with that of the State governments — align new capacity with demand. It also seeks to create a performance culture through deepening of competitive grants and creation of related institutional arrangements. However, success depends on effective implementation.

(Philip G. Altbach is professor and director of the Center for International Higher Education, Boston College, U.S. Pawan Agarwal is adviser for higher education, the Planning Commission, Govt of India.)

Source: 12 Feb, 2013/The Hindu

Higher education faces leadership challenges: Survey

The higher education sector in India is facing serious leadership challenges and this trend is likely to continue till 2020, according to a study published in New Delhi. Academics feel that high professional integrity, ethical standards, global exposure and ability to change are some of the other requisite qualities of a transformational leader.

The higher education sector in India is facing serious leadership challenges and this trend is likely to continue till 2020, according to a study published in New Delhi on February 14. This may create a yawning gap between the existing pool and the requirement of academic leaders to meet 12th Five Year Plan and India Vision 2020 for the higher education sector, the survey revealed.

The survey, conducted jointly by Education Promotion Society of India (EPSI) and MBAUniverse.com, received responses from thought leaders, chancellors, vice-chancellors, directors, deans, principals and professors located in 37 locations globally. The findings were released during an EPSI summit on 'Developing transformational leaders for Indian higher education'. Sashi Tharoor, Union minister of state, HRD, inaugurated the event.

When asked about 'the critically important traits of a transformational leader in Indian higher education, 80 per cent of the respondents cited 'futuristic approach to development' as the most important trait, followed by 'understanding of higher education ecosystem' by 57 per cent of the respondents.

Academics also felt that high professional integrity, ethical standards, global exposure and ability to change were some of the other requisite qualities of a transformational leader.

More than one-third of the respondents felt that being an academician was not a popular career choice as it lacked adequate mentoring. Lack of academic leadership, guidance and training (60 per cent) and low salary (50 per cent) were the other reasons why the education sector failed to attract promising academics.

- Indian higher education sector is facing shortage of capable leaders with 92% of the respondents saying that this trend is expected to continue until 2020.
- Just 5% of the respondents said that there was no paucity of leaders.
- Nearly 81% of the respondents pointed to a serious gap between the existing pool and the requirement of academic leaders to meet 12th Five Year Plan and India Vision 2020 for Higher Education sector.
- Only 18% respondents said that there is moderate gap between the expected demand and the available pool.
- When asked about "the critically important traits of a transformational leader in Indian Higher Education", 80% of the respondents cited "Futuristic Approach to Development" as the most important trait of the transformational leader, followed by " Understanding of Higher Education Ecosystem" by 57% of the respondents.
- "Exceptional academic record and research orientation", as well as "strong administrative ability and relationship orientation" were seen as equally essential traits with half the respondents voting for these.
- High professional integrity, ethical standards, global exposure and ability to change were some of the other requisite qualities of a transformational leader.
- More than one-third of the respondents felt that being an academician was not a popular career choice as it lacked adequate mentoring.
- Lack of academic leadership, guidance and training (60%) and low salary (50%) were the other reasons why the education sector failed to attract promising academics.
- The survey conducted in early February 2013, received 111 responses from thought leaders, chancellors, vice chancellors, directors, deans, principals and professors located in 37 locations globally, including USA, UK, Dubai, Germany, Australia, France and Hungary. In India, the respondents came from 22 Indian cities including Delhi-NCR, Pune, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Manipal.

• The survey examined why Indian higher education institutes are unable to attract overseas Indians with exceptional academic background and proven leadership skills.

• Three-fourths of the respondents cited highly bureaucratic Indian systems and siloed approach of stakeholders as the key reason.

• Poor appreciation of academics and perception that academicians in the higher education system have low integrity were other reasons why the reverse brain drain wasn't taking place.

• The respondents added that low brand-value of India, low or superficial orientation to research and development, poor compensation and incentives, high levels of corruption in institutions and society, and management myopia were reasons why well-known academicians did not consider India as a potential destination.

• To bridge the gaps for leadership challenge in higher education systems the questionnaire proposed to the respondents if experienced corporate sector, civil and defence services professionals could fill the leadership gap in the higher education institutions.

• Eight out of 10% felt that managing knowledge-based institutions is different from other organisations, even though 20% of the respondents commended them for their superior ability to manage the institutions.

• On the formal mechanisms needed to bridge the gap and initiatives, about 79% of the respondents voted for initiating transformational leadership programmes for founders of academic institutes and academic leaders, which will mentor potential candidates for bigger roles.

• Creating a group of academic leaders, both Indian and foreign, for grooming potential leaders annually was favoured by 51% of the respondents, with less than 10% voting for setting up a separate institution for this purpose.

"The results of the survey on leadership challenges in the higher education system are alarming and demand a serious attention by political leadership, policy makers, chancellors and vice-chancellors," said Dr G Vishwanathan, president, EPSI, and chancellor of VIT University.

The respondents added that low brand-value of India, low or superficial orientation to research and development, poor compensation and incentives, high levels of corruption in institutions and society, and management myopia were reasons why well-known academicians did not consider India as a potential destination.

Other noted educationists and thought leaders who addressed the event included Prof Arun Nigavekar, former chairman of University Grants Commission; and Prof K B Powar, chancellor, D Y Patil University, Pune.

Source: 14 Feb, 2013/MBA Universe / Times of India

Moody's Is Right, and Wrong About Higher Education

This January, Moody's Investors Service issued a negative outlook for the nation's colleges and universities for the fifth straight year. The credit reporting agency's perennial gloomy forecast underscores the challenge academic leaders face daily: preserving excellence while a still-limping economy exerts downward pressure on revenues from virtually every source.

But this year, the agency's report was bleaker than ever, amended to include the country's elite, best-financed institutions. To preserve current programming and ensure funding for future initiatives, Moody's urged "bolder actions" on the part of campus leaders from all sectors to take on what it identified as "the entrenched cost drivers" of the sector's business model: shared governance, classroom instruction, tenure, and student life services.

Indeed, these volatile times require vision and courage to make the high-stakes decisions that will shape college campuses for generations to come. But I would argue that Moody's prescription for reform is counter productive. The real test for educational leaders is how to solicit diverse opinions in our decision-making as we assess the benefit of bedrock services to provide an excellent educational experience for our students. The entrenched cost drivers Moody's cites are, in fact, fundamental to our principles and our enduring value as institutions.

Shared governance, when appropriately implemented, assures that transformative change is embraced by the entire community. A decade ago, when TCNJ overhauled its entire curriculum, faculty and staff played key roles in strengthening and deepening the intellectual engagement of students and professors. A strong emphasis on both faculty and student scholarship, for example, was a critical contribution that allowed us to enrich our classes, create research opportunities for our undergraduates, and embellish our brand. It also proved a wise investment, evidenced by an uptick in research dollars, an increasingly competitive application pool for student and faculty slots, and greater success in placing our students in top

graduate programs and jobs, thus cementing their loyalty.

The kneejerk opposition to tenure one often hears is simply uninformed. In and of itself, tenure is not costly - long-term service is. Nor does tenure, in and of itself, erode productivity.

Our tenured faculty do not inhabit a competition-free zone, but contend with newer hires for research dollars and students. Some of our senior faculty remain our most productive scholars and our most sought after mentors.

Indeed, tenure remains a key incentive to attract and retain exceptional faculty, whom we value for their scholarship, their experience in dealing with students, and their commitment to the institution. We count on the tenured faculty for regular input into campus matters, and appreciate their unvarnished opinions about the direction of the college. It was the senior tenured faculty leadership who drove much of the success of the curricular innovation at TCNJ.

In addition to top-notch classroom instruction, student life services such as residential education, tutoring, academic advising, psychological and health services, and other mechanisms of support, are important factors in the success of our students. In keeping students on track, working to capacity, and graduating on time, we save money for families and taxpayers.

In the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement, about 84 percent of first-year students reported that substantial support from faculty and staff members led to their academic success, while 88 percent of seniors said they'd consulted with faculty about their careers. We attribute our consistently high graduation rate of 86 percent within six years in part to the success of these programs. Critically, counseling also allows us to better understand and support students of concern.

Since the economy soured more than five years ago, TCNJ has done everything possible to cut spending and optimize services without undermining essential programs and practices.

We have consolidated functions, left administrative posts unfilled, and shaved energy costs by tailoring our schedule so that we take certain buildings offline at times of peak power usage.

We've raised revenues by increasing enrollment and better utilizing our space.

The College is currently working with a private developer on a project called Campus Town that will provide us with student housing, a new gym and bookstore, needed retail amenities, and an annual ground lease beginning at $400,000 and growing in subsequent years.

As campus stakeholders meet to update the College's strategic plan, we are encouraging everyone to think entrepreneurially about programs and revenues, and to consider new ideas and technologies with an open mind.

We are beginning to incorporate online instruction into some of our classes, while we maintain that students learn most powerfully face-to-face. We will carefully assess the effectiveness of these initiatives, which are in fact quite costly. In the end, our fiscal solutions must be aligned with our mission and strengths.

As a college president, it is my job to think long-term, always bearing in mind that what we do here is not simply ready our students for their first entry-level job. We're preparing them for something much more important: to be nimble and engaged citizens with the intellectual skills, compassion, and resolve to make meaningful contributions wherever life takes them.

Source: 14 Feb, 2013/Huffington Post

2013 Outlook: Indian Education Sector

We have a stable outlook on the Indian education sector, including both the school and higher education (HE).

The low ratings of small and less established education institutes already factor in the negative impact of enrolment slowdown, which is mitigated by India's demographic advantage and low literacy rate. We expect the market size to be Rs 6,024.1 bn (USD 109.8bn) by FY15, driven by robust demand.

Expanding Market Size

Indian education sector's market size in FY12 is estimated to be Rs 3,411.8 bn (USD 71.2bn). We expect the market size to increase to Rs 6,024.1 bn (USD 109.8 bn) by FY15 due to the expected strong demand for quality education.

The market grew at a CAGR of 16.5% during FY05-FY12. The HE segment was at 34.04% (USD 17.02 bn) of the total size in FY10 and grew by a CAGR of 18.3% during FY04-FY10.

Inadequate educational infrastructure

Although the government's (centre and states) spend on education increased to 3.35% of the GDP in FY12 Budget Estimates (BE) (FY05: 2.62%), the infrastructure, for both school and HE, needs to be upgraded to provide better quality education and absorb new enrolments.

The existing institution's (schools and colleges) capacity is not fully utilised and notwithstanding the enhancement of access (99% of rural population has primary school within 1 kilometre as of September 2010), the quality of infrastructure is poor.

Infrastructure and Intake

Particulars	Number of institutions	Students (m)
Kindergarten to Twelfth (K-12) - Government (m)	1.11	
K-12 - Private (m)	0.31	
Total (K-12)	**1.42**	**243.2**
HE (both private and public) (numbers)	33,500	
Universities (both private and public) (numbers)	634	
Total (HE, numbers)	**34,134**	**20.7**

K-12 data is for FY11, HE and universities numbers data - end December 2011
Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), District Information System for Education, India Ratings

Under the model schools scheme, launched in November 2008, it is proposed that the state governments build 3,500 schools and another 2,500 schools under public private partnership (PPP) framework.

The government also intends to build additional public school infrastructure through its funding and in PPP model. We view this as a positive factor, nevertheless the execution delays portend a slip in targets. Private spend on the education increased by a CAGR of 3.23% during FY04-FY11 and stood at Rs 361.74 bn in FY11.

However, private sector building schools in rural areas is unlikely in the short-run. This allows the government to diligently invest in Tier 3 cities and rural areas. At end November 2012, 20 states had been permitted the formation of 145 private universities.

Quality of education

Prolific growth in HE institutes resulted in the challenge of offering quality education and employability to students. Many technical institutes also run courses without approval from the regulator All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

This is because AICTE does not recognise them due to various reasons including absence of infrastructure and the requisite student teacher ratio (STR).

Although the Eleventh Five Year Plan mandated accreditation of all the HE institutes, the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for HE Institutions awaits the parliament's approval.

Dearth of competent teachers and faculty

The Indian education sector needs trained and quality teachers and staff.

Future STR Achievability Test (HE)

(M)	2011	2016
Students	16.98	25.94[a]
GER (%)	18.8	22[b]
STR	1:21	
Teachers	0.82	
Assumed STR	1:15[c]	1:20
Required teachers	1.13	1.30
Deficit	**0.31**	
Annual additional teachers requirement until 2016		0.10
Achievability		Difficult

[a] Calculated on the basis of projected population of CSO
[b] Assumed rate
[c] As per UGC norms for HE
Source: CSO, MHRD, India Ratings

The historical STR marginally improved in the primary and HE segment during FY01-FY10. We predict moderate growth (below 10%) in the HE teachers' strength in FY14 based on the historical CAGR of 7.91% during FY01 to FY11. In our opinion, the sector will be unable to achieve the STR proposed by the regulator in the medium term (UGC STR 1:15). GER is the gross enrolment rate in the table aside.

Regulatory challenges

The HE segment is tightly regulated by multiple agencies as opposed to K-12 segment which is regulated mainly by state education boards or the two national boards. State governments' fee ceilings, fee reimbursements and intake restrictions constrain institutions' autonomy. That said, the remarkable growth in the last decade and government's plan to create an apex regulator at arm's length are positive developments. 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. We views the structure evolvement as a positive. Although, foreign investment is allowed under automatic route in education, there are regulatory issues. Nevertheless, twinning programs with foreign institutions are recognised by the regulators.

Individual players struggle to tackle enrolments slowdown

Some segments in the education sector face enrolment slowdown due to macro-economic factors, lack of industry appeal and employability issues. However, this phenomenon is specific to less established institutes and in streams such as medical, engineering and management courses. Medical colleges attached to their own reputed hospitals draw comfort from their diverse faculty experiences and continue to see moderate to strong enrolment growth. Management institutes with less

or no industry association witness low enrolment and revenues leading to loan defaults or closures. We do not expect enrolments for these entities to rebound in the short term. However, institutes with low acceptance rates have tackled the enrolment crisis and have remained financially sound. International schools are less in demand than Indian educational boards in the country as they are new entrants in the education system. However, increasing income levels of the urban class are likely to drive the demand for international schools in the medium-to-long-run.

Bankers' adjustments

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. Nevertheless, bankers understand these problems (fee reimbursements delays and temporary reduced occupancy levels), extend concessions and accommodate payment of instalments even after due date without any penalty. They also protract the principal moratorium period and reschedule the amortisation schedule in certain cases. This accommodation, to some extent, resolves the liquidity constraints.

Credit indiscipline

Although the tax-free status and stable operating cash flows support the credit quality, it is constrained by indiscipline in loan obligations payment. In our view, notwithstanding the size of the institution, adherence to contractual provisions is based on its relationship with lenders. In our opinion, this credit indiscipline might regularise in the medium term.

Debt-funded aggressive expansions

The issuers' initial success and the tax exempt status for debt service payments drive them to engage in forward/backward integration or diverse expansion with high debt loads. The bankers' eagerness to fund capital expansion although at a higher interest rate as opposed to a year earlier instills confidence in the market players. However, in the event of thin coverage due to less cash flow or less equity infusions, the ratings will remain low.

New players could encounter low margins

Intrinsic quality of strong operating margins lured many private players into the arena. However, players with no expertise could encounter low margins due to a) premature debut without adequate infrastructure leading to low occupancy levels b) dilution in admission standards to fill seats eventually losing student and industry appeal c) high cost acquisition of skilled and trained teacher talents d) high land prices in prime location driving the institution base away from city resulting in high administrative costs e) cost overruns in construction.

Source: 14 Feb, 2013/Stock Musings

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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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