



Announcements

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

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

[Click here to Participate](#)

ASERF has instituted **Dr Stya Paul Young** Educationist Award' for honouring Young Educationists who have demonstrated their potential by making an impact on Indian education. Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2013. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Stya University announces admission for the session 2013

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

Apeejay Stya University announces Founder's Scholarship

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

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

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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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Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation

Apeejay Stya House

14 Commercial Complex, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, Part – II, New Delhi - 110048

Tel. No. (91 – 11) 29228296 / 97 / 98. Fax o. (91 – 11) 29223326

E-mail: aserf@apeejay.edu Website: www.aserf.org.in



All-India Dr. Stya Paul Essay Competition
2012

Apeejay School, Saket on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee Year announces

All-India Dr. Stya Paul Essay Competition 2012
on the theme
"The importance of Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century"

Open to students of Class XI and XII across India

1st Prize ₹25,000/- 2nd Prize ₹15,000/-
3rd Prize ₹10,000/- 10 Special Prizes ₹2,000/-
All prizes will carry citation

Deadline for essay submission:
February 28, 2013

Announcement of Winners: April 30, 2013
(Results will be displayed on Apeejay School Saket's website and shall also be intimated to winners by mail)

[Click here to participate...](#)

ASPECT

Mixed signals at the doors of higher education

A central feature of South Africa's 1955 Freedom Charter was that, "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened – Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit".

Implementing this laudable goal has been much more challenging than the charter's authors ever imagined.

In January 2012 at the University of Johannesburg, Gloria Sekwena – a mother accompanying her son who was applying for a place – was trampled to death in a stampede of 7,000 applicants.

In trying to explain the disaster, Vice-chancellor Ihron Rensburg referred to the Freedom Charter in justifying the institution's well-intended access policy of allowing 'walk-ins'. This year, with no walk-ins, Metro police cars patrolled the gates of the campus to prevent another queue and stampede.

While the doors of learning might be open, they are heavily guarded.

Was the cause of the 2012 tragedy simply a supply-and-demand problem, as the vice-chancellor implied? Unfortunately, the root cause is much more complex.

First, the reason that many students had not applied in time could be because, based on the results of 'trial' school-leaving exams in September, they had not expected to qualify for university admission. But final national exam 'inflation' suddenly put them in the university market.

Second, it seems that whereas the old 'school guidance' curriculum was focused on assisting students to apply for university admission, the new 'life skills' programme seems to be more about life and less about skills.

Third, it could be argued that the chaotic arrival at the university gates of prospective candidates has to do with confusing signals about admission requirements, and the availability of learning opportunities.

This, in turn, is the result of structural confusion in a post-school system in transition.

The big picture

What does opening the doors of learning in higher education look like in the bigger picture?

In 2012 there were 647,000 Grade 12 candidates, 511,000 sat the final school-leaving National Senior Certificate (NSC) exam – called 'matric' – and 377,000 passed. On a positive note, this was a pass rate of 73.9% – up from 70.2% in 2011 and 60.6% in 2009.

However, it should also be noted that the percentage of candidates who did not write the final exam rose from 12.3% (68,000) in 2009 to 21% (138,000) in 2012 – almost a doubling of the number of drop-outs from the system.

A major point of confusion – among prospective students, their parents and even the media – arises in trying to figure out who among the successful 'matric' candidates are eligible to apply for which higher education qualifications in which types of institution.

First, it must be highlighted that, unlike in most other countries where higher education refers broadly to post-school education and includes a variety of institutional types, in South Africa

following mergers instigated by then education minister Kader Asmal in 2002, higher education refers specifically to some kind of university: a traditional university, a comprehensive university, or a university of technology.

Second, the further education and training (FET) sector is still in the process of making the transition from the provincial school system to the national Department of Higher Education and Training.

As such, there is still no clearly defined post-secondary school college sector. And the private university and college sector is very small and restricted, with unclear selection criteria beyond the ability to pay.

Third, there is lack of clarity about what the NSC actually provides entry to. A 2005 ministerial statement declared that it is the minimum entry requirement to a university.

In particular, the NSC – which has different combinations of subjects and levels of achievement – provides admission to a higher certificate, diploma or bachelor degree at a university.

Since universities, comprehensive universities and universities of technology can – and in many cases do – offer all three of these qualification types, it means that legally, all students who attain an NSC qualify at minimum to attend a university.

But whether applicants are actually accepted or not is ultimately determined by individual universities, where often the requirements are not clearly stated – and especially not the level of achievement.

The problem of access

Let's go back to the numbers for a minute. In 2012, 377,000 students achieved the minimum requirements, meaning that potentially 73% of those who wrote the Grade 12 examination qualified for some form of university education.

But how many of these learners will actually get a place in a university in 2013?

According to a senior university planner, based on figures for the previous four years and the combined institutional enrolment planning numbers for 2013: only about 128,000. And this number only includes students from schools in 2012, and not the almost 100,000 who will enter from the workforce, the ranks of the unemployed and other avenues.

Furthermore, while the number who obtained an NSC at minimum qualification level increased by 40,000 – from 334,000 in 2009 to 377,000 in 2012 – the number absorbed into the university system only increased by about 10,000.

So, in the end, only 34% of the learners who obtained a minimum qualification in 2012 will enter the doors of higher education.

What this also means is that 249,000 young people are under the mistaken impression that they could potentially enter the much-desired university. This desire is not unfounded: in countries of great inequality, the returns from obtaining a higher education qualification are disproportionately high.

In South Africa it has been estimated that, in financial terms, a new graduate will earn five times more than a matriculant. And, in the context of more than 50% youth unemployment, the probability of a graduate finding a job is five times higher.

However, the reality is that a quarter of a million qualified school-leavers did not make it into a university in 2013 and are, instead, in a frenzy in the higher education marketplace. This is an appalling waste of talent and a shocking return on investment by families and the state.

Misinformation, contradictions and confusion

Meanwhile, misinformation and contradictions abound. Education politicians and bureaucrats were very quick to claim credit for improved school outputs – referring to the 73.9% of those who passed the Grade 12 exam last year and achieved a (legal) university entrance. What they don't tell you is that only about 20% of those students were actually educationally eligible.

Journalists then deepen the misunderstanding by blaming students for not applying in time.

An article in the Sunday Independent on 13 January, by Bongekile Macupe, was a case in point. The opening statement was that "there is no happy news to tell the thousands of students who were turned away from universities this week after failing to register in time".

Never mind the confusion of the terms 'applying' and 'registering'. The point is that universities were not going to take all those students anyway – in part because there is simply no space for them all; but more importantly because many universities regard the majority of applicants as educationally underprepared for university studies.

The print media's deception is furthered by the television media which, every year, finds an African 'superstar' from a township who, like one displayed on eTV this is year, achieved over 95% for mathematics and physics. In the interview, as do all the superstars, they attribute their success to hard work, goal directedness, and some support from a teacher.

When asked what he aims to study, he replied without hesitation: "Actuarial science at the University of Cape Town." Such aspirations are appropriate for the highest-scoring learner, and he has certainly set his sights on an appropriate institution and profession for his profile.

In fact, it must be said that at this top end of the market, the signals are very clear, and are probably quite comparable to international practices.

However, the same cannot be said for the rest of the system, as confusion about entry requirements and expectations sets in with the comprehensive universities, gets worse with universities of technology, and becomes utterly opaque in the FET 'post-school' sector.

The term 'post-school education' refers to an institutional notion of learning and not to an academic ladder. In South Africa, post-school simply means 'you are out of school'.

Educationally, it is generally understood to refer to the almost 50% of all children who drop out of school between Grades one and 12, plus the ones who achieved an NSC – an incomparable mixture of students and education skill levels.

In terms of the official qualification ladder, the public perception is not that FET is a clear vocational stream, but rather that it is a repeat of 'matric', since only 45% of FET college enrolments are post-matric. So why repeat matric when you already have a minimum university entrance?

A ministerial spokeswoman was quoted in the same Sunday Independent article as saying that post-school education must be seen as more than getting a matric and going to university. This is absolutely correct.

However, post-1994 education reforms restricted the emergence of a private higher education system, abolished polytechnics and left FET colleges in the provincial school system, meaning that the only real post-matric further education opportunity is a university.

Of the approximately one million students in post-secondary education in South Africa, only 25% are in colleges – including around 85,000 in private higher education.

Bringing the FET sector into the national higher education sector started under former education minister Naledi Pandor. To his credit, current Minister of Higher Education and Training Blade Nzimande has made this a priority, to the extent that his ministry projects in the 2012 Green Paper an enrolment of four million learners in the post-school sector by 2030 – up from 400,000 in 2010.

Even if hopelessly over-ambitious, it is the first post-1994 government policy that directly addresses the 'inverted pyramid' of the South African education system.

But another urgent priority is to clarify this fog of post-school education and, particularly, the qualification levels and meanings of the FET college sector, for students, life skills teachers, the market and the media.

Source: 16 Feb, 2013/ [University World News](#)

NEWS

One apex body needed for higher education'

There is an urgent need for a single apex body in the field of higher education. This apex body should treat knowledge in an integrated manner. This was stated by eminent scientist, professor and president of the Global Research Alliance National Chemical Laboratory (GRANCL) Dr R A Mashelkar at the second convocation of Charotar University of Science and Technology (CHARUSAT) at Changa in Anand district on Saturday.

"There have been repeated pleas on the need of a single apex body for almost five decades that have come from commissions to committees to scholarly papers. In fact, almost five decades ago, Kothari Commission in 1966 had enunciated a first principle 'all higher education should be regarded as an integrated whole'. The idea of 'smart regulation with light oversight', with one apex body is the ultimate solution," he said.

admashri and Padmabhushan awardee Mashelkar also stressed that several education reforms bills that are pending before the Parliament need to be cleared on a fast track.

"The National Commission for Higher Education and Research Bill, the National Accreditation Regulatory Autonomy for Higher Education Institution Bill, Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Education Institutions Bill, the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill and Universities for Research and Innovation Bill among others need to be cleared on urgent basis," Mashelkar said.

During the convocation, CHARUSAT's president Surendrabhai Patel in his presidential remarks asked the students to strive to become job creators and not job seekers.

In all, 390 students from Faculty of Technology and Engineering, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Management Studies and Faculty of Applied Sciences were awarded degrees during the convocation where 13 gold medals were conferred to meritorious students.

CHARUSAT's provost Dr B G Patel informed the gathering that while the university holds ten patents at present, it has filed for four more. "Our university is marching on the way to be a world class university for which we have charted out Roadmap 2015, the year in which we aspire to be among top 20 universities at the national level," he said.

Source: 16 Feb, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

Roles and functions of higher education councils

Since the mid-1980s there has been a growing trend in developed countries to establish semi-autonomous government agencies. Their creation has usually been linked to new public management and concomitant demands on governments for greater efficiency, responsiveness, transparency and accountability.

The nature of such agencies is diverse, but they usually share some key characteristics, including being at arm's length from their parent ministry, mandated to carry out public tasks within a specific sector, having a core staff of public servants, being largely financed by the state budget, and subject to administrative law procedures.

Within the realm of higher education governance, many countries – developed and developing alike – have established higher (or tertiary) education councils or commissions, which fall under this umbrella of semi-autonomous government agency.

The councils and commissions came into focus during the HERANA Phase 1 project on Universities and Economic Development in Africa – in particular, in relation to their actual or potential role in the coordination of knowledge policies and higher education issues.

HERANA is the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa, a major research project that investigated the relationship between higher education and development – economic and democratic – in African countries. University World News is a partner in the network.

In HERANA Phase 2, we are exploring the roles and functions of these agencies in higher education governance in eight African countries: Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

A neglected research area

The international higher education governance literature of the past few decades tends to focus on the relationship between the state and universities, and on governance at the institutional level.

There has been relatively little focus on the governance of higher education at the system level

– including the role of councils and commissions – and this is particularly so in the African context.

The current study explores and compares the role of the councils and commissions in the governance of their respective higher education systems, through the lens of:

The functions they are mandated to undertake.

The extent to which they play a role in pact formation, strengthening the academic cores of institutions, and coordination of knowledge policies and activities.

How they are structured and resourced in order to carry out these functions – for example, legal status, funding arrangements, structure and composition of members and staff, and autonomy.

How they have changed over time with regard to all these aspects.

The factors that impact on their capacity to carry out their mandates – for instance, resources, capacity, and other actors in the system.

The study, conducted by a multidisciplinary team of researchers, is taking a multi-pronged approach to collecting data, including desk research (relevant legislation and background information), interviews with key informants from the councils or commissions and their parent ministries, and a questionnaire covering the financing of these organisations and their funding function (where applicable).

With the majority of the data collection complete, we presented the draft analytical framework and some preliminary findings at the annual HERANA workshop held in Cape Town in November 2012.

Five role categories

A first round of the analysis of the functions of the councils and commissions revealed five broad role categories: advisory, regulatory, monitoring, funding and coordination.

The advisory role included policy advice to government; advising government on whether to register new institutions or accredit programmes, and advising institutions on possible improvements to their systems or practices.

The regulatory role came in various forms, including: the licensing or registration of new (often private) institutions; the accreditation of new and existing academic programmes; national programme reviews (for example, the MBA degree in South Africa); and determining the equivalence of qualifications as well as credit accumulation and transfer policies and procedures.

A few of the councils and commissions had some sort of funding or financing-related function in the

system, although none of these were properly implemented. These functions ranged from being in charge of or coordinating the tertiary education sector budget and making budget allocations, to fundraising on behalf of higher education institutions.

Respondents at the councils and commissions used the term 'monitoring' in at least two different senses. The first referred to monitoring that was happening in the system – general trends over time, or specific developments measured against stated national goals or system targets. The second referred to the monitoring of 'quality implementation' in higher education institutions after having set up quality assurance mechanisms.

Finally, the coordination role could be seen as a role in itself, or as a dimension of the other roles (that is, the advisory, regulatory, funding or monitoring roles).

Three types of coordination role emerged in the data analysis, namely: coordination as 'connecting' key stakeholders (facilitation-engagement, bridging, buffering); coordination as strategic planning for the sector (coordinating multiple interests relating to higher education); and coordination as pact formation and maintenance.

A key research question relates to the legal autonomy and political independence of these organisations – whether certain functions require more or less than others; where the organisation's autonomy is contested and how these tensions are negotiated; and what factors impact on the organisation's autonomy (for example, funding arrangements, who appoints the council or board members, and the approach of individual ministers).

One of the aims of the project is to map the higher education governance system in each country, and to identify the role of the councils and commissions in this broader landscape and where and how they are located in relation to other key players.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the issue of lack of funds and human capacity to undertake their mandated functions emerged in the interviews in every country.

It is likely that a key recommendation to funders of higher education in Africa will be for capacity building in these organisations, and perhaps especially in the area of quality assurance.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the preliminary analysis of data indicates that all of these organisations carry out important functions in their respective (higher

education governance) systems, but that they are all struggling with capacity and role definition.

To some degree or another, they are all in a state of flux.

In part, this is because they are dynamically linked to systems that are themselves in flux (particularly institutional and governance arrangements). In part, it is because of the absence of a pact – broad agreement between government, universities and core socio-economic actors about the nature of the role of universities in development – at the national level.

As a result, some of the councils and commissions constantly have to negotiate their roles in the system, as well as the resources and capacity they need in order to carry out their functions.

Source: 16 Feb, 2013/ [University World News](#)

India should invest more in education than defence

India will benefit if it spends more on education and social welfare rather than on its defence for dealing with any possible external threat, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's daughter Anita Bose-Pfaff said Tuesday.

"It will be a happier situation if India is not threatened by war, particularly given problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan which has a very destabilising effect on the sub-continent. If India manages to remain stable, it can well cut down on defence spending and pump in more money into education and social welfare...", she told reporters here.

Regretting high illiteracy rate in the country in spite of boasting about its intellectual potential, Anita said the society and its leaders must address this issue.

She said one might take pride in having a nuclear bomb, but one must address the problem of getting rid of nuclear waste.

Asked if this did not contradict the stand of her father who professed war to get Independence, Anita said the situation now was different from those days.

"My father then considered waging war against British rule to gain independence. The situation today is different," she said.

On the current political scenario, Anita said the country had crossed a 'very big hurdle' decades ago when Indira Gandhi accepted defeat in the elections and stepped down. Given the political structure now, the country has learnt to live with coalition governments, she added.

Asked if India needs a leader like Netaji along with Anna Hazare to fight corruption, Anita said the country needs such leaders, but the movement would not have any effect if people don't follow their ideals.

Source: 19 Feb, 2013/[PTI/Zee News](#)

Strengthening India-UK higher education links on Prime Minister's visit

The Prime Minister has taken one of the largest delegations of university representatives on this week's trade mission to India signifying the importance of education to the UK-India relationship.

Following education emerging as a key theme early in the mission, Dr Joanna Newman, Director of the UK Higher Education International Unit said the sector was pleased at the statements the Prime Minister had made about Indian students being welcome in the UK.

"Many UK universities and higher education institutions have seen a drop in the number of Indian student enrolments. We are therefore delighted by the Prime Minister's positive comments reinforcing the post-study work opportunities available for those students who want to study in the UK."

There are already strong links between the UK and Indian higher education sectors.

The higher education objectives of the visit are to identify further opportunities for UK and Indian government institutions to work together to implement innovative approaches to education. Additionally, sharing best practice to enhance the employability of students through initiatives such as two way mobility and internship will be explored.

During the visit a number of key partnerships and initiatives will be announced:

- Research collaboration between University of Cambridge, the Non-Ferrous Technology Development Centre (NFTDC, Hyderabad), and RTM Nagpur University which is achieving major breakthroughs in fuel cell technology.
- £11 million funding from the Government of India to establish a Centre for Chemical Biology and Therapeutics (CCBT) which is a collaborative project between researchers at India's National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), the Institute for Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine (InStem) and the University of Cambridge.
- Cardiff University working in collaboration with the University of Hyderabad and LV Prashad Eye Institute in Hyderabad to share best practice in the teaching of optometry

· Scholarships for Indian students to attend the University of Exeter International Summer School in 2013 is offering 50 scholarships for students studying Masters degrees

· The University of Warwick will host the £92 million National Automotive Innovation Campus in partnership between WMG, Jaguar Land Rover, Tata Motors European Technical Centre and the UK Government.

· The British Library will announce the launch of the Mewar Ramayana, bringing together for the first time in almost 200 years, the dispersed parts of the lavishly illustrated copy of this text on an innovative digital platform from May 2013 through a major collaborative partnership with Indian partners.

· Indian students to get free access to top UK courses through the Futurelearn portal, the online company being launched in July 2013 by The Open University to deliver massive open Online courses (MOOCs)

During the three day visit the delegation will meet with key representatives from the Indian Planning Commission and Department of Education, Indian universities, research centres and associated organisations and Government departments.

The UK delegation comprises the UK Higher Education International Unit, representing the UK HE sector, with Vice-Chancellors from Cambridge, Cardiff, Exeter, LSE, Open University, Warwick and the CEOs of the British Library and the British Council.

Source: 19 Feb, 2013/[International](#)

India, UK sign agreements to develop community colleges and strengthen education sector

India and United Kingdom signed two MoUs to promote development of community colleges and implementation of School Leadership Programme on Wednesday. The MoUs were signed on behalf of India by minister of state, HRD, Jitin Prasada and for United Kingdom by David Willetts, minister for Universities and Science in New Delhi.

Willetts was in India as a member of high level delegation led by British Prime Minister, David Cameron. The two sides also discussed the ways and means to strengthen the education sector. Speaking during the discussion Prasada noted the statement of the British PM on increasing the number of the Indian students getting admission in UK and making the visa process easier. He also suggested that the English proficiency test of the Indian students normally valid for two year should be enhanced to five years or more.

The Indian delegation which was later joined by the HRD minister, M M Pallam Raju. He said that the government has been focusing on the school education as it considers it critical. Raju also sought cooperation of the British Government in implementation of RTE. He also highlighted the initiative taken by the government in promoting community colleges and explained the areas where the bilateral cooperation can be had.

The British side wanted that the Indian government should sort out the issue relating to one year master's course granted by the UK Universities. Willetts said if this problem is sorted it will help the Indian students in pursuing further courses in their own country.

The Indian delegation said the matter is being examined at the various fora. The visiting delegation showed keen interest in teacher's training and school leadership sectors.

The leaders also discussed strengthening the present programmes of educational cooperation between the two countries and new avenues for cooperation.

The leaders deliberated on ways to enhance mobility of students, researchers, faculty and educationists between the two countries. They also appreciated that institutional linkages and leadership development are two areas in which substantial progress has been achieved under the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) since its inception in 2006 and the fact that more than 1,025 partnerships had been supported in different areas including over 380 in the second phase of UKIERI from 2011.

The two leaders appreciated that UKIERI has provided a vibrant platform for various collaborations in the areas of research and innovation, vocational education and skill development, leadership programmes. It was also noted that two Joint working groups are active for innovations and skill development for devising the future collaborative programmes. Institutional collaborations for thematic partnerships have also been institutionalised under UKIERI. The ministers also recognised the need for capacity building of English language teachers in new methodologies.

The two leaders affirmed their support for a strong partnership in delivering skills to their citizens. The leaders noted the increasing opportunities in the delivery of vocational skills in all sectors the increasing engagement of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) with the Sector Councils in India.

The leaders welcomed the partnership between the UK Open University and Government of India,

supported by British Council and UKAID, to provide training to teachers using web-based and other innovative technology. The leaders welcomed the UK-India partnership to support secondary education through the Government of India's Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) to universalise access to secondary education with emphasis on quality and equity.

Source: 21 Feb, 2013/[Times of India](#)

Need to set up more technical education institutes in Delhi

Chief minister Sheila Dikshit on Wednesday underlined the need for setting up of more institutions to impart technical education, saying quality human resources was the key to ensure healthy economic growth.

She was speaking after laying foundation stone of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College at Dwarka in West Delhi.

The campus is being developed at a cost of Rs 130 crore. The building will have 20 teaching laboratories, six research laboratories, 12 lecture theatres besides 28 small rooms for holding the tutorial classes.

Source: 21 Feb, 2013/[Times of India](#)

Energy, education next big things in India-US ties

Cooperation in the areas of energy and education could be the next big thing in India-US relations, officials indicated after "a series of very useful and important interactions" between visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai and US officials.

"In these discussions, the importance of the bilateral partnership in key areas, including energy, trade and economic development, as well as our existing regional and international consultations were reaffirmed," an Indian embassy statement said.

"In the year ahead, it is intended that the two sides would increase the frequency and pace of bilateral consultations, including at official and political levels," it said.

Mathai, who is on a three-day visit to the US, also had a brief ten-minute call on new US Secretary of State John Kerry during which he "extended to him the good wishes of our leadership, and their congratulations upon his appointment."

Mathai also discussed the proposed visit to India by Kerry for the Third Round of the Bilateral Strategic Dialogue, possibly in mid-June. Kerry in turn reaffirmed his invitation to the External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid to visit the US soon.

After the meeting with Mathai, Kerry tweeted under his personal tag: "Saw friend/Foreign Secretary Mathai- discussed importance of relationship w/ #India, expressed sympathies to brave people of Hyderabad -JK.

Mathai also called upon Deputy Secretary of State William Burns and Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman.

He had a conversation over lunch with Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and Environment Robert Hormats as well as extensive and wide-ranging consultations with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman.

During the Mathai-Sherman meeting the "two sides covered bilateral, regional and global issues," the Indian Embassy stated.

The two "discussed a broad range of issues, including our bilateral cooperation on energy, climate change, defence, civil nuclear issues, education, regional dynamics, and joint collaboration in Afghanistan, Africa and Asia," according to a State Department spokesperson.

"Both look forward to another round of the US-India Strategic Dialogue later this year," she said.

Earlier today, Mathai set out a detailed blueprint of India-US bilateral relationship in an address on India and the United States in the 21st century at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Mathai proposed greater India-US cooperation in seven key areas ranging from terrorism, defence and enhanced trade to support in multilateral fora.

Source: 22 Feb, 2013/IANS/NewsTrackIndia

Rs1000 crore to change the face of vocational education

The biggest game changer in this budget is the announcement that Rs1,000 crore would be provided to the NSDC for giving an award of Rs10,000 to any student who passes a national skill evaluation examination that NSDC would put into place.

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That single move immediately transforms the very face of vocational education in India.

1. It creates a national standard for skills. Currently several standards of skills exist, many promoted by state bodies, ITIs, Khadi & Village

Industries Commission and a variety of other certification bodies.

2. NSDC becomes a national certification body, much like the central Board of Secondary Education, which will soon compete for respectability and credibility in the face of corroding standards of state level examinations.

3. The award becomes a clever way of reimbursing the fees to students who pass the qualifying standards. It provides a scholarship only after passing the test, not before.

4. It allows for private training institutes -- for example, Nokia and Samsung could train people on how to repair mobile phones. What matters is that the student passes the certifying examination. It does not have to be a recognised or state-approved educational institute. Expect more private play of quality training by private players.

What remains to be seen is (a) how quickly and effectively NSDC can create the template for outcome based national certification examinations for each skill, and, (b), how to avoid duplication of prize money to a person who is already a superbly skilled person and who opts to appear for and pass a basic examination for say an electrician, and then appears for an intermediate level examination, and then an advanced examination, and collects three times the prize money.

But overall, a brilliant scheme to promote skills, and private initiative.

Source: 28 Feb, 2013/ DNA India.com

Increased Allocations to Education Sector Positive - India Ratings

India Ratings views the increased allocations of INR658.67bn to education sector -17% over FY13 revised estimates (RE) - as a positive feature. The agency also feels strengthening of existing schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan through hiked allocations could provide salutary benefits.

Concurrently, INR16.5bn allocations to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences could accelerate the commencement of these courses in these institutions. Nevertheless, the ramp up and movement to operational phase on a timely basis is a challenge.

Scholarships announced to the tune of INR52.84bn are likely to help a few disadvantaged sections of the society to access education facilities. At the same time, upped allocations to few institutes of excellence (Aligarh Muslim University, Banaras Hindu University, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural

Heritage) provide impetus and reinforce the thrust for this sector.

India Ratings feels that long awaited liberalisation of the sector is imperative for substantial improvements in education infrastructure.

Source: 28 Feb, 2013/ [India Education Diary](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

The Humanities, Unraveled

Let me start with the bad news. It is not even news anymore; it is simply bad. Graduate education in the humanities is in crisis. Every aspect, from the most specific details of the curriculum to the broadest questions about its purpose, is in crisis. It is a seamless garment of crisis: If you pull on any one thread, the entire thing unravels.

It is therefore exceptionally difficult to discuss any one aspect of graduate education in isolation. Questions about the function of the dissertation inevitably become questions about the future of scholarly communication; they also entail questions about attrition, time to degree, and the flood of A.B.D.'s, who make up so much of the non-tenure-track and adjunct labor force. Questions about attrition and time to degree open onto questions about the graduate curriculum and the ideal size of graduate programs. Those questions obviously have profound implications for the faculty. So one seamless garment, one complexly interwoven web of trouble.

In the humanities, when we talk about the purpose of graduate programs and the career trajectories of our graduate students, the discussion devolves almost immediately to the state of the academic job market. For what are we training Ph.D.'s in the humanities to do, other than to take academic positions? Graduate programs in the humanities have been designed precisely to replenish the ranks of the professoriate; that is why they have such a strong research component, also known as the dissertation. But leaving aside a few upticks in the academic job market in the late 1980s and late 1990s, the overall job system in the humanities has been in a state of more or less permanent distress for more than 40 years.

Since 1970 doctoral programs have been producing many more job candidates than there are jobs; and yet this is not entirely a supply-side problem, because over those 40 years, academic jobs themselves have changed radically. Of the 1.5 million people now employed in the profession of college teaching, more than one million are teaching off the tenure track, with no hope or expectation of ever winding up on the tenure track.

Many of them do not have Ph.D.'s: According to the 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (the last such study conducted), 65.2 percent of non-tenure-track faculty members hold the M.A. as their highest degree—57.3 percent teach in four-year institutions, 76.2 percent in two-year institutions (many holding more than one part-time position).

Clearly, something about the structure of graduate education in the humanities is broken. Or, more precisely, the system has been redesigned in such a way as to call into question the function of the doctorate as a credential for employment in higher education.

There is no doubt that the study of the humanities is more vibrant, more exciting, and (dare I say it) more important than it was a generation ago.

It is a dispiriting subject, to be sure. It was long ago, in 1994, that Cary Nelson, a professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and I wrote a polemical essay for *The Chronicle*, "Graduate Education Is Losing Its Moral Base." We argued that many graduate programs had become little more than sources of cheap teaching labor for low-level undergraduate classes, and that some programs should be reduced in size or eliminated altogether. Many of our critics responded that we had failed to understand the "apprenticeship" model of graduate education. But we had not failed to understand that. On the contrary, we noted that in the apprenticeship model, which dates back to the days of the guilds, the apprentices got jobs.

That model was no longer relevant to the conditions of the academic job market. Our critique eventually led to a more radical critique of the system by Marc Bousquet, now a professor of English at Emory University. He argued that, for many students, the Ph.D. marked not the beginning but the effective end of a career in teaching. Bousquet is not entirely right. Many Ph.D.'s who fail to land tenure-track jobs do wind up on the non-tenure-track career path—as adjuncts or full-time untenured faculty. But his argument that the Ph.D. is actually the "waste product" of a system designed to produce cheap teaching labor was—and remains—a bracing and necessary response to colleagues who believed that the apprenticeship model was still viable.

More recently, in 2011, Anthony T. Grafton, then president of the American Historical Association, and Jim Grossman, AHA executive director, declared that henceforth nonacademic employment for history Ph.D.'s would not be considered a Plan B: "Alternative" careers should have as much legitimacy as the traditional Ph.D.-to-tenure-track trajectory. The alt-ac option, as it is widely known,

has generated much debate in the humanities, but so far little sense of what the viable "alternatives" to academic employment might be. The situation is vastly different in the arts, where M.F.A. or Ph.D. holders typically expect to find employment in a far wider array of cultural institutions than humanists—orchestras, dance companies, design companies, museums, theaters, nonprofits. But of course, the cultural institutions to which degree holders in the arts aspire are often in states of distress similar to those affecting universities, albeit for different structural reasons.

So here the debate stands: We need to remake our programs from the ground up to produce teachers and researchers *and* something else, but since it is not clear what those something else might be, we haven't begun to rethink the graduate curriculum accordingly. (Anyway, we're not trained to do that! All we know how to do is to be professors!)

And since it is not clear what those something else might be, the alt-ac discussion also tends to be conflated (reductively and mistakenly) with the DH discussion—that is, the emergence of the digital humanities, onto which, in recent years, we have deposited so many of our hopes and anxieties. Somehow we expect the digital humanities to revolutionize scholarly communication, save university presses, crowdsource peer review, and provide humanities Ph.D.'s with good jobs in libraries, institutes, nonprofits, and innovative start-ups. And the digital humanities will do all that by sometime late next week.

The revolution in scholarly communication has consequences for the future of the dissertation, as the former MLA president Sidonie Smith has been arguing for the past few years. Smith's work follows in the wake of, and extends, the 2006 report of the MLA Task Force on the Evaluation of Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion, which urged that the relevant criterion for peer-reviewed scholarship be the intellectual quality and originality of work, not the container it comes in. There is one overwhelmingly obvious implication of that argument: If we have all these new forms of scholarly communication, why are we asking our graduate students to write proto-monographs for a system that no longer supports monographs? (I am referring, of course, to the reduction or elimination of subsidies for university presses and university libraries.)

It might help to remember, though, that the alt-ac debate has a history, at least in the MLA. In 1998, then-MLA President Elaine Showalter decided to promote the idea of alternative, nonacademic

careers for humanities Ph.D.'s. The backlash was intense—and it came chiefly from the MLA's Graduate Student Caucus, led by Bousquet and William Pannacker, now an associate professor of English at Hope College, in Holland, Mich. Bousquet replied with his "waste product" theory of graduate education, and Pannacker has since written many columns in *The Chronicle* urging people not to go to graduate school in the humanities at all. Both, in different ways, have come to regard the enterprise as a shell game, and both, 15 years ago, construed Showalter's call as a disingenuous suggestion that people who had trained for a decade to be humanists could suddenly switch gears and become secretaries and screenwriters.

One lesson I took away from the bitter battles of 1998 is that the people who feel most betrayed by the idea of "alternative careers" are the people closest to finishing their dissertations and going out on the academic job market. I suppose that is unsurprising. But at first, I had imagined that the most entrenched opposition would come from tradition-minded faculty and deans who regarded nonacademic careers as deeply undesirable postgraduate trajectories for humanities Ph.D.'s.

That is also the opposition imagined in Grafton and Grossman's "No More Plan B" essay, where they suggest that the problem with the rhetoric of "alternative" careers leads students to internalize the values of tradition-minded faculty who regard nonacademic careers with disdain: "We should not be surprised when students internalize our attitudes (implicit or explicit) and assume that the 'best' students will be professors and that for everyone else ... well, 'there's always public history.' Even those who happily accept jobs at secondary schools, for example, describe themselves as 'leaving the academy' or 'leaving the historical profession,'" they wrote.

According to a talk Grafton gave at a conference I recently organized at Pennsylvania State University, part of the betrayal that A.B.D.'s and almost-Ph.D.'s in the humanities feel has to do with the fact that many of them have spent their 20s and their early-mid-30s in graduate programs hoping for tenure-track jobs; they have spent their youth in the lowest reaches of the tax code, and some of them have put off having families. Grafton therefore endorses arguments that seek to reduce time to degree on the humane grounds, or the slightly more humane grounds, that it is easier for Ph.D.'s in the humanities to contemplate switching tracks at 25 or 26 than at 32; additionally, one hopes, students who earn their Ph.D.'s in their mid-20s would have considerably less student-loan debt to worry about.

The problem lies in figuring out how to get people out of Ph.D. programs by the age of 25 or 26; apparently we knew how to do that 40 years ago but have forgotten. My predecessor as MLA president, Russell Berman, has argued that time to degree in the humanities—currently an astounding 9.5 years—should be cut in half. But should there now be two doctoral tracks, one hard-core, old-school research with a traditional dissertation, and another more like a rigorous four-year M.A.? I think that is a solution few will want to pursue, because it opens onto yet another thorny issue, namely the fact that we have in effect already created such a two-tier system in the academic labor market, where we have a relatively small cadre of tenured faculty doing research and a much larger cohort of professors who are basically on a teaching track. It seems a mistake to institutionalize that division of labor still more emphatically by building it into the structure of doctoral education.

My own view is this. Throughout the 1990s, I urged programs to reduce the number of students they admit, and to support more substantially the students they do admit. (At my doctoral institution, the University of Virginia, 76 students were admitted in 1983, my entering year; 126 were admitted the following year. It was explicitly an attrition system. When I arrived at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in 1989, I found there were numerous Big Ten English programs with more than 200 graduate students.) I still think it makes more sense to limit admissions and to issue dire warnings to all applicants about the uncertainty of academic employment.

But over the past three years of discussions with my colleagues on the MLA Executive Council, I have learned that it is simply impossible to achieve a sufficiently broad consensus on that position. Many people in foreign-language departments fear, with good reason, that any blanket statement advocating the reduction or elimination of graduate programs will have catastrophic effects for their already tiny fields (if they are in languages other than Spanish). And without a sufficiently broad consensus on the council, we can't go ahead and make across-the-board recommendations for departments; we can only advocate rigorous self-study and the ethical treatment of graduate students and employees.

So for now, we are awaiting the report of the MLA Task Force on Graduate Education for further guidance. About reducing time to degree, I am curious to see what will develop from Stanford University's effort to encourage a five-year program for humanities Ph.D.'s; at present, I am

agnostic, though I am convinced that our current time to degree locks people into a system of prolonged low-wage employment.

When it comes to rethinking the curricular content of our graduate programs, I think of something the late Richard Rorty used to say whenever he considered the future of philosophy: Take care of freedom, and truth will take care of itself. What he meant was that we do not have to secure the future of philosophy by staging a cage match in which the correspondence theory of truth (the idea that "truth" is adjudicated by a nonhuman "reality") duked it out with the coherence theory of truth (the idea that truth is adjudicated by human belief systems) until one of them emerges the winner (though of course Rorty would have preferred that we stop thinking about truth in terms of correspondence). Instead we have to secure the future of institutions that permit freedom of inquiry and freedom of thought. That's the important task. If we do that, then we can let the debates within those institutions take care of themselves and wander where they will without any parameters set by our current concerns.

I think that way about the future of the content of graduate education in the humanities: Take care of the enabling conditions of graduate instruction, and the fields of expertise created and validated by the doctorate will take care of themselves. It is not a recipe for complacency, needless to say, because taking care of the enabling conditions of graduate education is an arduous and continuing task.

But I do want to say one thing about the fields of expertise we have created and validated in the humanities over the past 30 or 40 years. They have been, on the whole, pretty awesome. That's a technical term, so let me explain. I have never been among, and indeed I have never quite understood, the people who believe that the rise of the study of race, gender, and class represented a vitiation of the humanities. Nor do I see the rise of the study of sexuality or postcoloniality or disability as an indicator of a decline in the intellectual power of the humanities. Quite the contrary. Though I have not agreed with every aspect of every intellectual initiative of the past 30 or 40 years, I think there is no doubt that the study of the humanities is more vibrant, more exciting, and (dare I say it) more important than it was a generation ago.

And every year I think: This is what makes graduate study in the humanities so fraught, so full of contradiction for so many professors and students. The sheer intellectual excitement of the work, whether it is on globalization or subjectivity or translation or sustainability or disability, is one thing. This work is so valuable—and it offers such

sophisticated and necessary accounts of what "value" is.

And yet when we look at the public reputation of the humanities; when we compare the dilapidated Humanities Cottage on campus with the new \$225-million Millennium Science Complex (that's a real example, from my home institution); when we look at the academic job market for humanists, we can't avoid the conclusion that the value of the work we do, and the way we theorize value, simply isn't valued by very many people, on campus or off.

The alt-ac community poses a timely and bracing challenge to that attitude. It asks us what graduate curricula might be most readily transferable to careers outside academe (perhaps curricula that include semester-long internships and/or administrative experience?)—and whether those careers will be honored and validated by deans and provosts, who remain likely to evaluate the success of graduate programs in the humanities by their placement rates, which are likely to continue to refer exclusively to placements in academic positions.

But in the face of that challenge, this is what I worry about: The department that most emphatically and open-mindedly embraces the idea of graduate training for careers outside academe might just find itself the department whose graduate program is eliminated in the next strategic plan. That is something that deans and provosts will have to consider before we can have any serious discussion about rethinking the purpose of the Ph.D. in the humanities.

Source: 16 Feb, 2013/[Chronicle](#)

To Fix Its Education System, India Should Look to MOOCs

*The following is a guest post by **William H. Avery**, author of *China's Nightmare, America's Dream: India as the Next Global Power*. The blog post is adapted from a commentary published in the *Economic Times of India* and continues themes raised in a recent *Chronicle* article on the challenges American colleges face in India.*

In the 20th century, the United States built a higher-education system that no nation could match in scale and quality. This system helped the country become the dominant economic power of the post-World War II era.

But that is last century's news. Today India and China are racing to expand and enhance their own higher-education systems, with the aim of becoming economic powerhouses of the 21st century. It is a race that India has been losing, with potentially disastrous consequences for its

future economic growth prospects. India needs a game-changer quickly, if it is to close the growing gap with China in higher education today and avoid an even larger gap in economic growth tomorrow.

Enter massive open online courses, or MOOCs. There has been much debate about how MOOCs might change higher education in the United States. But whatever impact MOOCs ultimately have on education in the United States may be small compared with the impact they can have in India, the 21st century's largest English-language higher-education market. MOOCs are certainly India's best chance, and perhaps its only hope, of catching up to China in higher education.

Since the turn of the millennium, China has doubled the number of higher-education institutions and increased enrollment fivefold. It has been the greatest expansion in university education in the history of mankind. As a result, almost 26 percent of China's university-age population is enrolled in an institution of higher education, versus about 18 percent in India.

It was not always so. In 1990 and 2000, India bested China in university enrollment rates. Then China decided to make higher education a policy priority, and leapfrogged India in the space of a single decade.

Do not let India's outliers—the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs)—fool you. The key battlefield in Asia is 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 amounts to a tiny fraction of India's 120-million-strong university-age population.

So what is India doing to catch up? Not much. The University Grants Commission's 12th Five-Year Plan (covering 2012-17) is short on ambition and long on vague laments ("considerable challenges remain," it says). While China has ambitious plans that it executes, India has unambitious plans that it fails to execute. The contrast could not be greater, nor could the cost of that contrast to India's growth prospects.

In 1995 the Indian government introduced to 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 the advent of MOOCs.

The implications of free online content for Indian higher education—and for India’s future economic growth—cannot be overstated. 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 an esteemed scholar in Cambridge, Mass. Or Princeton, N.J. Or Berkeley, Calif. 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. With MOOCs the inaction of the Indian government can no longer stand in the way of its citizens gaining the knowledge and skills they need.

The availability of free online content could well lead to an entirely new model for higher education in India. Forget the sprawling university campus with faculty members developing their own course content. While that model is in theory still laudable, India’s government has shown it cannot deliver such universities on a scale and at a quality level its citizens deserve. Now is the time for India to invest in a new higher-education model built around MOOCs from top American institutions.

Precisely what this new model will look like remains to be seen. But it is certain to have lower costs (in infrastructure and faculty) than the old model and can be grown to a large scale.

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 elites, English-language skills among university-age Indians are limited, as is access to the Internet.

And of course there are the open questions about what credentials, if any, an Indian student would receive from completing a MOOC and how the online courses can prevent cheating.

Despite these complex challenges, for India the new reality of the MOOC revolution is simple. The demand 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 Indian students. Can real-time translation technologies be used to convert Harvard’s classes into India’s many local languages? Will the new model be solely distance learning, or will students come together to discuss the material? Where? Can existing village school facilities be leveraged after school hours to provide spaces for MOOC learning?

India’s entrepreneurs, both business leaders and social entrepreneurs at nongovernmental organizations, can 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: to stay out of the way. The government had its chance with 12 five-year plans spanning 60 years. It did not deliver. Now MOOCs are 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 Indian 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 in India learning in MOOCs by the millions.

China’s recent investments 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 catch China in the race for higher education today, and for economic growth tomorrow.

Source: 20 Feb, 2013/[Chronicle](#)

The Rise of Women

The facts of women being more likely than men to go to college, perform better academically, and major in fields other than science, technology, engineering and mathematics are mostly attributable to factors affecting students before – in some cases, long before – they enter the halls of academe. But that doesn’t mean colleges can’t do anything to mitigate the consequences.

Those are the conclusions of the authors of a new book, *The Rise of Women* (Russell Sage Foundation), about how and why female students continue to outpace their male counterparts in education (yet still can’t seem to earn a comparable paycheck).

“We’ve seen astonishing change over a very short historical period,” Thomas DiPrete, the book’s co-author and a sociology professor at Columbia University, said on a call with reporters Wednesday.

Starting with the people born around 1950, the rate of men’s bachelor’s degree completion stopped growing, and it stayed stagnant for years. In 1970, 20 percent of men and 14 percent of women finished college. By 2010, women’s graduation rates had “skyrocketed” to 36 percent, DiPrete said, while the rate among men grew only seven points, to 27 percent.

Today, women outpace men in college enrollment by a ratio of 1.4 to 1.

Beginning as early as kindergarten, the authors explained, girls have better average social and behavioral skills than boys, and that relates to girls' higher average grades at each stage of school and why girls are more likely to earn a degree.

"The grade gap isn't about ability," said Claudia Buchmann, co-author and sociology professor at Ohio State University, "it's really more about effort and engagement in school."

On average, middle school girls are more likely to say they like school and good grades are important, and are thus more likely to study more.

"The flip side of course, is that boys' lower engagement in school leads to weaker preparation, and then reduces their chances of getting through college," Buchmann said.

The authors' research found that the difference-maker for boys is schools with strong academic climates.

"We really need schools that set high expectations, that treat students as individuals – not just as gendered groups – and also motivate students to invest in their education so that they can reach the big returns of a college degree that exist in today's labor market," Buchmann said.

Gender stereotypes are also at play, the authors found. Boys have historically been trained to think that they needn't obey rules or work hard because men used to be able to drop out of high school and still earn wages comparable to better-educated women, thanks to jobs in fields like manufacturing, construction and travel. That's not the case anymore.

Even today, DiPrete said, young men are "overly optimistic" about their ability to earn a livable salary, even though they're less educated than women. That may cause them to "under-invest" in schoolwork, lowering their academic performance and probability of completing college.

(These findings corroborate some previous research. A 2010 paper in the journal *Gender Issues* found that gender stereotypes and lack of information may be limiting boys' likelihood of attending college. Judith Kleinfeld, a psychologist at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, found that some boys did not know they'd likely need a college degree, and many believed boys are lazy or prone to peer pressure.)

One way to address the motivation issue is through better guidance counseling, DiPrete said.

"If they want to be a varsity player on a high school basketball team, they know perfectly well that they can't tend to other interests for several years and then when they're juniors in high school

get serious about basketball and think they have any chance in the world of making the varsity team," he said. "Given that they don't actually have an idea of how much work they have to do in order to succeed at whatever their level of educational expectations, it's hard for them to calibrate their effort."

For those who do make it to college, "The biggest problem for gender inequality among the college-educated remains the lack of gender integration across fields of study," said Philip Cohen, a professor of sociology at the University of Maryland at College Park.

Yet as the book explains, the high school years – not the college ones – are where students begin to segregate in choice of major. In those years, more women than men lose interest in science and technology fields. (In college, there's no difference between men and women in completion rates.)

And the education system may be to blame. Women who attend high schools that greatly emphasize STEM subjects have much more interest in those majors in college, Cohen explained. "I would love to see that suggestion get more traction before we approach the idea of kids losing steam in college in America."

Other research DiPrete is working on shows that college women are much more interested in exploring different curricular areas, which may serve to lower the odds that they'll go into STEM and other fields that have very "lockstep" focus. Understanding the broader educational goals of women could help programs tailor their requirements so students can take a diversity of classes while also pursuing fields with heavy, set-in-stone curriculums, he said.

Although women hold almost half of all jobs in America, less than 25 percent of those positions are in STEM fields, according to the U.S. Department of commerce – and even women who study STEM fields in college are less likely to seek those jobs after graduating.

To increase attainment generally, postsecondary institutions could help by providing "clearer pathways" from college to the labor market, DiPrete said. Part of the reason that the United States has the highest drop-out rate in the industrialized world is that students often don't know how to get jobs or the college credentials they need.

It could also help – at all levels of education – to emphasize the benefits other than economic ones of getting a college degree: better health, more democratic engagement and higher job satisfaction, to name a few.

Full-time working women in 2011 earned only 82 percent of what men earned. That's up 20 percentage points from 30 years ago, thanks in part to women getting more education and access to high-paying managerial positions, but also an internal motivation to get a degree as "insurance" to be able to make a middle-class living.

Source: 21 Feb, 2013/[Inside Higher Edu](#).

Higher education needs to tackle bureaucratic barriers

Although Indian higher education suffers from many dysfunctions and the system overall is characterised by what some have termed "pinnacles of excellence in a sea of mediocrity", it does reasonably well on some international comparisons.

Here are a few examples:

India is a global leader in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) spent by public and private sources on higher education. At 3% of GDP (1.2% from public and 1.8% from private sources), India spends more than the United States (1% public and 1.6% private) and Korea (0.7% public and 1.9% private) on higher education.

- This suggests a limited scope for further increase, although more is required since, in absolute figures, investment in higher education does not measure up in international terms. Furthermore, 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% 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 to raise the gross enrolment rate to 25% 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 Brazil, China and Russia, which are other nations in the BRICS bloc. 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. Although India invests significant sums in post-secondary education, with the funds increasingly coming from students and their families, it does not spend the money 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 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 of small institutions. But the affiliating system is vast and deep rooted and, therefore, it is neither feasible nor desirable to dismantle it.

However, decentralisation of part of the curriculum holds great promise. With greater academic autonomy, core courses could be retained by a university, while responsibility for the rest of the curriculum could be devolved to colleges. This would create a desired innovation culture in colleges.

Clustering and even merging colleges that are very small would also have to figure in 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 is about four decades behind most advanced nations in enrolments.

While the US had an enrolment rate of 15% 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% respectively in 1975. Korea enrolled only 8% in 1975, which rose to 13% in 1980 and then rapidly increased to 34% 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% 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 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 standards, are relatively well paid, they are not necessarily effective. Academics, and especially college teachers, are constrained by rigid bureaucracy. Furthermore, their work is not carefully evaluated – salary increases and promotions are awarded 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 root.

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 prevent the academic system from performing effectively.

Conclusion

India has some areas of accomplishment in higher education. The challenge is to capitalise on these 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 US spends the most per capita on health care, but expenditure does not yield results. The Barack Obama reforms, like the 12th Plan in India, may finally improve an ossified system traditionally dominated by special interests 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.

Source: 23 Feb, 2013/[University World News](#)

Indian Education System: What needs to change?

What do we need to change about the Indian Education System?

Education has been a problem in our country and lack of it has been blamed for all sorts of evil for hundreds of years. Even Rabindranath Tagore wrote lengthy articles about how Indian education system needs to change. Funny thing is that from the colonial times, few things have changed. We have established IITs, IIMs, law schools and other institutions of excellence; students now routinely score 90% marks so that even students with 90+ percentage find it difficult to get into the colleges of their choice; but we do more of the same old stuff.

Rote learning still plagues our system, students study only to score marks in exams, and sometimes to crack exams like IIT JEE, AIIMS or CLAT. The colonial masters introduced education systems in India to create clerks and civil servants, and we have not deviated much from that pattern till today. If once the youngsters prepared en masse for civil services and bank officers exams, they now prepare to become engineers. If there are a few centres of educational excellence, for each of those there are thousands of mediocre and terrible schools, colleges and now even universities that do not meet even minimum standards. If things have changed a little bit somewhere, elsewhere things have sunk into further inertia, corruption and lack of ambition.

Creating a few more schools or allowing hundreds of colleges and private universities to mushroom is not going to solve the crisis of education in India. And a crisis it is – we are in a country where people are spending their parent's life savings and borrowed money on education – and even then not getting standard education, and struggling to find employment of their choice. In this country, millions of students are victim of an unrealistic, pointless, mindless rat race. The mind numbing competition and rote learning do not only crush the creativity and originality of millions of Indian students every year, it also drives brilliant students to commit suicide.

We also live in a country where the people see education as the means of climbing the social and economic ladder. If the education system is failing – then it is certainly not due to lack of demand for good education, or because a market for education does not exist.

Education system in India is failing because of more intrinsic reasons. There are systemic faults that do not let our demand for good education translate into a great marketplace with excellent education

services. I discussed the reasons previously in this article: Will Education make a comeback in India?

Let's explore something else in this one: what should change in India education system? What needs to be fixed at the earliest? Here is my wish list:

Focus on skill based education

Our education system is geared towards teaching and testing knowledge at every level as opposed to teaching skills. "Give a man a fish and you feed him one day, teach him how to catch fishes and you feed him for a lifetime." I believe that if you teach a man a skill, you enable him for a lifetime. Knowledge is largely forgotten after the semester exam is over. Still, year after year Indian students focus on cramming information. The best crammers are rewarded by the system. This is one of the fundamental flaws of our education system.

Reward creativity, original thinking, research and innovation

Our education system rarely rewards what deserves highest academic accolades. Deviance is discouraged. Risk taking is mocked. Our testing and marking systems need to be built to recognize original contributions, in form of creativity, problem solving, valuable original research and innovation. If we could do this successfully Indian education system would have changed overnight.

Memorising is no learning; the biggest flaw in our education system is perhaps that it incentivizes memorizing above originality.

Get smarter people to teach

For way too long teaching became the sanctuary of the incompetent. Teaching jobs are until today widely regarded as safe, well-paying, risk-free and low-pressure jobs. Once a teacher told me in high school "Well, if you guys don't study it is entirely your loss – I will get my salary at the end of the month anyway." He could not put across the lack of incentive for being good at teaching any better. Thousands of terrible teachers all over India are wasting valuable time of young children every day all over India.

Education for all

It is high time to encourage a breed of superstar teachers. The internet has created this possibility – the performance of a teacher now need not be restricted to a small classroom. Now the performance of a teacher can be opened up for the world to see. The better teacher will be more popular, and acquire more students. That's the way of the future. Read here about why I think that we are closing on to the age of rockstar teachers.

We need leaders, entrepreneurs in teaching positions, not salaried people trying to hold on to their mantle.

Implement massive technology infrastructure for education

India needs to embrace internet and technology if it has to teach all of its huge population, the majority of which is located in remote villages. Now that we have computers and internet, it makes sense to invest in technological infrastructure that will make access to knowledge easier than ever. Instead of focussing on outdated models of brick and mortar colleges and universities, we need to create educational delivery mechanisms that can actually take the wealth of human knowledge to the masses. The tools for this dissemination will be cheap smartphones, tablets and computers with high speed internet connection. While all these are becoming more possible than ever before, there is lot of innovation yet to take place in this space.

Re-define the purpose of the education system

Our education system is still a colonial education system geared towards generating babus and pen-pushers under the newly acquired skin of modernity. We may have the most number of engineering graduates in the world, but that certainly has not translated into much technological innovation here. Rather, we are busy running the call centres of the rest of the world – that is where our engineering skills end.

The goal of our new education system should be to create entrepreneurs, innovators, artists, scientists, thinkers and writers who can establish the foundation of a knowledge based economy rather than the low-quality service provider nation that we are turning into.

Effective deregulation

Until today, an institute of higher education in India must be operating on a not-for profit basis. This is discouraging for entrepreneurs and innovators who could have worked in these spaces. On the other hand, many people are using education institutions to hide their black money, and often earning a hefty income from education business through clever structuring and therefore bypassing the rule with respect to not earning profit from recognized educational institutions. As a matter of fact, private equity companies have been investing in some education service provider companies which in turn provide services to not-for-profit educational institutions and earn enviable profits. Sometimes these institutes are so costly that they are outside the rich of most Indian students.

There is an urgent need for effective de-regulation of Indian education sector so that there is infusion

of sufficient capital and those who provide or create extraordinary educational products or services are adequately rewarded.

Take mediocrity out of the system

Our education system today encourages mediocrity – in students, in teachers, throughout the system. It is easy to survive as a mediocre student, or a mediocre teacher in an educational institution. No one shuts down a mediocre college or mediocre school. Hard work is always tough, the path to excellence is fraught with difficulties. Mediocrity is comfortable. Our education system will remain sub-par or mediocre until we make it clear that it is not ok to be mediocre. If we want excellence, mediocrity cannot be tolerated. Mediocrity has to be discarded as an option. Life of those who are mediocre must be made difficult so that excellence

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Personalize education – one size does not fit all

Assembly line education prepares assembly line workers. However, the drift of economic world is away from assembly line production. Indian education system is built on the presumption that if something is good for one kid, it is good for all kids.

Some kids learn faster, some are comparatively slow. Some people are visual learners, others are auditory learners, and still some others learn faster from exper

ience. If one massive monolithic education system has to provide education to everyone, then there is no option but to assume that one size fits all.

If however, we can effectively decentralize education, and if the government did not obsessively control what would be the “syllabus” and what will be the method of instruction, there could be an explosion of new and innovative courses geared towards serving various niches of learners,

Take for example, the market for learning dancing. There are very different dance forms that attract students with different tastes.

More importantly, different teachers and institutes have developed different ways of teaching dancing.

This could never happen if there was a central board of dancing education which enforced strict standards of what will be taught and how such things are to be taught.

Central regulation kills choice, and stifles innovation too. As far as education is concerned, availability of choices, de-regulation, profitability, entrepreneurship and emergence of niche courses are all inter-connected.

Allow private capital in education

The government cannot afford to provide higher education to all the people in the country. It is too costly for the government to do so. The central government spends about 4% of budget expenditure on education, compared to 40% on defence. Historically, the government just did not have enough money to spend on even opening new schools and universities, forget overhauling the entire system and investing in technology and innovation related to the education system. Still, until today, at least on paper only non-profit organizations are allowed to run educational institutions apart from government institutions. Naturally, the good money, coming from honest investors who want to earn from honest but high impact businesses do not get into education sector. Rather, there are crooks, money launderers and politicians opening “private” educational institutions which extract money from the educational institution through creative structuring. The focus is on marketing rather than innovation or providing great educational service – one of the major examples of this being IIPM.

Allowing profit making will encourage serious entrepreneurs, innovators and investors to take interest in the education sector.

The government does not have enough money to provide higher education of reasonable quality to all of us, and it has no excuse to prevent private capital from coming into the educational sector.

Make reservation irrelevant

We have reservation in education today because education is not available universally. Education has to be rationed. This is not a long –term solution. If we want to emerge as a country build on a knowledge economy, driven by highly educated people – we need to make good education so universally available that reservation will lose its meaning.

There is no reservation in online education – because it scales.

Today top universities worldwide are taking various courses online, and today you can easily attend a live class taught by a top professor of Harvard University online if you want, no matter which country is belong to.

This is the future, this is the easy way to beat reservation and make it inconsequential.

What are the most important changes you want to see in the India education system? Share your ideas.

Source: 26 Feb, 2013/ Startup.nujs.edu/blog

RESOURCE**Indian universities crying for better leadership, say 90% academics**

A global survey of the academic community on the leadership challenges faced by the Indian higher education system has revealed that the 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.

The results of the survey were unveiled at the Education Promotion Society for India (EPSI), a national body of over 500 higher education institutions, summit on developing transformational leaders for Indian higher education on Thursday.

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.

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%) 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 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 Vellore institute of Technology 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.

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.

Minister of state for HRD, Shashi Tharoor in his address said that the Indian higher education system needs to step up credible standards of higher education. Towards this end, the government has initiated 11 bills on Higher Education in the Parliament.

Tharoor admitted that India has not addressed the issue of equity as well it has attempted to address the issues of enrolment, excellence and employability. The minister welcomed the growth of

the private sector education institutions that make up for 64% of the total institutions in India and contribute to 57% of total enrolment.

In the EPSI survey, policy and regulatory issues covered included the latest Bill being discussed in the Parliament allows police, under certain conditions, to arrest the top leaders. The respondents feared that this Bill once enacted could be misused by the system for personal and other obvious benefits. When asked whether "the Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Higher Education Institutions Bill 2011 that provides provision for arresting and imprisonment of chancellors, vice-chancellors, Deans or head of institutions, help to curb malpractices in higher education?" only 20% of the respondents felt that it will put an end to the malpractices in higher education while an overwhelming majority of 80% said that this will lead to wrong precedents in higher education systems which is already over stressed with several constraints and challenges.

Responding to this fear, the Minister said, "The purpose of this Bill (Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Higher Education Institutions Bill 2011) is not to 'harass' the educationists but to make all of them 'honest'," while alluding to unfair practices like capitation fee, multiple fee structures and differential salaries to teachers prevalent in the education system.

Arun Nigavekar, former chairman of University Grants Commission, defined the traits of transformational leaders needed for India. He said their task is to impart 21st century Learning skills to tech savvy youth like--how to learn; make critical judgments; differentiate between good, bad and indifferent; communicate intelligently and be flexible, adaptable and tolerant to other creeds and cultures.

K B Powar, chancellor, D Y Patil University, Pune debunked the claims of education administrators claiming increased gross enrolment ratio (GER) in the higher education sector by pointing out that GER also includes enrolments in distance learning mode which has a poor pass percentage of 15%.

Source: 15 Feb, 2013/[Times of India](#)

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Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation

Apeejay Stya House
14 Commercial Complex, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, Part - II
New Delhi 110048

Tel. No. (91 – 11) 29228296 / 97 / 98
Fax No. (91 – 11) 29223326

Email: aserf@apeejay.edu
Website: <http://aserf.org.in>

