



Announcements

ASERF has instituted [Dr Stya Paul Young Educationist Award](#) for honouring Young Educationists who have demonstrated their potential by making an impact on Indian education.

Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2009. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

[Apeejay Education Society launches courses in Biosciences & Clinical Research:](#)

Apeejay Education Society (AES), has now established an institute for Biosciences and Clinical Research to meet the growing demand for technical personnel in the Biosciences sector. The institute, [Apeejay Svrn Institute for Biosciences and Clinical Research, Gurgaon, \(AIBCR\)](#) has been established in collaboration with leading companies in the industry, viz Martin & Harris, ASG Biochemicals and Walter & Bushnell Health Care.

For more, visit: www.apeejay.edu/aibcr

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.

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ASPECT

In search of learning

Thoughts have grown in wild profusion on the various facets and issues relating to higher education in India. Not all of them are necessarily consistent; they are even contradictory and can turn out to be misleading.

The Knowledge Commission was expected to give a sense of direction, but it turned out to be a house divided. Its vice-chairman and some members resigned. Its functioning was on occasion opposed by the HRD ministry. A new minister has now taken over. Will he be able to steer clear of contradictions and provide positive leadership to ensure the progress of higher education? This presupposes a clear ideological outlook.

An overriding ideology now influences our economy, polity, technology, society and culture. This is the ideology of marketisation, globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation. It also tends to influence our educational system.

The ideology of marketisation has led to the “commodification” of everything. Education is one such “commodity” to be bought and sold in the market. An educational institution is the shop where “education” is bought and sold. The type of instruction imparted and its “quality” depends on the demand and supply in the market.

This concept of education is a far cry from the classical liberal ideas of education in Europe as also from our own ancient traditions. Cardinal Newman in spelling out the goal of universal education observed that it should produce a “gentleman” with good judgment regarding right and wrong. More recently, Edward Dabono stated that education should produce a thinking individual. In the scintillating convocation address to Allahabad University, delivered in 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru said, “A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for adventure of ideas, for secret of truth, for the onward march of the human race towards ever-lasting goals of life.”

No guarantee

In today’s system of higher education in India, we seem to have ignored such ideas and concepts. Young people generally opt for courses that will ensure a rewarding career. Money is the ultimate determinant. In taking up such courses, students pay scant attention to their own likes and dislikes, their

medical course is now considered to be expensive and prolonged, with no guarantee of an immediate payback. Because it takes time to settle down as a doctor, more and more students are going in for computer engineering, information technology, management, animation and gaming. These subjects ensure remunerative jobs on graduation.

No wonder the traditional arts and science courses have no takers. Students do not want to go in for pure sciences and mathematics. A leading scientist, CNR Rao, has drawn attention to this phenomenon. He has warned that if this goes on, there will be no “science teachers”. This can lead to disastrous consequences not least because science is the foundation of technology and without a sound foundation of science no country can progress. Scientific research can come to a standstill.

Likewise, the neglect of the liberal arts such as literature, philosophy, and history can lead to lopsided education and an unbalanced society. The Yashpal Committee has recommended an inter-disciplinary approach to higher education even in such technological institutions as the IIT.

There is a cut-throat competition for the limited number of seats available in the IITs and IIMs and similar institutions. Under the pressure of competition, students are more anxious to clear examinations with a high rank rather than acquire knowledge and skills. Not to mention acquiring knowledge for its own sake and the depth of understanding it provides. Students even spend a fair amount in the coaching classes which prepare students for competitive examinations. While coaching classes are full, classrooms in colleges are deserted.

The liberal outlook has given way to a purely utilitarian and commercial one. Education is looked upon as an instrument of producing human resources needed by the economy. Educated and trained human resources have become a scarce commodity specially in the context of demographic changes in the advanced countries like Japan and Germany and other European countries where gerontocracy prevails. Young human resources are in short supply. This has put India with its young profile (50 per cent of the people less than 25 years) in an advantageous position.

India can be the factory to churn out human resources for the rest of the world. It is in this context that the

Knowledge Commission has called for a drastic increase in the institutions of higher education such as IITs, IIMs, and universities. India needs a minimum of 1500 universities, according to Mr Sam Pitroda, the chairman of the Knowledge Commission. Following the recommendations, the Centre announced the setting up of 30 new Central universities and several new IITs and IIMs.

But there can be no mushroom growth of the institutions of higher education. They not only require substantial financial resources for infrastructure, but also a high calibre faculty which is not readily available. If institutions are hurriedly set up, they will remain below par. This is one of the drawbacks of India's system of higher education. Quality is sacrificed at the altar of quantity. A special report on India (The Economist ~ 13-19 December 2008, China and India ~ a tale of two vulnerable economics) states ~ "The quality of teaching in India's 248 universities and some 18,000 colleges is generally poor. NASSCOM the IT Industry's lobby group reckons that out of 30,000 engineering graduates who emerge each year mostly from private college, 25 per cent are unemployable without extensive further training and half are just unemployable... In a recent ranking of world's 500 best universities by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, only two were from India."

Under the pressure of demand, a rapid growth of these institutions has become a necessity. An enormous number of young people with high aspirations can be an asset to India if they can be given knowledge and skills required in the modern economy and society governed by modern technology like that of internet. If the number of institutions of higher education is insufficient, the youth will remain unemployable and get frustrated. Rather than being an asset, they will be a liability, posing grave danger to society.

Changed outlook

THOSE belonging to affluent sections seek admission to universities in the USA, Germany and Australia. It is estimated that their number is about 3.5 million and they spend \$13 billion on pursuing education abroad. It is, therefore, rightly argued that this amount could be invested within the country to set up quality institutions of higher learning.

The number of institutions of higher education required to be set up is so large that they cannot be set up by the government alone. They will have to come up in the private sector. Such institutions are not unknown in India. During British rule, Lokmanya Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai took the lead in setting up such institutions. Their outlook was essentially nationalistic.

They were educationists. They wanted qualified Indians with a patriotic spirit.

That outlook has changed. The profit motive is the major determinant. There are non-aided institutions that receive government assistance in the form of concessions. These private institutions lack infrastructure and a faculty worth the name. And yet the government cannot take corrective action because of their political connections and support. They have grown from strength to strength making the educational enterprise a flourishing business. Rather than being affiliated to established universities, they have successfully claimed the status of deemed universities.

The previous HRD minister was liberal in according the status of regular universities to institutions previously known as deemed universities. Their number has gone up to 125. The new HRD minister, Mr Kapil Sibal, intends to examine whether the status of such institutions is justified. Our private universities are a far cry from the world-renowned private institutions in the USA.

Source: [The Statesman](#)/Editorial

NEWS

A teachable moment

The AICTE corruption scandal has plumbed new lows, as the accused chairman of the council, Ram Avtar Yadav, finds powerful political backers. The AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education), as the body that monitors all our technical institutes, has a tremendous responsibility. However, AICTE approvals have long been a sham, and top officers are implicated in serious corruption charges. The HRD ministry had suspended Yadav after the CBI investigation started, but now, an entire posse of MPs across parties has stuck by him, claiming that he was unfairly singled out because of his caste.

The idea that Yadav is being picked on because of his caste is preposterous. This political mobilising on caste lines on a matter that patently has nothing to do with identity does a disservice to credible identity politics, besides confirming the impression that such systemic sleaze goes unpunished when it suits our political class. Why is the government so squeamish about taking action against these individuals? In cases as defining as this one, one can only conclude that inaction means implicit endorsement of narrow self-interest over national well-being.

The government has signaled that education reform is one of its most urgent priorities, promising an

overarching national regulator to replace these multiple agencies like the AICTE and UGC. The fact that councils meant to regulate higher education are themselves clouded in this kind of murk goes to show how putrid the current system is, and how important the proposed overhaul is. In another example, the Medical Council of India chairman is on several medical college boards, institutions he is meant to evaluate and regulate. If this manifest conflict of interest does not stir the government to take action, then how credible are its fine-sounding promises on higher education reform? Of course, the story of our higher learning institutes is one of self-interest all the way down. Politicians own many of these institutes. Keeping things as they are and shielding the AICTE from investigation might suit their purposes; this situation India cannot afford.

Source: New Delhi [/indianexpress.com/](http://indianexpress.com/)13th August 2009

BEd colleges rapped for using rented buildings

Three BEd colleges run by members of Saurashtra University Syndicate have been slapped notices by National Council for Technical Education (NCTE). The reason: the institutes are being run on rented premises. However, trustees have denied receiving notices.

Sources said NCTE has asked these colleges to shift to their own buildings and produce official documents. The colleges are Shyamji Krishna Verma BEd College, HN BEd College and Saraswati BEd College. Saurashtra University can take punitive steps against such colleges, but no action is generally taken.

Syndicate member and HN BEd College trustee Nehal Shukla said, "We have not received such a notice. We have already applied for change of location. When the NCTE team comes for inspection, we will show them the new place. NCTE had given us one year to find our own premises."

Source: Rajkot [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)5th August 2009

Colleges to have internal quality assurance cell

In an effort to upgrade the academic quality in colleges, UGC has asked the self-financed & aided colleges to constitute an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC).

The cell would be monitoring various activities and events organised in the college and its annual report would be sending to the monitoring body, informed the CDC (College Development Committee) director, Dr C P Singh. The decision was taken recently during the UGC meeting held in Lucknow where the colleges had submitted their proposals.

"The UGC has asked the self-financed and government-aided colleges to start an internal quality assurance cell. It would be on the basis of the report of the cell that would be sent to NAAC, the grading of the colleges would be done," said Singh.

It was also learnt that this cell would also be instrumental in the promotion of the teachers. More so, over 2 lakh students would be benefited with the opening of this cell. "However, the UGC would be providing grant only to the aided colleges and not to the self-financed colleges," said the official.

Source: Kanpur [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)11th August 2009

Evaluation of modernization & Upgradation of ITIs

The upgradation of Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) is being taken up under the following schemes:

- Upgradation of 100 Government ITIs into Centres of Excellence (CoE).
- Externally aided Vocational Training Improvement Project (VTIP) covering up-gradation of 400 Government ITIs.
- Upgradation of 1396 Government ITIs through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode, wherein 600 ITIs have been taken up for up-gradation, so far.

Under the schemes for 'Upgradation of 100 Government ITIs into Centres of Excellence (CoE)' and externally aided Vocational Training Improvement Project (VTIP), the funds are released to respective State Governments, in instalments, based on utilisation certificates of earlier released funds. As regards upgradation of 1396 ITIs through PPP mode, central fund as 'interest free loan' is released directly to the IMC Society of ITIs and not to the State Government and is being properly utilized for the purpose of upgradation of ITI.

The schemes are monitored continuously by National Steering Committee (NSC) and National Implementation Cells / Units specially set up for this purpose through various meetings, national workshops and video conferencing with the State Governments on each of the above schemes. Further, senior officials from the Ministry, as area officers, visit the States / UTs on regular basis to verify the status on the ground. Also, under Vocational Training Improvement Project (VTIP), overall progress on implementation in the States /UTs is reviewed periodically, twice in a year, through Joint Review Mission (JRM) held jointly by the Ministry, the World Bank and the State Governments. Also, at the State



level, the schemes are monitored by State Steering Committees and State Implementation Cells / Units.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Labour and Employment Shri Harish Rawat in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/3rd August 2009

Fate of higher education teachers due to retire undecided?

The contradiction in state government's order and University Grants Commission's (UGC) circular on increasing the superannuation age has left the fate of higher education teachers who retired recently or are due to retire soon in a catch 22 situation.

While the GO states that it is not binding on the government to increase the retirement age of teachers, the UGC circular says that if state government decides to implement revised pay scales, it will have to follow all the instructions in the circular, which include increasing the age of retirement from 62 years to 65.

Sample this: on July 9, the state higher education department came out with an order stating, "After giving it a serious thought, the government has decided not to increase the age of superannuation as recommended by the Union human resource development (HRD) ministry on the suggestion of the UGC."

Another NGO was issued on July 29 clarifying state government's stand further. It said that as per the point number 8 (P) (V) of HRD letter issued on December 31, 2008, implementation of the revised pay scale scheme is optional, which means that the state government is not bound by any clause. The GO further states that increase in retirement age would block posts due to fall vacant following superannuation of teachers for three years, thereby limiting the employment opportunities for the youth.

The GO also states that increase in superannuation age of higher education teachers may lead to similar demands from secondary and primary teachers, which in case accepted would further reduce the employment opportunities. In addition, it said that increasing retirement age would mean payment of highest grade to teachers above 62 years of age, which means more expenses on the already overburdened state exchequer. In comparison, the younger lot recruited, as teachers would have to be paid less at the entry level.

However, HRD letter to the state government states that it is optional for the state government to implement the scheme but in case it does, then all the clauses will have to be followed. The point 8 (P) (I) of

the HRD letter states that the implementation of the revised scales shall be subject to the acceptance of all the conditions mentioned in the letter and regulations to be framed by the UGC.

The HRD letter also states that 80% of additional expenditure involved in the implementation of the pay revision will be borne by the Union government and rest by the state government. However, the Union government will give financial assistance only when the scheme is implemented in totality without any modification.

The basic intention of UGC behind recommendation to increase retirement age was that quality faculty for higher education is not available in the country at present as teaching profession has become the last option for the talent. As a result, there is an acute crisis of teachers.

In UP, for over 19.5 lakh students in around 500 government and government aided degree colleges and state universities, the requirement of teachers is around 30,000 to maintain the proper teacher-taught ratio. However, at present there are only 14,000 posts, of which over 2,000 are vacant. Teachers said that in order to improve quality of education, government will not only have to create more posts but also increase the superannuation age.

Further, the state government has ordered 25% increase in student intake in state government funded colleges and universities. This will aggravate the crisis as number of students will increase, teaching strength will decrease following retirement of existing teachers.

Higher education officers said that all the teaching vacancies are in the process of being filled, hence teacher-taught ratio would remain intact. But teachers pointed out that selection process has been caught in litigation. Regarding extra financial burden because of increase in retirement age, teachers argued that government should add the pension given to the retired teacher and the [salary](#) to the new recruit and then compare it with the salary expense after increasing the superannuation age.

Source: Lucknow timesofindia/4th August 2009

Govt. admits lacunae in higher education policy

Orissa does not have a higher education policy and over 95 per cent of the department's annual budget is spent on salaries of teachers and other university and college staff. The state government, which admitted to these facts on Saturday, decided to set up a task force to deal with the problems in higher education and come up with a concrete roadmap.

"We want to revamp the higher education system and chalk out a five-year plan. We have asked vice-

chancellors of all universities, technical and management institutes along with academicians for suggestions," higher education minister Debi Prasad Mishra said. "We are also planning to come up with a deliverable framework for 2020."

Academicians have expressed concern over the acute shortage of teachers in the state and declining standards of students going for higher education. Vice-chancellor of Sambalpur University A K Pujari said, "Filling up of the vacant teacher's posts in colleges will solve problems of most universities. The government must provide complete autonomy to educational institutions for better functioning."

Toeing a similar line, vice-chancellor of Utkal University Binayak Rath said, "The entire education system has been hit by red-tapism and negative mindset. There is an acute dearth of good and committed teachers and absolutely no atmosphere for research. "Higher education secretary Madhusudan Padhi said, "The task force likely to be formed by October will be an apex body of higher education. It will prepare a plan for growth of higher education. Four sub-committees will provide suggestion for expansion, curricular concerns, governance and regulations and financing of higher education."

Secretary of Orissa Private Engineering Colleges' Association (Opeca), Binod Dash said, "This is an irony that technical education comprising of engineering and management is under the purview of industries department. Acute shortage of quality teachers and no uniformity in fee structure are some of the major problems."

Source: Bhubanewar [/timesofindia/](#)8th August 2009

HRD looks to 'free' education watchdog

In a move that could protect the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research from political, ideological and bureaucratic interference, the HRD ministry has proposed an amendment in the Constitution. HRD minister Kapil Sibal confirmed the move.

The ministry wants the constitutional amendment to ensure credibility behind the promise of autonomy. So far, no regulator in any field has been set up through a constitutional amendment. In fact, the health ministry's proposal for a regulator, currently with many ministries for their opinion, does not talk of amending the Constitution.

Sources said enshrining autonomy for the proposed commission in the Constitution would act as a protective model for the regulator. There is a growing thinking in the ministry that creating a new regulator in place of UGC through an Act of Parliament will not be

the real step forward. "Autonomy should be guaranteed in the Constitution itself. Otherwise, the new body will also become like UGC over a period of time," the sources said.

HRD ministry is in touch with the law ministry to fine-tune the Article of the Constitution that would be amended. "Governments can come and go but the regulator will remain untouched. It's not very easy to tinker with constitutional authorities," a law ministry source said. After the constitutional amendment, a mandatory Bill will also be brought in Parliament.

It is believed that the idea of amendment in the Constitution came when the ministry was discussing the Yashpal committee report on renovation and rejuvenation of higher education. The committee had recommended that the proposed regulatory body should report directly to Parliament. But Sibal felt a way ahead should be devised and thus the idea of amending the Constitution came up.

There is a growing belief that at a time when the ministry is working towards setting up 14 Innovation Universities of world class standards, autonomy should be real that would also win the confidence of foreign universities which want to come to India.

The ministry is hopeful that the Constitution amendment Bill will be ready in time for the winter session of Parliament.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)13th August 2009

IIM Shillong implements IT education project

IIM Shillong, also known as the Rajiv Gandhi Indian Institute of Management, has become the first among India's centrally funded technical institutions and universities to successfully implemented an IT education project.

The project, student system and alumni development solution for higher education' project, includes the deployment of Peoplesoft Campus Solutions, Human Capital Management, Financials and Supply Chain Management applications from Oracle.

The implementation of the project has automated all its backend processes, besides improving time management, data accounting and the efficient management of human resources and staff and student feedback.

It has resulted in freeing up more time and resources, and provide better information for management and faculty to enhance their core mission of delivering education programmes to the Institute's post graduate students.

The project would enable complete calendar view of a teacher's classes, one-click email to one, a select group of, or all students in a class, track midterm and

final grades for each student, write notes that can be displayed on a student's transcript, automate leave planning and related compensation for the entire workforce and so on.

"In today's fast-changing and highly competitive environment, we are determined to provide quality education to our students," said Prof Ashoke Dutta, director of IIM Shillong.

"IIM Shillong has taken a big step towards implementing a comprehensive IT solution with the help of Oracle and Citagus. We have sought to reduce manual processes as much as possible, and provide access to real-time information for students and the college management and faculty. This will enable us to focus completely on education programmes for our students and excel in quality and accessibility," Dutta added.

IIM Shillong will now be able to more effectively manage relationships with alumni and other donors.

Source: Guwahati [/business-standard/](#)10th August 2009

MHRD to revise subsidy for professional courses

As a part of the second 100-day agenda of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, the Human Resource Department (HRD) Ministry will soon bring to the Cabinet the student loan interest subsidy scheme.

The ministry has decided that the parental income criteria for students to avail the subsidy for professional courses will now be Rs.4.5 lakh per annum.

According to a senior official, "Though initially Rs.2.5 lakh income criteria was being mulled, the Planning Commission and the Committee of Secretaries to which it was later referred recommended that the income criteria be fixed in such a way that the scope and scheme gets widened. Therefore, a reasonable income criterion has been fixed. The revised scheme will be mulled in the Cabinet soon."

Currently Rs.14,000 crore is being provided as loans to students annually under the existing higher education loan scheme.

But, many poor and meritorious students do not apply for the loan considering the interest and collateral security provisions.

The new scheme will however, bear the burden of education loan during the moratorium period.

Moratorium period is the duration of academic courses, in which, the student usually does not pay monthly installments for the loan, but the total interest for this moratorium period gets added to the principal

amount once the repayment begins after the student gets employed.

The new scheme wants to cater to the non-creamy layer of the society.

The scheme is the promise of the UPA government's Common Minimum Programme that assured that nobody will be denied professional education no matter whether he/she is poor.

The scheme is expected to benefit around five lakh students and the interest burden on the government is expected to be nearly Rs.4,000 crore over the entire 11th plan period.

The Modern Educational Loan Scheme has been formulated by the Indian Banks' Association.

The loan facility will be available to those students who will take admission in professional courses offered by recognized institutions - government and private.

Source: New Delhi [/indiaedunews.net/](#)14th August 2009

Now, NCTE chief faces probe

After the CBI unearthed massive corruption among top brass of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), it is the turn of the National Council for Teachers' Education (NCTE) to come under the scanner with the Human Resources Development (HRD) Ministry marking a vigilance inquiry against its chairman M A Siddiqui for allegedly giving 'inappropriate' recognition to an institute. The inquiry comes soon after the ministry sought Siddiqui's comments on Congress MP G Harsha Kumar's complaints that the Innovative College of Education in Greater Noida was running more than the sanctioned number of courses.

Though Siddiqui confirmed that there was a complaint after which they sought his comments, he did have any information on the vigilance inquiry. Sources in the HRD ministry, however, confirmed that a probe has been initiated. The NCTE is a statutory body performing regulatory functions, ensuring maintenance of standards in teachers' education and preventing proliferation of sub-standard institutions.

In fact, the Amalapuram MP had initially complained to the NCTE itself. "Following the complaint, we sent an inspection team to the institute. The committee's report said only two courses, BE.d and BCA, were being run there as reported by the institute and things were satisfactory. The same report was sent in reply to the MP concerned," Siddiqui told The Indian Express.

Dissatisfied with the reply, Kumar wrote to the HRD Ministry calling it a breach of privilege. He alleged that

the institute was running over ten courses without due approvals or requisite infrastructure. Following the complaint, the HRD ministry sent a note to the NCTE chairman asking for his comments.

"I have told the ministry that this was what was reported by the institute to the inspection team. Meanwhile, a reinspection of the institute was ordered last month. I, however, have no information or intimation of any vigilance enquiry in the matter," Siddiqui said.

Trying to defend himself, Siddiqui said he had taken a host of corrective measures, including closure of some 400 colleges after they were found violating norms.

Incidentally, last year, social activist Anna Hazare had written to Sonia Gandhi alleging "large-scale corruption at NCTE". The PMO had even asked the HRD Ministry to explain why no substantive action was taken against NCTE despite several complaints.

Earlier, a committee, constituted by the HRD Ministry, led by former Education Secretary Sudeep Banerjee, had suggested that the body be repealed, saying the Diploma in Education (D.Ed) and Bachelors in Education (B.Ed) courses could be easily conducted by the universities. The HRD ministry even circulated a Cabinet note on the same in May 2007, but then the matter was suddenly buried. More recently, the Prof Yashpal-led committee on rejuvenation of higher education had also advised that NCTE and other regulators be scrapped and a single independent body be instituted.

Source: New Delhi indianexpress.com/12th August 2009

Parliament nod for Right to Education Bill

Parliament has adopted 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2009,' which envisages free and compulsory education to children in the 6-14 age group with the Lok Sabha approving it by voice vote on Tuesday. The Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on July 20.

Replying to the debate, Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal termed the Centre's move a "national enterprise that would help shape India's future." The legislation would ensure every child is right to education, and the obligation of the government to impart it. Once the President gave assent to the Bill, getting education would be a fundamental right of the child.

The law was brought not to interfere with the State government's attempts to provide elementary education. On the medium of instruction, he said there was a provision to provide elementary education, as far as possible, in the mother tongue of the child. The

law would ensure that the child got free, compulsory and quality education by qualified teachers.

The curriculum would be less rigorous and it would ensure all-round development of children.

While 25 per cent of seats in every private school would be allocated for children from disadvantaged groups including differently abled children at the entry level, as far as minority institutions were concerned up to 50 per cent of those seats could be offered to students from their communities.

Stressing the need for a big boost to children's education, Mr. Sibal said that out of every 100 children attending elementary school only 12 reached the graduation level; in Europe it was 50-70 (students reaching college from the elementary level) and the global average 27. The Centre wanted to increase India's average to 15 by 2012 and to 30-35 by 2020, he said.

On infrastructure, he said there was a provision for establishing recognition authority in every State under which all schools would have to fulfill the minimum requirement of infrastructure within three years.

Otherwise, they would lose recognition. Similarly appointment of teachers had to be approved by the academic committee, he pointed out.

Source: New Delhi thehindu.com/5th August 2009

Right to education law to benefit disabled children too

Disabled children will also benefit from a bill making education free and compulsory passed by the Lok Sabha Tuesday. Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal said it would be for the first time such children would be integrated in the school system.

Speaking on the debate on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2009, that was passed by the Lok Sabha with a voice vote late Tuesday, Sibal said the legislation left it to the states to list out disadvantaged children according to local circumstances, but "it would be the obligation of the states to include differently abled children".

"When we frame the model rules for the implementation of the legislation, we will ensure that children suffering from disabilities must be included among the disadvantaged children," the minister said.

"This would be the first time in India that disabled children would be integrated in the school system," he added amid thumping of desks by the members.

Sibal said there was another legislation of the 1990s that spoke of equal opportunities and this "is being



amended to include certain differently abled categories in that legislation”.

Source: New Delhi [/thaindian.com](http://thaindian.com)/4th August 2009

Seven changes that a 'better India' awaits!

As another Independence Day knocks on our door, we cannot help looking forward to a better tomorrow. This August 15, let us take a chance to think!

We made the common people wear the thinking cap and propose changes, reformations and alterations that they think can contribute to a brighter future for our nation. Here is the list of proposed changes...

1. **KRA's & accountability of MP's:** “When every odd job and employee in our country is assessed on the basis of clearly defined ‘Key Result Areas’, the performance of the so-called ‘well-wishers’ of our country definitely demands a fair assessment! Consequently, all deserving candidates should reward, while a bad performer has to bear the brunt. The MP’s and politicians should be treated according to their performance,” suggests Chef Devraj Halder.
2. **Mindset:** “The mindset of the Indian people definitely needs an overhaul. The day people feel that it’s ‘My country’, there will surely be positive changes in their approach towards everything,” opines Mahesh Srikanta, a Mumbai-based media professional.
3. **Responsible youth:** “It’s high time we stop blaming the government and get rid of the “It’s government’s fault” attitude! This is the time to take charge. The youth should become more responsible towards their country and realise the fact that no one else, but the people of India chose their government...so better blame yourself for all the chaos!” exclaims Noor Enayat, a Delhi-based PR professional.
4. **An end to moral policing:** “It is time to break free from the barriers of moral policing and set a code of moral conduct, where individual freedom deserves utmost respect. The government should shift its focus to other important issues rather than raiding pubs or indulging in round table conferences to fix the dress code for women,” says Mohika Gupta, a journalist.
5. **Overhauling of the education system:** “The government should realise that students don’t need initiatives like scrapping the class 10th board exams, but the need of the hour is the complete reformation of the education system. ‘Relevant education’ should herald! The condition and quality of education provided in government schools should improve and higher educa-

tion should streamline to be in touch with industry. In short, we should stop taking short cuts and embrace educational reformations that will benefit the students and the country in the longer run,” says Harish Kumar, a chartered accountant.

6. **Responsible cinema:** “Since the youth is deeply inspired by what they see in [films](#), there should be a paradigm shift in Indian cinema as well. Rather than sticking to slapstick comedy in the name of entertainment, focus on responsible and meaningful cinema,” opines Raghav Dasgupta, a student from Delhi.
7. **Better journalism:** “The amount of footage given to celebs like Chand and Fiza or to Rakhi Sawant made me say that. I think there are better events/people to cover,” feels Tariq Khan, an Indian techie.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)12th August 2009

'Should deemed university status be scrapped?'

The controversial run of deemed [universities](#) in the recent past has not escaped the Supreme Court's attention. On Friday, it asked the Centre to examine the necessity of having a "deemed university" provision in the University Grants Commission Act.

"Should there at all be a provision in the UGC Act for grant of deemed university status to an educational institution? Deemed university status is granted to those institutions which exhibit academic excellence," a Bench comprising Justices Dalveer Bhandari and M K Sharma said.

Hearing a PIL filed by advocate Viplav Sharma, the Bench said: "The deemed university status was conferred on such institutions to make them eligible for financial grant from UGC and the independence to grant degrees."

Sharma's counsel Sanjay Hegde said grant of deemed university status has become a industry and that there was no check on the manner in which they were functioning much to the chagrin of [students](#) and parents.

Solicitor General Gopal Subramaniam told the Bench that the matter has also engaged serious attention of the Centre and the HRD ministry has already constituted an expert panel to go into the controversy in its entirety, including the desirability of scrapping the "deemed university" provision altogether.

A recent TOI-Times Now expose on a deemed university in Tamil Nadu demanding massive capitation fee to admit students had forced the HRD ministry to appoint a committee headed by P N Tandon to look into the irregularities in the grant of

recognition to deemed universities and review the entire gamut of the issue relating to it.

The SC had earlier expressed concern over the largescale corruption in grant of deemed university status to educational institutions which even lack basic infrastructure like classrooms.

In his PIL, Sharma sought a direction for conducting common entrance examinations for different professional courses offered by various universities to avoid clash of entrance examination dates and consequent harassment to students. SC posted the PIL for further hearing on September 29.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)1st August, 2009

Sibal asks IITs to create quality faculty for tech education

Noting that there is a mismatch between quantity and quality in technical education due to lack of good teachers, Union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal today asked the IITs to play mentoring role in creating quality faculty.

Speaking at the Convocation of IIT-Delhi, Sibal said despite growth in number of technical institutions, there had not been commensurate increase in quality graduates in the country.

"The key missing link in this growth is the availability of quality faculty," he said.

"The IITs should become centres of quality research. The IITs can play major mentoring role in creating quality faculty," he told reporters on the sidelines of the function.

He said the IITs had been able to attract and retain quality faculty because of "other attractions" and their "commitment" to the IIT system.

Sibal also emphasised on sharing of faculty among the IITs. He said the premier technical institutions could share their teaching programmes using technology.

The minister also called for more research activities and said for long scientists and technologists in the developing world were disadvantaged because of "distance from the market".

Sibal asked the IITs to compete with the best institutes of the world not only in terms of education and training but also in research output.

The other challenges before the IITs are to act as a catalyst in growth of quality technical education in the country, he said.

Sibal said the main problems confronting the country are poverty, water, diseases, environment, violence, terrorism, and destruction of the traditional fabric.

"These problems represent trans-disciplinary challenges," he said. He conferred Distinguished Alumni Award on Prof Sharad Malik and K Ananth Krishnan.

IIT Delhi Director Prof Surendra Prasad said the institute, in association with other IITs, was in the process of setting up a virtual lab to help students of several smaller institutions.

About 1,419 students will be awarded degrees in the 2-day convocation. As many as 181 students will be given away Ph.D, Prasad said.

The research work in the IIT- Delhi had increased significantly in the last few years; Prasad said adding that the institute was running 138 research projects at present.

Besides this, IIT Delhi has started an outreach programme under which it is offering courses to students in Ethiopia through technology mode, he said.

Source: New Delhi/PTI [/business-standard/](#)8th August 2009

Soon, higher education to go world-class

The 14 proposed Innovation Universities, aiming to attain world-class standards, will set new benchmarks in higher education be it in academics or autonomy.

The HRD ministry's concept note said admissions to undergraduate classes in these universities — to be established through public-private partnership — will be open to students from all over the world and will be done through one of the four methods adopted by institutions worldwide. The ministry prefers a two-stage testing process. The first will be a screening process involving a standardised aptitude test in broad areas of higher learning such as physical sciences, social sciences, humanities, languages, life sciences etc where tests will gauge cognitive and analytic abilities. In the second stage, candidates will have to go through an examination that measures knowledge through essay type questions. Tests will be conducted in all state capitals and major cities of the world.

At post-graduate level, the note said, standardised aptitude test should be done. For doctorate programmes, references from eminent academicians will supplement the results obtained at PG level. As for reservation, the note lay stress on socio-economic background of candidates. However, it made it clear that replacing the current system of caste reservation will give rise to constitutional issues and therefore it should be done on the basis of what is permissible.

Socio-economic factors to be considered include educational background and income of parents as well as nature of [school](#) (rural or urban) from which the candidate passed. The university will provide



scholarships to the top 20% of students at undergraduate and postgraduate level and educational loans will be available to those in need.

A search committee will shortlist candidates for the post of V-C. It will then be submitted to the proposed National Commission of Higher Education and Research. NCHER will give three names to the President and these names will be open to scrutiny by academia.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)12 August 2009

The IIT dilemma - old vs new

While the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are still believed to be the ultimate destination for engineering students, more than 500 students have rejected the admission offer to study in one of these institutes this year. Reasons vary — from not getting one's choice discipline to being hesitant about 'new IITs' and temporary campuses. The seven 'old IITs' include Kharagpur, Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Kanpur, Roorkee and Guwahati. Eight more were added to the list and approved by the government in 2008. These IITs are mentored by the nearest old IITs.

Does this rejection of students reflect that IIT as a brand is no longer as popular as it used to be? In response, Surendra Prasad, director, IIT-Delhi, says, "I have a problem with the word brand. But yes, I'd say that the stature of IIT has gone up. So expectations too have gone up."

However, Prasad adds that the rejections should be seen in the context of new IITs. People are suspicious of the effectiveness of the new IITs. The sudden expansion has led to this kind of a situation, he explains. However, he agrees that though the pace could be a little slow, the need for an expansion was always there.

A recent ministry of human resource development (MHRD) agenda paper — on the futuristic vision of IITs — states that India has about 1,700 engineering educational institutions and about two million students. The number of graduates per year is about 4,00,000. In a scenario like this, the seven IITs, 20 NITs, three IIITs, and a few other institutes are not sufficient. For example, in 2006, 3,00,000 students took the entrance exam for 5,000 seats. According to the MHRD report, the only way to meet the demand is by increasing the intake of existing IITs by setting up satellite campuses of existing campuses or setting up new IITs.

As to the hesitation factor of parents and students, Prasad says, "It is important to disseminate information and we are trying our best." What parents and students need to know is, he adds, that all these

new IITs have an established IIT as their mentor. Besides, quality will not be compromised in any of these new institutes. But then, Prasad points out that in the initial years, the dilemma is likely to persist because one has to choose between an established IIT and a new one. That's a tough choice to make.

While one of the major concerns of IIT aspirants and parents seems to be the idea of temporary campuses, Rajat Chakraborty, ex-professor and former head of Jadavpur University, mechanical engineering, feels that such fears are unfounded. He recalls that the first of the IITs — IIT Kharagpur — started functioning out of a temporary campus. It was born in May 1950 in Hijli detention camp, Kharagpur, "where our freedom fighters sacrificed their lives for our country's independence." In fact, before that, the IIT was functioning from 5, Esplanade East, Kolkata. He adds, "However, every educational institute goes through a gestation period and that cannot be discounted."

Chakraborty, who was also a parliamentary member of the Council of IITs for three years in the '70s, further points out, "The moment the first batch from any of these institutes complete their placements, students will start feeling confident."

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)3rd August, 2009

UGC finds fault with HRD's Brain Gain policy

While agreeing with the overall thrust of HRD ministry's Brain Gain policy for the proposed 14 world class Innovation Universities, the University Grants Commission has found fault with the idea of having mentors in Nobel laureates for the faculty. It has also cautioned against accepting people who have suffered burnout overseas.

UGC also wants the Brain Gain policy not to be confined to the proposed world class universities but to other institutions as well.

In its comments on the Brain Gain policy, UGC said the idea of mentors "may sound romantic and impressive but is of little practical value". "The Harvards and Oxfords of this world or our own Indian Institute of Science and IITs do not have outsourced mentors for their faculty," UGC said in a note to the HRD ministry. The commission said, "What is needed is an institutional ambience that nurtures talent and promotes excellence."

Otherwise, UGC agrees with the policy and said many leading institutions are already practising it. The commission has said the scheme may have to be structured in a way that enables leading universities and institutions to retain their talent. "This will ensure that brain gain does not lead to internal haemorrhage," UGC said.



UGC has said effective and visible mechanisms need to be put in place for the wider dissemination of the Brain Gain policy and the opportunities it offers. "This initiative should be truly internationally competitive with appropriate benchmarking and not allowed to degenerate into a first-cum-first-served opportunity for job seekers or as a cushy refuge into home waters after a burn-out overseas," the note says. UGC has also said that "firm commitment to diversity among both faculty and students should be an important element" of these universities. This implies giving representation to people from different sections of society.

The Commission has also cautioned against "either overestimating or underestimating the available talent among the Indian diaspora". "There is a need for a parallel initiative to send a large number of talented Indian doctoral students overseas to leading centres for post-doctoral research in emerging inter-disciplinary areas and in areas of strategic interest to us," UGC said. The Commission feels a "post-doctoral [training](#) scheme" can be dovetailed to the UGC's ambitious 'operation faculty recharge'.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)14th August 2009

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Certain anomalies grip education Bill

THE HISTORIC 'RIGHT TO EDUCATION BILL' TO provide free and compulsory schooling for all children between 6-14 years was passed by the Lok Sabha recently, after a tumultuous journey and weathering many a political storm, ever since it was first mooted in the Indian Constitution over 50 years back. Though the Bill is a laudable step in the right direction, it suffers from certain anomalies that need to be given due consideration in the future, either through notifications or amendments.

It is important that the Bill finds remedies for some of the pertinent issues raised such as institutionalising of Early Childhood Care and Education (age group of 0 to 6 which now rests with the state), consensus on the concept of neighbourhood schools and its promise of a common school system.

This Bill will not be able to meet its obligations unless the common school system encompassing all types of schools is achieved (ensuring certain common standards), by bridging the existing wide differences between various states and central boards.

On the provision of providing education to disabled children, we are happy that the Union HRD minister has assured that the definition of disadvantage would include all and would be outlined in the "model rules".

Admitting students in all schools without any age proof is also a laudable idea since children will be able to find a place in a school at any age even if they have not been able to go to schools earlier. But this may be an issue because

the date of birth is an essential requirement and the school leaving certificate is supposed to certify the age of the child.

The private schools have been facing severe pressure of admissions and above that the bill states no screening during admissions. This is fraught with all sorts of complications and there have to be some methodology of inclusion & exclusion. At this stage, it may not be appropriate to implement a provision without there being sufficient numbers of good quality schools in the neighbourhood.

This Bill is aimed towards education for all. But the real problem is the paucity of good schools. Merely reserving 25% of quota for the EWS (economically weaker sections) in the private schools (at the cost of depriving another set of non-EWS students from being educated, who nevertheless may also be not very well off) is certainly not egalitarian justice. Rather than imposing, the schools should be required to work towards adding 10-15% seats to their normal intake.

In the current situation of shortage of good schools, a more viable option would be to look innovatively at ways and means of utilising the available scarce resources, i.e. allowing schools to run a second shift and allowing them greater FSI (floor space index) to cater to the higher intake of students.

The government can also initiate the school voucher system wherein the government reimburses the schools (similar to what has been envisaged now, although the formula for arriving at the rate has not been fixed nor the financial arithmetic is been reflected in the Bill), but through a voucher given directly to the identified EWS members who can take it to any school of their choice. At this stage, however, it must be understood that low quality education is better than no education at all. So the government's first priority should be to ensure that each and every child has access to a school, and also simultaneously work towards raising the quality. The current move of allowing lower qualifications to meet the shortage of teachers can only be a short-term measure. The best way of enhancing quality is to have dedicated teachers at all levels effectively trained within the local environment itself, including those in the rural areas.

In order to attract the quantum of private sector to provide quality education as an supplement to the government's effort, there is a need to create a friendly environment. Imposing punitive action on the private school is again encouraging regime of control and inspector raj which would translate into higher transaction cost on those who would like to send their children in those schools and lead to lack of transparency, encouraging fly – by – night operators rather than people with long term vision in the private sector. Hence all approach should be through voluntary and incentivized movement towards government mission and vision.

Problems with quality not just restricted to unaided private schools but many govt. schools having no infrastructure, running under tents or in open areas. But at least some education is been provided by these institutions. Do we



really want to close these avenues without providing alternative avenues in the neighbourhood?

A study/survey conducted by British educationist Prof. James Tooley showed that unrecognised private schools out-performed government schools by a wide margin. This defies the notion that unregistered or unrecognised private schools are thought to be of low quality, and hence demanding of detailed regulation, even closure, by governmental authorities.

Though the Bill is well-intentioned, the question is about its implementation and monitoring. Education being a concurrent subject, Centre and states will have to collaborate. This is a potential minefield. It is suggested that the HRD ministry should constitute a high-level group comprising members from the government, Centre, states and key stakeholders from the private sector, to act toward addressing the various lacunae, arrive at an implementable time-bound action plan in consonance with the spirit in which the Bill is intended and act as an oversight body.

(by Sushma Berlia: The author is president, Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation and ex-president, PHDCC)

Source: The Economic Times/14th August, 2009

The right to cut-rate education

The right is limited to some children for some kind of schooling with no guarantee of universal access or quality education for all.

How much does the government spend on average on the schooling of a child? One would assume this is a critical figure for calculating not just the input costs but also the outcome. Yet, it is this very figure that is most difficult to come by. Try the Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD) or the state education departments. None of them is able to provide an answer with any degree of certainty. As a nation, we simply do not know how much we spend on education.

In the chaotic and multi-layered system of education promoted by the Union and state governments, the cost of schooling per child per annum varies widely. This is the crux of the problem with education in India and also the fundamental reason why the Bill for Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE), just passed by the Rajya Sabha, followed by Lok Sabha and waiting for the presidential stamp is hugely flawed.

The Bill perpetuates a discriminatory and non-inclusive system in which the quality of education is dependent on the social classes to which the school caters. For the mass of government schools, funding is extremely tight and thus, quality is largely missing. Let's take the central government's hierarchy first. At the apex are the better-funded and better-managed Kendriya Vidyalayas to which admissions are much sought after—remember the chagrin of HRD minister Kapil Sibal when he discovered that 1,000 of the 1,200 recommendations he could make for admission had already been used by his predecessor Arjun Singh?—and whose results are among the best in the country.

Sharing the top spot are the elite residential Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas after which come the Sainik Schools and way below them, the subaltern category of ordinary government schools and residential schools for tribal children. Another class of schools will be soon added to the list. During his previous tenure, the Prime Minister had proposed 6,000 'model' schools across the country and this category of more generously funded establishments will be coming up shortly.

The estimate of costs varies greatly. From Rs 15,000 per child annually in the Jawahar Navodayas to Rs 11,000-14,000 in the Kendriya Vidyalayas, it declines to a meagre Rs 1,800-2,500 in the run of government schools. In the complex hierarchies promoted by the Centre and the state governments over the decades, the gradations and quality fluctuate wildly. In the National Capital Territory there are seven different kinds of schools apart those given to the municipal corporation and voluntary organisations to run. Here the expenditure on a child's education can be as little as Rs 900 annually although some NGOs are getting close to Rs 3,000 per child for running mobile schools which operate out of buses.

The problem with the RTE Bill is that it does little to set quality standards. Well-known education activist and lawyer Ashok Agarwal says the Bill should have insisted that all government-run schools should be of the level of the Kendriya Vidyalayas. "The government is spending public money on running exclusive schools meant for people of a higher socio-economic status whereas children of the poor and the marginalised sections of society are forced to make do with less than a tenth of the expenditure. "This is in utter violation of Articles 14, 21 and 21A of the constitution," says the lawyer who has filed a public interest litigation in the Supreme Court against the discriminatory system and sought a direction that all state and state-supported schools should adhere to a standard framework with a clearly defined per capita expenditure and also follow a common framework for admission. The PIL was filed in June 2008 and notices have been issued to the 36 respondents. In April this year, a committee was set up by the Central Government to look into these issues.

However, the expenditure patterns show that little is being done to redress the issue. The budget allocations for the government's flagship programme for providing education to the mass of children, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), has been falling since 2007. From an outlay of Rs 12,020 crore in 2007-08 (revised estimates), the allocation declined to Rs 11,940 crore in 2008-09 (revised estimates). For the current year, it is Rs 11,934 crore. To make matters worse, states have been told to raise their contribution to SSA without any increase in the funds devolving to the states.

But overall, one of the more serious drawbacks of the Bill is that it excludes children below six years of age from its provisions. This, say educationists and activists, is a denial of the fundamental right of children already given to them by the Supreme Court through the Unnikrishnan Judgment of 1993. By reading Article 45 of the Constitution in conjunction with Article 21, that judgement declared 'free and compulsory education' a fundamental Right of all children

until they complete the age of 14. The pending Bill, if enacted, will result in 170 million children below six years of age losing their fundamental right to balanced nutrition, health care and pre-primary education in what are undeniably the most formative years. In an appeal to the Speaker Meira Kumar, the All India Forum for Right to Education headed by the redoubtable educationist Anil Sadgopal has pointed out what is a major lacuna along with several other drawbacks. It says the Bill distorts the concept of 'neighbourhood school' as defined by Parliament and thereby compels poor children to study in inferior quality schools and also maintains SSA's discriminatory multi-layered school system by 'permitting the government to build schools of entirely unacceptable, ambiguous and sub-standard norms and standards'.

Was this done on cost considerations? The financial memorandum on the Bill says it is not possible to quantify the financial requirement for implementing the bill 'at this stage'. At the same time, the central government, it says, will prepare the estimates of capital and recurring expenditure and provide to the states as grants-in-aid of revenues such percentage of expenditure as it may determine from time to time. This clearly is not a reassuring outlook for either the states or for the children. While Sibal has assured the nation that a group is preparing the estimates and that "Once the Bill is enacted, we will make a demand for additional resources", critics say there is an attempt here to fudge facts. Sadgopal, a former professor of education at the University of Delhi, points out that a financial estimate of Rs 2,28,000 crore as an additionality over the next seven years was sent by the ministry to the cabinet secretariat in February 2008 after due approval of the Planning Commission.

So why the reluctance to put a figure to what the reforms will entail? One view is that the government is unwilling to make a commitment on this score for fear of delaying the bill further. Education activists, however, are rubbing in the fact that the total expenditure on this sector has been declining since the 1990s and is just 3.5 per cent of the GDP instead of the 6 per cent recommended by the Kothari Commission — the 1966 report of the commission continues touchstone for education reforms in the country — and reflects the lack of earnestness in improving education.

Given the strong reservation of the critics and the reluctance of the government to make clear the funding requirements, will the Bill pass muster in the Lok Sabha?

Source: [Business-Standard](#), August 1, 2009

Beginning of term

It is easy to fall into the trap of either overstating or understating the importance of the freshly-passed Right to Education Act. On one hand, you could argue that it merely legislates an outcome, insufficiently spelling out solutions to the more nitty-gritty problems. On the other hand, the act is the first real attempt in decades to revolutionise India's entire paradigm for primary education. Both are true; and focussing on either to the exclusion of the other would be a mistake.

This right has had a long gestation period, from debates in the Constituent Assembly to drafts during the NDA regime and UPA-I. So look first at the good news. As HRD Minister Kapil Sibal's speech in the Lok Sabha made clear, the act is certainly a departure in thinking, and one that should be welcomed. The "de-bureaucratization of education", as Sibal put it, is overdue; and so is the "participation of civil society in school management committees". This newspaper also welcomes the course-correction attempted by the HRD ministry on openness to the differently-abled; the educational infrastructure could not truly claim to be modern or universal without taking into account the special needs of this large subset of India's children. And the "social requirement" that private schools take in disadvantaged children from their neighbourhood is grounded on good empirical work from elsewhere on the effectiveness of such interventions — and, for fans of school vouchers, it features for the first time government admitting the possibility that education is something that can be publicly funded but privately provided.

That being said, the battle is not over. Several aspects need still to be put into place, and each of them is essential to the act's effectiveness. The first is clarity on the relative financial burdens on the states and the Centre. The second is that state-level rules and implementation might vary, and the act as passed is very sensitive to those. The third is that, like any "rights-based" policy interventions, the policy's working will depend not just on government but also on the ability of local parents to get organised and to demand what is now, for the first time, a basic right for their children. And that is something that civil society should now start enabling.

How will the government legally enforce compulsory primary education?

- Will cases be filed against parents not sending children to school, leaving them to defend themselves in the court?
- Has anyone who is applauding the legislation knows the conditions in most of our villages?
- If reservation for the depressed classes in private school is provided, can the poor among them afford the fees?
- Will enough good teachers be found to teach in village schools?
- During the sowing and harvesting seasons, will the rural folk send their children to school or make them earn some wages?
- How would we know who is disadvantaged if no screening process is allowed. Anyone can claim to be disadvantaged or poor
- Has the govt. thought or spelt out how schools should deal with indiscipline children.
- The lack of discipline in western schools is appalling, do we really want to go down that path.
- If 300 children apply to a school with 40 seats how do we decide who gets in and who does not since screening processes are no longer allowed.
- Let's even say the Govt. introduces a point based system and say that narrows the number to say 80 kids what does a management do? We still have to choose 40, do we toss a coin.

- The aim of the bill is good but it has not been well thought-out. This is going to lead to more litigation and chaos.

There are many more questions of this type. Has the government answer? As the editorial says the government has not spelt out solutions to the more nitty-gritty problems involved.

Source: [Indian Express](#)/ Thursday, Aug 06, 2009

Put them back on track

With the Right to Education Bill being passed by the Parliament, education now becomes a fundamental right. But what about the needs of those who have dropped out of the school system?

Starting with our Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, everyone in the government and those engaged with education acknowledge that an overwhelming majority of our young people (14-20 years) are not attending any educational institution — schools, technical training institutions, colleges, universities etc.

What does our education system (formal, not-so-formal, private) provide? Schools, industrial/vocational training institutions and colleges/universities (professional and general). Look around and it becomes more than obvious that there are really no educational opportunities for those who have either dropped out, or have been pushed out of the system.

Disadvantaged communities

Who are these young people? Again, there is little disagreement over the fact that an overwhelming majority of these young people are from poor and disadvantaged communities, living in villages, tribal hamlets, desert, hilly and remote habitations in rural areas. In the cities and in peri-urban areas — these young people are most likely to be new or seasonal migrants in search of work. There is considerable body of evidence that reveals that children of families displaced by natural and man-made disasters, children of people affected with social strife and conflict and children of single/widowed women and those who have lost their parents to a disease (including HIV and AIDS) constitute the bulk of drop outs. Within each of the above groups that girls are more likely to be in a majority.

What are these millions of young people doing? A large proportion of girls are married; those who are not are engaged in some kind of work. Boys are engaged in some kind of work; if they find it in these troubled times. Most often these young people have little to do. They are under-employed or unemployed and given the quality of education they did receive, the chances are that they do not have the knowledge, skills or confidence to seek new avenues for employment or self-employment.

Let us delve into the world of education and training. If we look at the expenditure pattern of the government and also the not-so-insignificant donor community, it is fairly apparent that a significant proportion of resources continue to be invested in schooling, somewhat less on higher education (the bulk of new expenditure in higher education comes from the private sector) and the remainder on vocational and technical education. There is little quarrel with the need to invest in the above sectors. Nevertheless given the stiff

competition for resources and the multiple pulls and pressures the educational needs of out-of-school young people — those who have dropped out of the system — does not attract the needed attention of the official machinery.

Here is a space that has been left wide open. If we look carefully, the total contribution of the donor community — private foundations, international NGOs — in the formal space is miniscule when compared to total expenditure. Though in quantitative terms it may add up to a lot. As of the present private and corporate foundations, INGOS and public charities continue to aspire to work in the same space as the government. Many of them try to energise, improve or fine-tune the government system. They devise projects and programmes in collaboration with NGOs to make the government system work better or make it more accountable. And while some of it no doubt yields good results, there is little conclusive proof of significant impact. Given that there are millions of school drop outs and school push outs in the country, is it not time that those who wish to make an impact turn their attention from trying to cajole and push government to exploring avenues to create meaningful educational opportunities for the young people out of school in rural and urban areas who are desperately seeking opportunities to learn and to grow?

Design intervention

Earlier in 2001 and 2006, the Government of India (Planning Commission) set up two working groups to look into the situation of adolescents. These reports acknowledged that the educational needs of adolescents and young people (especially the drop outs) had been largely ignored by the mainstream education system. More disturbing — with the exception of a few pioneers in different parts of the country — even the alternative sector has turned a blind eye to them. The large donor and international/national development community too continues to focus on fixing the system. Without for a moment arguing that the existing schooling system is perfect or that it does not need fixing, it is undeniable that millions of young girls and boys continue to drop out and have little opportunity to grow into self-confident, skilled, aware and articulate adults. With the school system essentially geared to the urban middle-class and formal employment market (a baggage that we have consciously chosen to carry from colonial times), the educational needs of drop outs and out-of-school children continues to be ignored. True, a few have tried to design interventions under the aegis of population and health (read HIV) programmes, but they primarily address fertility, sexual behaviour and Planned Parenthood aspects of adolescent education. The situation on the ground is such that the real-life education needs of young people are not being addressed.

Programmes, residential or non-residential, could include a couple of hours of basic education involving language, math, science, civics, society etc followed by an intensive theoretical as well as hands-on/practical training in a skill or vocation. Intensive two-year programmes could be followed by apprenticeship and where necessary linked to a bank from where they can take a loan to start their own unit and/or purchase implements they may require for their vocation. Based on periodic survey of emerging opportunities for employment/self-employment in a given

area (say Block or District) — such programmes can provide young people a place where they can continue their education.

Such programmes need lead to formal high-school certificate, but some kind of a diploma. If designed creatively in a modular fashion, such programmes could enable young school drop outs multiple entry points (in the event of them dropping out) and also multiple exit points whereby those motivated enough to pursue formal schooling can be linked up to open schools.

Positive spiral

Why is this kind of opportunity important in today's world? It is widely acknowledged that the presence of a group of demoralised/disillusioned youngsters, who may have either completed schooling or have dropped out, who have little scope for employment/self-employment that yields a decent income, acts as a strong disincentive for education of other children in the family and community. Younger children see the writing on the wall — education does not significantly alter the life situation of the poor and the marginalised in our society. It does not lead to any material gain, or for that matter even unquantifiable value addition (social capital). Increasing adolescent crime, violence and general social unrest among the literate youth (or educated youth if you like) further reinforces negative attitudes towards the youth and towards education (especially if the cohort has completed primary schooling).

As a result the very absence of opportunities for education that is meaningful leads to greater disaffection among the youth.

Conversely, the presence of meaningful educational opportunities results in a positive spiral — and this acts as a propelling force, encouraging the community to invest in the education of their children. This may also lead to greater public interest and engagement with our education system — making it more accountable to the children.

Here is a wide open space, one where the government is not doing much today. We have several big corporate foundations, international NGOs and international foundations and a growing community of people genuinely interested in making a difference.

Can this community not think out of the box and reach out to millions of young girls and boys who are waiting for an opportunity to break free from the vicious cycle of poverty and hopelessness? Does this not make economic sense in a country that seeks to leverage its demographic dividend?

The numbers

50.5 per cent boys (55.2 SC and 65 ST) and 51.2 per cent girls (60 per cent SC and 67.1 per cent ST) drop out before they complete elementary school (class 1-8).

If we are to take the percentage of those who drop out before completing class 10, the percentage shoots up to 61 per cent for boys (69.1 SC and 74.2 ST) and 64 per cent for girls (77.8 SC and 80.7 ST).

What is "real life" education?

Basic language, math, science and civics that gives them confidence to negotiate the world they live in. Confidence and skills to reach out the information and knowledge to make informed decisions. Skill training (linked to emerging economic opportunities in rural and urban, farm and non-farm), and most important, ability to critically reflect on their

life and their situation and chart a path for themselves with their peers.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 9 August, 2009

Institutes of higher learning should be granted autonomy:

With a view to introspect and plan for future, the experts, who were present in the Outreach auditorium of IIT-K on Sunday on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee programme, delivered lectures on the subject 'Challenges in Higher Education'

Expressing his concern over the delay in the implementation of the policies chalked out for improving the standards of the higher technical education in India, Sam Pitroda, chairman of the National Knowledge Commission said, "Most of the problems have solutions on the table, still the debate is going on for long. In reality, it is the time to act now. It is time for the vice-chancellors of the universities, directors of the institutes and the heads of the departments to act but unfortunately everybody is waiting for the other person to take the initiative."

He further added, "If the focus is not put on the application of the technology in the field of education, we will lose the opportunity of moving ahead. We require mobility wherein the students can take part in the educational programmes of the other universities also and I am very concerned that the time is running out of our hands and we are not inching ahead."

Pitroda also highlighted the fact that there is a dearth of talented, educated people here in the Indian society and thus, there is a severe shortage of the skilled faculty in the institutes of high repute. The need, therefore, is to rapidly change the present higher education system, he added.

The moment Pitroda concluded his talk, the jampacked hall burst out in applause. The eminent guests present then put up questions to him which were answered patiently.

It was now the turn of author, journalist and senior BJP leader, Arun Shourie to present his views. Shourie also expressed his concern over the higher technical education being neglected for long.

"The standards and norms of excellence are under assault in India and at the same time China is moving ahead in the field of higher education with a very high speed, giving tough competition to our country. India is even facing a tough competition from the countries like Nigeria, Cyprus etc," said Shourie in the presence of the distinguished gathering.

He further elucidated that the government institutions have become dysfunctional and corrupt, therefore, there is an urgent need to provide autonomy to the institutes of higher learning. He said that the benchmark should be made against the best and not against the people in our catchment.

Shourie expressed his happiness that the institutions like IITs have started focussing on the areas like bio-engineering, energy generation and distribution and healthcare.

Reacting to the question against the continuation of reservation, raised by one of the members from the audience, he said, "No segment of the society can be left out. It is our duty to impart knowledge to everyone. A

positive help (like free education, free accommodation etc) should be given to minorities. Merits should be same for everyone and the standards once set, should not be lowered."

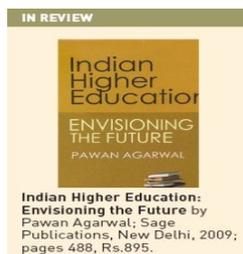
Shourie too received a huge round of applause from the people present in the auditorium.

Also present on this occasion were eminent people like director, IIT-K, SG Dhande, Prof Ashutosh Sharma (IIT-K), Prof Manindra Agarwal (IIT-K), ex-director of IIT-Bombay, Prof Ashok Mishra, chairman, Board of Governors, IIT-K, Prof Anandkrishnan, divisional commissioner, Venkateshwar Lu and others.

Source: [The Times of India](#), KANPUR, 9 August 2009

A guide to reforms

The book serves as a carefully prepared and annotated agenda note that draws attention to decisions to taken and actions to initiate.



In the context of the ongoing discussions in the country about expanding and restructuring higher education, Pawan Agarwal's book on the subject is a timely contribution. The author was Director in the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development when he started work on the book, and much of the writing done during his tenure as a Fulbright New Century Scholar of Higher Education in India. He is currently with the Government of West Bengal.

First the context itself (for a discussion of some aspects of the context, see **Frontline**, July 17, 2009). Many of the contextual discussions on higher education are rooted in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan's (2007-12) proposals, summed up as "expansion, inclusion and excellence". Immediately prior to the Eleventh Plan was the Report of the National Knowledge Commission, which also asked for substantial expansion of higher education and suggested ways of achieving it without compromising excellence. More recently, there has been the report of the committee headed by Professor Yash Pal, with accent on regulatory framework.

Agarwal makes important contributions to this contextual discussion by providing the international dimension and a great deal of factual material gathered from different sources – official material, other agencies concerned with higher education, studies by other scholars, publications of international agencies such as the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and a wide variety of websites.

Consider the following. In terms of enrolment of close to 12 million students, India is the third largest in the world in the sphere of higher education, next to China (21 million) and the United States (17 million). However, India tops the world in terms of its 18,500 institutions. Growth of enrolment and institutions has been phenomenal since Independence, the former from one million in 1947 to 12 million in 2005, the latter from 2,000 to 18,500 during the same period. Of the 18,500 institutions, the bulk – over 18,000 – are colleges. The rest consists (as of 2007) of 252 State universities, 114 deemed universities, 24 Central universities, 11 private universities, 13 institutes of national importance and five institutions set up by State legislatures. These are all degree-awarding institutions. There are also a large number of vocational training institutions, which do not give degrees, polytechnics, industrial training institutes (ITIs) and so on.

Of the 18,000-plus colleges, around 6,000 are arts, commerce and science colleges offering primarily undergraduate courses. Only fewer than 10 per cent of the students are at the postgraduate level, while those pursuing doctoral programmes are less than 1 per cent. From another angle, only a little over 16 per cent of the students are in professional courses, with engineering and medicine leading, not surprisingly.

Agarwal provides a great deal of information: on financing higher education, for instance, including shares of governments, households and other agencies; the growth of private agencies in higher education; the progress of the recently introduced accreditation process; and much more. I shall draw attention to some of them later. But let me turn now to the substantive issues dealt with in the book.

Substantive Issues

Granted that higher education will and should expand in the years ahead, the substantive issues will the expansion dilute quality? How is it to ensure that the expansion indeed is socially inclusive? In addition, what role can the private sector play towards the expansion of higher education?

An understanding of the essential nature of higher education is necessary to enter into these aspects. One point of view put forward is that unlike lower levels of education, particularly primary education, where universalisation should aimed at as a social objective, higher education is essentially a matter of individual preference and competence. Clarification of this issue is necessary to enter into a detailed discussion of the questions posed above.

Is there a difference between an individual “going in” for an ice cream and a course in higher education, let us say, a course in medical education? There are, of course, similarities: in both, the individual must have an inclination or preference. The individual would expect to get some benefit, and he/she in turn should have the willingness and ability to pay. However, there is a crucial difference. Going in for an ice cream may be thought of as a purely personal matter of an individual. On the other hand, there is a social dimension to an individual going in for a course in medicine: at the end of the course, he/she will be practising as a doctor and society has a right to expect that he/she have the required competence to do so. The degree that the medical student gets after completing the course is the certificate of that competence.

But note that unlike in the ice cream purchase, which can be thought of as a transaction between a buyer and a seller, in the medical education there is a third party with the authority to decide matters beyond the purview of the trainee and the course giver: it is the third party which does the final certification, as also the course content and the qualifications of the provider. This unnamed third party is society. The role of society is quite palpable in the case of a course in medicine, engineering, architecture and “professional” courses in general. However, even in the case of disciplines such as philosophy and history, the social benefit is an important component: philosophers tell society what society is and historians tell society how it has evolved.

Hence let us note that higher education benefits not only those who are directly involved in it, but society at large, or higher education has a significant component of externality and unlike ice cream and things like that, it is a social good or public good.

With this background, let us see how Agarwal deals with the substantive matters relating to Indian higher education. He points out that against a global average of 4.2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) spent on education, India spends 3.8 per cent. Public (social) expenditure on higher education in India is 1 per cent of GDP which is not a low figure considering that the highest corresponding figures are 1.7 per cent in Finland (the highest in the world), 1.3 per cent in the U.S., and 0.8 per cent in the United Kingdom and in Australia.

However, in terms of U.S. dollars adjusted for domestic purchasing power, India’s spending of 400 per student is very low; the highest is Sweden’s 13,000 while the U.S. figure of 10,000 is the second. China’s public expenditure per student in higher education is 2,700 and Indonesia’s 460. But India tops the list when public expenditure per student is related

to per capita GDP – a high of 95 per cent while in China (the second highest) it is 53 per cent, and in the U.S. and the U.K. it is around 28 per cent.

Public expenditure on higher education, therefore, is quite high if the last set of figures given above can be treated as a proxy for “ability to pay”. Equally important, the total spending of households on higher education by way of fees alone is almost as much as public spending. Households’ spending on higher education has been rising sharply since the 1980s, indicating the growth of fee-charging institutions and the increase in self-financing courses practically everywhere.

What the Eleventh Plan indicates is that higher education has miles to go. Student enrolment of 12 million may appear to be massive, but the fact is that as a proportion of the relevant age group (18 to 23), the general enrolment ratio (GER) is pathetically low, just around 11 per cent, compared with Indonesia’s 17, China’s 20, Brazil’s 24, not to speak of Japan’s 55, the U.K.’s 60 and the U.S.’ 83. (South Korea tops with a GER of 91.) It is therefore suggested that by the end of the Eleventh Plan, the Indian GER should go up to 15 and to 21 by the end of the Twelfth Plan. There is a ninefold increase in outlay in the Eleventh Plan for higher education and skill development for which 16 new Central universities, 14 world-class universities, eight new Indian Institutes of Technology and seven new Indian Institutes of Management are to be established. There will certainly be a proliferation of colleges and other institutions dealing with higher education.

Private profits

Agarwal notes with some concern that this situation will lead to “entrepreneurialism and academic capitalism” which will “shift higher education from a social institution to an industry”. He gives detailed accounts of the growth of private enterprise in Indian higher education, especially from the 1980s onwards, and points out some specific weaknesses of this growth.

By way of conclusion, he makes two points. First, “private higher education has come to stay and is destined to grow. It will bring competitive merit and force periodical changes in curriculum, pedagogy, examination and governance across the entire educational sector. However, the state will have to negotiate equality and equity through a fair, transparent, participatory regulatory system.” Second, “private initiatives need to be encouraged to enhance capacity since they bring in upfront investments.... Public funds are also required to set up new institutions in areas or for subjects where the private



sector may not be interested”, listing research and promoting excellence as examples.

This uncritical endorsement of the public-private partnership (PPP) is not only misleading but also not conducive to the healthy expansion of higher education. True, private institutions – the vast majority of the colleges, have dominated the Indian higher education scene that is. However, before Independence they were indeed centres of higher education, particularly teaching. After Independence too, largely, the private colleges considered teaching as their **raison d’être**, though they might have been motivated by religious imperatives or community considerations. Above all, they were all institutions receiving grants from the government.

Private educational institutions that came into being in the past three decades, on the other hand, have promoted by private agencies, often families, who perceived in the growing demand for higher education an excellent opportunity to get high returns – through high fees, special fees, capitation fees, and “donations” for teaching positions – for their “upfront investments”.

There certainly is a need to tap private resources for the expansion and modernisation of higher education. But a distinction must be made between not-for-profit institutions that are committed to education and use their profits, if any, only for educational purposes, on the one hand, and the rest motivated by profit-making and accumulation. The former should be encouraged and the latter should allow only with strict conditions. Any resort to the PPP model in higher education without making this distinction is a sort of sell-out to undesirable private enterprise. The failure to appreciate this distinction arising from inadequate appreciation of the inherent social dimension of higher education is a drawback of Agarwal’s essentially descriptive account.

A similar problem has seen in the author’s treatment of equity in the context of expansion of higher education. The second chapter on Access and Equity is admittedly a prelude to the third chapter on Private Higher Education. As on other topics dealt with in the book, on equity too Agarwal has marshalled a great deal of useful information – on rural-urban disparities, inter-State variations, gender differentials, income disparities and so on. Inter-caste and inter-religious differences also listed. There is a separate section on affirmative action as well. Though there is considerable descriptive material on the socially more contested and crucial issue of reservation for sections of the population grossly under-represented in higher education, the author has no clearly articulated position. There is a “neutral” statement: “Numerical

quotas in institutions of higher education, particularly the more reputed institutions that provide access to high status and best paid jobs, have been an inflammatory issue and contested consistently. It remains and will continue to be a divisive and emotive issue in India unless all political parties decide not to use caste, creed and religion in electoral politics” (page 58).

Regulation

A third major theme dealt with in the book is regulatory framework. At present, the University Grants Commission is the largest regulatory body and the All India Council for Technical Education is the second. There are also over a dozen professional councils (such as the Medical Council of India). The higher education departments of State governments also perform regulatory roles, especially in relation to colleges. Recently, a process of accreditation under the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) make regulation more meaningful. The plethora of overlapping regulatory bodies can cause tensions and problems.

Regulation (which unfortunately tends to deteriorate into control) of higher education by duly constituted external authorities is required because higher education (unlike ice creams and other things) is a social good and its quality must be periodically examined and certified by third parties. However, more than that statement is necessary. It is important to recognise that different aspects of higher education have to assess such as adequacy of the courses, competence of the teachers, and finances.

Agarwal has some pertinent observations and suggestions regarding the regulatory architecture. First, if different aspects of higher education have to be assessed, the variety and diversity of the institutions have taken into account and hence a “one-size-fits-all” approach is not only inadequate but counterproductive as well. Second, different roles of regulation recognised – assessing the content to check on quality, ensuring financial support for the deserving without intrusion into academic affairs, auditing of financial matters, and so on.

In view of these different roles, a plurality of agencies will be more appropriate than a single body, and these agencies could be at different levels. An all-India agency of academic experts may be useful to ensure standards and quality while local bodies may be more effective for auditing. Hence it is doubtful whether the proposal made by the National Knowledge Commission to set up an all-India Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE) and the more recent variants of the same idea (such as the Yash Pal Committee’s recommendation to set

up an apex statutory body, the National Commission for Higher Education and Research, which will subsume the academic functions of all existing regulatory bodies) are in the right direction.

Attempts to solve the problems of higher education at the national level are, of course, necessary and Agarwal's book is one of the most comprehensive available. It is essentially a good bureaucratic compilation, rich in factual material and international comparisons and with some analysis. My assessment is that the book serves as a carefully prepared and annotated agenda note that draws attention to decisions to be taken and actions to be initiated. Surely, higher education in India cannot reform, reoriented by concentrating exclusively and abstractly at the national level.

Change must come about where the action actually takes place, the multitude of institutions. My recommendation to decision-makers at that level (as also to readers) is to use the book without relying too much on it.

Source: Chennai flonnet.com/11th August 2009

Education and Sociology

In education area, sociology plays a vital role as teachers and students counterparts lead to the level of success in education. So the contribution that sociology has to make to the practical activity of educating teachers will be considered in this discussion, as the steering point. What we have today are disjointed courses dealing with the burning issues of the day, and a concern with problems that teachers may be able to solve even without undergoing a comprehensive teacher education.

While designing teacher education programmes, it is necessary to develop sociology of education, which will be of value to the teachers both in and out of the classroom. This is because a teacher who is well taught in sociological aspects of education has a wider perspective, perception and consideration of the issues of culture that affect his or her work. Teachers are instrumental in this reproduction process. Since many teachers base their judgments of students on their students' social class, they therefore perpetuate inequality. Teachers' own social class origins affect their perceptions and treatment of students.

When a teacher tries to understand the relationship between social class and education achievements, he ought to combine psychological and sociological perspectives regarding his perception of issues, in order to be able to make a well-guided inference about his learners. Our teacher education programmes should have enabled teachers to

reflectively a background that sufficiently exploits cultural differences of learners, and their implications on the teaching learning process. With available equal opportunities at the school level, the student should be made by reflective teachers in order for students to understand that he stands equal opportunities with those from well to do families.

Source: athenslearning.org/13th August 2009

Education has to be inclusive for India to grow: Kalam

Fifty children from Parivartan Shikshan Sanstha, a NGO in Shantinagar, were special guests at an interactive session with former President APJ Abdul Kalam at the Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI) on Saturday.

The event was organised as part of the institute's social responsibility subject. Kalam encouraged students to ask him questions when he said, "Its only questioning that leads to science and innovation."

The students did not disappoint the former President as they asked him several questions.

A student from the college asked what led to the making of scientist Kalam. "I was just a 10-year-old when my teacher Subramanian thought us how birds fly. Life changed for me at that very moment. I took up engineering at the Madras Institute of Technology and became an aeronautical engineer. It's all in the hands of the primary class teachers to inculcate that one dream in the heads of young kids to realise their dreams," Kalam explained.

Expressing concern over the present day education system, Kalam said there is a huge need to bring in change. "Secondary and higher education is meaningless if primary education is not imparted meaningfully. A lot of changes have to be brought about in the education system and it needs to be all inclusive if India has to grow," Kalam said while answering a question posed by T Amol, a student from VJTI.

Kalam said that if all children decide to walk out of their little cocoon and pledge to teach at least five illiterate persons then by 2020 a large difference can be brought about.

Source: Mumbai expressindia.com/10th August 2009

Educational programmes via TV from Germany to India

German broadcaster Deutsche Welle has signed up with IT@School ViCTERS, India's first dedicated educational TV channel, to allow Indian students

access to more than 200 hours of its educational programmes.

The agreement will offer schools and students in India the opportunity to see, among others, the popular German programme Mouse TV. It will also bring in documentaries and videos covering science, medicine, waste management, workplace safety, water, world cultures and the animal kingdom.

Deutsche Welle called India “one of the most significant providers of educational television worldwide.”

“This new partnership offers Deutsche Welle a great platform to reach out to students at schools in India,” said Angelika Newel, head of distribution Asia/Australia at Deutsche Welle. “We are confident that our brand of edutainment will be a hit with both students and teachers.”

IT@School ViCTERS is the educational channel of the Kerala government’s department of education.

Anvar Sadath, the channel’s executive director, described it as an opportunity for students here to “see and understand advanced educational video content of international standards”.

ViCTERS (virtual class technology on Edusat for rural schools), India’s first dedicated educational channel based on Edusat for schools, was inaugurated in 2005 by A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the then president of India.

Kerala was the first state to make use of Edusat for transmitting educational programmes for nearly 15,000 schools in 14 districts.

Operational since 2007, ViCTERS is telecast 17 hours a day, from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. It is distributed by local cable operators, and covers as much as 80 percent of the total households in Kerala, according to the organisation running it.

ViCTERS also facilitates interactive virtual classrooms that enable school students and teachers to directly communicate with subject experts and educationists.

Incidentally, Deutsche Welle is Germany’s state-run international broadcaster. With DW-TV, DW-RADIO and DW-WORLD.DE, it produces news, background information and cultural highlights worldwide, while creating a platform for intercultural dialogue.

“One could say that DW is now positioning itself as a provider of high value educational content on TV and radio. ViCTERS, which is part of Kerala’s IT@School project, is probably the only state-run educational TV channel,” Deutsche Welle country representative for India Sajan Venniyoor told IANS.

Deutsche Welle has been working for the past 10 years with the Indira Gandhi National Open University and providing educational television inputs. “Education

and partnerships with schools and universities will continue to be a priority for the broadcaster in the future,” said DW.

Deutsche Welle and DW-TRANSTEL have also been putting out educational television broadcasts in India. Deutsche Welle said it is open to support educational television in India with “hundreds of hours of programming.”

Source: New Delhi [/blog.taragana.com/](http://blog.taragana.com/)3rd August 2009

Impetus on ICT for improving quality of higher education

In a bid to give a thrust on the quality of higher education, the Gujarat state higher Education authorities have taken up the task of involving Information and Communication Technology (ICT) programme in colleges and universities: Knowledge Management programme and Knowledge Consortium.

Recently, the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Application and Geo-Informatics (BISAG) supported by the Government of Gujarat (GoG) has completed academic programmes on value added education for lecturers. The state government has given Rs 60,000 to all the colleges across the state to run lectures for students through the Direct to Home (DTH) services.

Every college is asked to purchase a DTH set and make the facility accessible to every student.

However, Authorities of some universities have, said that teachers and students are already efficient in ICT.

A university authority said on condition of anonymity “One cannot say that the students and teachers lack ICT skills, more so when universities have their own e-journals and computer systems”.

Jayanti Ravi, Gujarat State Higher Education Commissioner told Newline: “The aim is to make both students and professors efficient in ICT. There are students in tribal areas that do not have access to quality education. Gujarat has professors doing good research but they need to be trained in ICT, right from training in functional English to use of e-journals. In fact, even Sardar Patel Institute of Public Administration (SPIPA) will run a programme for lecturers and professors. We had run a Knowledge Management Programme for professors, and lectures were done on a small scale last year. We will run it on a full-fledged basis this time.”

Principal Secretary of Education, Hasmukh Adhia said: “We have instructed Higher Education authorities about the use of ICT to improve the quality of education.”

Prof Kamal Joshi, Knowledge Consortium Consultant and in-charge, BISAG project, said: “We have already completed a training programme for the academicians

last month. The aim was to give them more information in terms of value addition in higher education. We have given Rs 60,000 for DTH in every college so that they can avail lectures from experts in more than 24 subjects. The programme started this month will run from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. A committee was formed to select the lectures in all fields of higher education. Already, 300 colleges have brought DTH services."

Source: New Delhi [/indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com)/4th August 2009

Indians to refine business skills at 'finishing schools'

The traditional image of finishing [schools](#) is of the Swiss Alps, where elegant young ladies from well-to-do families learn to walk, talk and make conversation before entering polite society.

Now India is looking to the model for the three million or so graduates it produces every year to refine the skills they need to succeed in business and give the country a sharper edge in the global marketplace.

The "finishing [schools](#)

"in Mumbai, New Delhi, Hyderabad and Bangalore are to open later this year, as part of a two-million-dollar project by the Indian School of Integrated Learning (ISIL) and British [training](#) firm Speak First.

"The finishing school is taking graduates and anyone else of that academic level through a programme which will give them all the skills that a business could possibly want," Speak First's Amanda Vickers told AFP in Mumbai.

"A lot of people (in India) are academically really well qualified, very bright and intelligent, all the things that most businesses want. But where there is a gap is in the skills that you need to succeed in business."

India has seen massive foreign investment into the likes of its IT, banking and outsourcing sectors, attracted by a massive, educated, and cheaper, workforce, fuelling close to double-digit economic growth in recent years.

But both Vickers, Speak First's managing director, and ISIL chairman Vijay Moza said Indian employees could do better when it comes to "soft skills". Misunderstandings have often arisen from telephone manners or email etiquette with clients and even colleagues based elsewhere in the world that may just be a simple case of cultural difference, they said.

A common bugbear among foreign businesses and individuals here is of many Indians not wanting to say "no", leading to frustrations when requests are not completed on time or even at all, said Vickers. Too much respect for clients and superiors can be

construed as a lack of directness while attempts to be more direct can come across as aggression, she added.

Teaching communication, interpersonal and negotiating skills as well as cultural awareness is simply "reflecting a business need" in an increasingly globalised world, she said. For his part, Moza said he has heard frequent complaints from company bosses not just about many [graduates'](#) lack of workplace skills but the time and money it costs to get them up to speed.

"Finishing schools" would help fill the gap left by the Indian education system that does not have the resources to teach personality development, said Moza. It could also improve the employment rate, he said, quoting a 2005 Nasscom-McKinsey report that said only 30 percent of Indian graduates were suitable for jobs in the offshore IT sector or outsourcing industries.

ISIL was also looking for tie-ups with universities to offer courses so that "by the time students come out of college they will be ready for a job", he added.

Trainers for the schools are currently preparing for the start of courses in November, running through class programmes using role-plays, discussions and flip-charts.

Graduates to middle managers and above will soon be in class on either full-time, one-year courses or part-time working towards a vocational qualification. "Soft skills training has huge potential but what's more important is that we have to put all these things together. By 2020 India is going to be a superpower with China and the US," said Moza.

Source: Mumbai [/economictimes/](http://economictimes/)9th August 2009

Institutes of higher learning should be granted autonomy: Shourie

With a view to introspect and plan for future, the experts, who were present in the Outreach auditorium of IIT-K on Sunday on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee programme, delivered lectures on the subject 'Challenges in Higher Education'.

Expressing his concern over the delay in the implementation of the policies chalked out for improving the standards of the higher technical education in India, Sam Pitroda, chairman of the National Knowledge Commission said, "Most of the problems have solutions on the table, still the debate is going on for long. In reality, it is the time to act now. It is time for the vice-chancellors of the universities, directors of the institutes and the heads of the departments to act but unfortunately everybody is waiting for the other person to take the initiative."

He further added, "If the focus is not put on the application of the technology in the field of education, we will lose the opportunity of moving ahead. We require mobility wherein the students can take part in the educational programmes of the other universities also and I am very concerned that the time is running out of our hands and we are not inching ahead."

Pitroda also highlighted the fact that there is a dearth of talented, educated people here in the Indian society and thus, there is a severe shortage of the skilled faculty in the institutes of high repute. The need, therefore, is to rapidly change the present higher education system, he added.

The moment Pitroda concluded his talk, the jampacked hall burst out in applause. The eminent guests present then put up questions to him which were answered patiently.

It was now the turn of author, journalist and senior BJP leader, Arun Shourie to present his views. Shourie also expressed his concern over the higher technical education being neglected for long.

"The standards and norms of excellence are under assault in India and at the same time China is moving ahead in the field of higher education with a very high speed, giving tough competition to our country. India is even facing a tough competition from the countries like Nigeria, Cyprus etc," said Shourie in the presence of the distinguished gathering.

He further elucidated that the government institutions have become dysfunctional and corrupt, therefore, there is an urgent need to provide autonomy to the institutes of higher learning. He said that the benchmark should be made against the best and not against the people in our catchments.

Shourie expressed his happiness that the institutions like IITs have started focussing on the areas like bioengineering, energy generation and distribution and healthcare.

Reacting to the question against the continuation of reservation, raised by one of the members from the audience, he said, "No segment of the society can be left out. It is our duty to impart knowledge to everyone. A positive help (like free education, free accommodation etc) should be given to minorities. Merits should be same for everyone and the standards once set, should not be lowered."

Shourie too received a huge round of applause from the people present in the auditorium.

Also present on this occasion were eminent people like director, IIT-K, SG Dhande, Prof Ashutosh Sharma (IIT-K), Prof Manindra Agarwal (IIT-K), ex-director of IIT-Bombay, Prof Ashok Mishra, chairman,

Board of Governors, IIT-K, Prof Anandkrishnan, divisional commissioner, Venkateshwar Lu and others.

Source: Kanpur timesofindia/9th August 2009

Key university departments could 'implode' without foreign students

Vital university departments could collapse without foreign students, a leading vice-chancellor has told *The Times*.

Professor Paul Wellings, the chairman of the 1994 Group, which represents 18 research-intensive universities, including Durham, St Andrews and Exeter, suggested that international students were propping up key disciplines in higher education institutions. Subjects such as engineering, physics and computing could implode at some universities without their input, he warned.

More than one university student in seven is from outside Britain and those from outside the EU bring in 8 per cent of the total income of British universities, paying almost £1.9 billion in tuition fees last year.

However, some vice-chancellors are concerned about the new points-based visa system. They believe that it is deterring foreign students, who are being turned away or subjected to such long delays that they risk missing the start of term.

Lord Mandelson, the minister responsible for universities, said recently that foreign students were vital to the economy. He revealed that several vice-chancellors had contacted him with worries about the points-based visa system.

Professor Wellings, who is the Vice-Chancellor of Lancaster University, told *The Times*: "There are some disciplinary areas that are underpinned by international students, such as computing, engineering and physics. They have a disproportionate share of international students.

"If we took out those international students I think we would see some departments starting to implode quite quickly and the pattern of subjects offered by universities would also change quite quickly. To some extent international students are making sure the research and knowledge fabric is being maintained."

Professor Wellings said that the growth in the number of international students had allowed universities to build better facilities and led to broader curriculums.

The number of higher education students in the world is predicted to double in the next 20 years and Britain is currently the second most popular choice of destination, after the US. While that ranking could slip, the number of foreign students coming to Britain is still predicted to grow.



Professor Wellings said that this growth was essential to bolster student numbers and sustain universities. Currently 43 per cent of British young people go into higher education. Professor Wellings said that the Government would reach its 50 per cent goal eventually but only because a shrinking teenage population could have the effect of lowering the entry standard at some universities.

The target of half of under-thirties going to university by 2010 was first set by Tony Blair ten years ago. Now the aim is to "increase participation in higher education towards 50 per cent of those aged 18 to 30, with growth of at least a percentage point every two years to 2010-11".

David Lammy, the Higher Education Minister, said: "Record numbers of young people are now entering higher education, with over half from all social classes aspiring to go to university, so progress to 50 per cent demonstrates our commitment to make their ambitions a reality. Getting more young people skilled and into higher education has never been so important for our country's future and the health of the economy."

Source: [/timesonline.co.uk/](http://timesonline.co.uk/) 13th August 2009

Kapil Sibal: Right to free education bill

India with over billion populations has the Right of freedom of speech, has now Right of free education but this right cannot be executed without the Right to free health and Right of social security because each right is dependent on the rights of others. Absence of Right to free health and social security with one milieu of right to free education will remain an act enacted but fail to remained practice with many applied and practical tests at the application levels. Without defining the nursery and primary schools and the neighborhood schools, state will have no unilateral standard and thus education imparted will have various orders of the day as is being perceived today. Question was well taken and raised by Bhagwat Z Aazad BJP MP and other MPs in course of discussion on the floor of house before the bill was put to vote.

With the bill enacted with constitution provision dating back 60 years ago has its own folly. Education do begins from the age of five but who is responsible to bring the child mind to develop till this hybrid age it is naturally a play school and thus without the mapping of play school the right of free education remain a distant dream.

Even private sector having there own standards of Play school will indulge in the education gimmick for child potential.

Resultant of free education, standards are not set for the student at cross road of 15 yrs. Do the act

provides vocational or academic career there after 15 years, which is most important.

Certificate of 15 years of schooling authorise the student to go for certificate, diploma or degree course are varied unanswered questions.

But we all are happy that a step has been taken by the HRD Minister Kapil Sibal who has definitely clear, pure intentions to make the education move forward to bring the masses to give ample opportunity to education and schooling does not remain in the hands of feudal lords.

His higher conscience too reflected his cause of free education straight from his heart when he said India's ratio of schooling kids going to graduate level is 100:12, which will not help India to compete in the global education and shall try our level best to enhance up to 100:35, great call, candid words.

Parliament has passed the historic Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill 2008 following its approval by the Lok Sabha today. It envisages providing free and compulsory education to children in the age bracket of 6-14.

The landmark Bill also allows 25 percent reservation to weaker sections in all schools at the entry level. Rajya Sabha has already passed the bill. Replying the discussion in the Lok Sabha, human resource development minister Kapil Sibal said that the onus is now on the government to ensure that all children get free and quality education.

He asserted that it is for the first time in the history of the country that differently abled children are also being integrated in to a normal school. Calling it a national enterprise, Mr. Sibal said that the state must come forward to cooperate in this endeavour. Our parliamentary correspondent gives an overview.

AIR correspondent Manikant Thakur reports from Parliament that getting educated comes under Human Rights and finally the dream of free and compulsory education for all children in India seems to be shaping up. Seeking to carry out radical changes in the primary education pattern, the legislation states that no child shall be required to pass any Board examination until completion of elementary education. Schools taking capitation fees will be penalised and the child or parents can not be subjected to any screening procedure before admission. The bill also seeks to ban private tuition by teachers and ensure that no child is subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment. It shall be the duty of every parent or the guardian to admit the child to a neighbourhood school. No child will be denied admission for lack of age proof. Having said all this, some homework is yet to be done .As per estimation; the financial requirement to implement the act will be about 2.28

lakh crore rupees for a period of 7 years. Apart from the existing schemes, the government will have to spend an additional 12,000 crore rupees per annum for its implementation. The share of financial burden is yet to be worked out between the state and the centre. Seeking a uniform and quality education is not an easy task. One has to wait and watch for the good things to happen.

The bill was originally initiated in the Rajya Sabha in December 2008 by the former human resource development minister Mr. Arjun Singh. Mr. Kirti Azad of the BJP initiated the discussion in the Lok Sabha.

Source: New Delhi [/thaindian.com](http://thaindian.com)/5th August 2009

Learning block

It may not be easy for most of us to recall how many reports Professor Yashpal has so far submitted to the government of India and other organisations. His report on 'Baste ka Bojh': reduction of the curriculum load, submitted in 1992, was supposed to be a landmark in reducing stress on children. Even those assigned the task of monitoring its implementation may not readily recall its existence. That is generally the fate of reports in India; however, it should, not discourage anyone from pinning high hopes on the latest Yashpal Committee Report. This committee was appointed to advise the government of India, on the "Renovation and Rejuvenation" of higher education. Now the new minister for human resources development has explicitly stated that his proposed reforms shall be implemented only after detailed consultations, his proposals must be analysed without any biases and prejudices.

What happened in education during the last couple of years will be an uphill task to repair. Who can forget the manner in which 15 vice-chancellors of the proposed universities were appointed in a tearing hurry, setting up a possible world record? In higher education, one of the foremost challenges is to evolve a procedure for appointment of vice-chancellors purely based on merit and competence. It could be a yeomen service to the cause of higher education if the recruitment of vice-chancellors, heads of national level institutions and organisations could be made without political interference, pressures and connections. It is well known that these appointments are made, exceptions apart, based on political alignments, caste, religious considerations and other non-academic factors. It will not be easy for the minister to bring about drastic changes in the procedures unless a genuine effort is made to evolve a consensus amongst all concerned.

For several decades, the Leftists were permitted to play havoc with institutions of higher learning. In a well

thought-out long-term strategy, they succeeded in hoodwinking the Congress and did not hesitate to reduce its role in the freedom struggle through their hegemony of institutions like Indian Council of Historical Research and Jawaharlal Nehru University, to mention just a few. Is it possible to ensure that party politics is kept out of the university and college union elections? These may appear as 'matters of detail' to the distinguished, but could make a real difference.

Have money, open a deemed university and become its vice-chancellor — it has become as simple as that. It is indeed shocking how regulatory bodies ignored their own regulations, disband committees and dispense with the prescribed procedures to help the private investor! If you fail once, have a new name, and know the right contacts, all you need to do is apply again! The two instances of colleges from Tamil Nadu charging capitation fees, as reported in the sting operation, has only revealed the tip of the iceberg. As the new minister has ordered an inquiry into the entire issue of deemed universities, the regulatory bodies which were so generous earlier are now pretending to act tough! There is a total failure and loss of credibility of the regulatory bodies created to maintain norms and standards ensure quality of comparable levels and support institutions to become centres of excellence. Everyone now knows what values these bodies follow in their functioning. In such a situation of visible demoralisation, the urgency to open more institutions and move ahead of the enrolment ration of 11 to say 20 or 25 confronts the planners. The shrewd private entrepreneur calculates assured returns and can go to any length to get a professional college or a deemed university approved. In India, it is tough to regulate the machinations of the investors in education. They have learnt the tricks of the trade and know how to overcome the hurdles that are put just to give right indications.

Reports shall continue to pour in. These keep people busy. The real change shall occur only when the human resources minister is determined to remain free of the operating coteries, listens to all but make his own decisions, and changes the work culture right from Shastri Bhawan to the primary school in Koraput.

The writer was director, the National Council of Educational Research and Training during the NDA government

Source: New Delhi [/indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com)/1st August, 2009

Ministry plans world-class varsities with more autonomy

The HRD Ministry has unveiled a blueprint for world-class universities (WCUs) that proposes a free hand and more autonomy to varsities, exempting them from

audit systems and placing them outside the UGC-style regulatory system, offering a range of scholarships and a flexible faculty recruitment process. The ministry has also announced its 'Brain Gain' policy to attract quality faculty from across the globe proposing to amend existing legislations to permit foreign citizens to be engaged as faculty in India.

The concept note for the universities, circulated to select academicians, proposes a strong focus on research at these varsities and government aid in the form of a corpus.

"While the varsities will start with a corpus instituted by the government, some 10 years later or so, the varsity will be expected to sustain itself considerably with patents and consultancy services. Instead of an auditing system there will be outcome audits based on peer or academic reviews of the varsity," said a senior official.

The varsity will have just two pay bands for faculty and the varsity will be free to recruit as many faculty members as its suits them within these two pay bands. Similar freedom will be given to the university to design curriculum and course work. The universities will get Research Endowment Fund annually. Besides, the universities will have the freedom to get funding from non-government sources subject to condition that it will not be from dubious or unverified sources. The universities will be free to establish Chairs of Studies with funding through non-government endowments.

The ministry also announced its 'Brain Gain' policy on Monday, which aimed at attracting best quality teachers from across the globe to work at the 14 National Universities, proposed to be set up by the Centre in the 11th Plan. To ensure that quality faculty of foreign nationality join these universities, the government may amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 which does not allow persons of Indian origin, who are citizens of another country, to be appointed to public services and posts.

The government also intends to amend the Comptroller and Auditor General's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Services) Act of 1971 to exempt national universities from the CAG's scrutiny.

Source: New Delhi [/indianexpress.com/](http://indianexpress.com/)11th August 2009

Shri Kapil Sibal calls upon IITs to expand towards becoming technology developers

IITs are being expected to make the transition towards being known not only for their quality graduates, but also as new knowledge creators and technology developers in the manner of the great research universities around the world. Speaking at the 40th Convocation address at IIT, Delhi, here today, Shri

Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development said that IITs must break the cycle of producing only quality graduates, and must recognize today the needs of our future and work towards creating an ecosystem for impact research. While expressing happiness that, today, there is nearly 30% annual growth in sponsored research as well as PhD enrollment, which reflects the significant progress made by IIT Delhi in this direction, he pointed out that clearly there is still a long road ahead, if the intent is to compete with the best globally.

The HRD Minister pointed out that, while, for long, new technologies were creating products that were targeted to primarily improve the quality of life in developed societies, the last decade has clearly shown that science and technology can create products and services which can impact even the poorest communities. This, coupled with the well known demographic changes taking place, has created enormous research opportunities for our scientists and engineers who are now very "close to the future market", he said.

Shri Sibal stated that the other great challenge before the IITs is to act as a catalyst in the growth of quality technical education in the country. He said, "the last two decades have seen exponential growth in technical education. The growth in quantity has not translated to any significant growth in the number of quality graduates. The key missing link in this growth is the availability of quality faculty. Here two factors are critical; perceived attractiveness of faculty positions vis-à-vis other opportunities and the aptitude of trained graduates. It is clear that IITs have been able to attract and retain quality faculty in spite of having a major disadvantage in terms of compensation packages vis-à-vis corporate R&D. This has been possible only due to the other attractions available to the faculty at IITs and the commitment to the IIT system. A significant effort is required to reach out and train faculty, in both teaching and research, in other Institutions as well. Here, existing IITs have a major role to play."

The graduating IIT Delhi students, the Minister said, were fortunate to be graduating from one of the best technical institutions in the country. He emphasized that as these students represent the very best and brightest we have, his expectations from them were of a very high order not only as professionals, but also as intelligent and wise voices in the community they would now serve. Being beneficiaries of a highly subsidized education, society also expects them to give back in many ways, Shri Sibal added.

Shri Kapil Sibal gave away the distinguished alumni awards to Prof. Sharad Malik, currently at Princeton



University and Mr. K. Ananth Krishnan, currently Chief Technology Officer, Tata Consultancy Services. Prof. V.S. Ramamurthy, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIT Delhi addressed the gathering, and Prof. Surendra Prasad, Director, IIT, Delhi gave the Director's report on the occasion.

Source: New Delhi [/pib.nic.in](http://pib.nic.in)/8th August 2009

The need for quality education among our society

“The present system of education is all wrong,” said Vivekananda. “The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. Control of mind should be taught first. If I had my education to get over again and had any voice in the matter, I would learn to master my mind first, and then gather facts if I wanted them. It takes people a long time to learn things because they can't concentrate their minds at will.”

According to Dr. (Ms.) AS Desai, former chairperson, UGC, “education has to be a process which prepares the student to learn to develop a way of thinking, that is know how to seek information, know the sources from obtaining it, how to sort out the information, analyze it, and make meaning out of it for conceptualization and application.”

In the 60 plus years of India's Independence, and since the formation of Manipur as a status of state in 1972, we have indeed made tremendous strides in the field of education despite its abysmal educational sector. However, the biggest question that I would like to put forward is, ‘have we fulfilled the fundamental goal of education i.e. character building’? The character that I meant is values, which forms the foundation of any harmonious society. Value orientation is a missing dimension in our educational system. Gone are the days when the social and education systems provided an environment wherein the individual could imbibe values through examples set by the teachers and elders. Today the pressures of materialism have pushed us into a situation where the teachers, parents and the students are racing against time to match their resources with the constantly changing demands of the environment. This calls for a paradigm shift in our perception of the goals of education. To be a better society we need to achieve success within the framework of time vested values to the youngsters to understand the underlying links between freedom and discipline, independence and interdependence, commitment to self and commitment to others, material success and moral values.

The prevailing societal mentalities should be changed like the practice of expecting someone else to solve the problems. It is the attitude of the educated person, rather than the ignorance of the uneducated, which is

acting as the main constraint in achieving a feasible solution. The present-day education has become soulless in that most of employees in the government sector and most of the politicians who are supposed to be torchbearers are setting bad examples for the younger generation. Once my friend, who is an engineer jocularly said, ‘I would prefer to work as a clerk in Manipur than as an engineer in outside’. The meaning could be understood by anyone. The pervasive practice of corruption without fear almost from all the departments shows our lack of inculcating value-based education. When values degenerate, corruption sets in. The employees and officials who are supposed to be accountable for their actions to the people would not perform their assigned duties unless they are paid regular ‘speed money’. There are large numbers of projects in the state, which are not implemented by the set deadline. Therefore, when any of these projects is completed, the cost would have gone up ten times. Take the case of Khuga multipurpose project in churachandpur district, which was started since 1983 but was kept standstill for a period and resumed in 2002 after a long gap. This mini-dam would have cost a few crores had it been finished in the set period but so far the costs have been a whopping 250 crores. However, interestingly, none owns responsibility for the unpardonable lapse. A strange administration indeed! The guilty in the gross dereliction of duty are those who are ministers, high officials and engineers. Moreover, all of them are educated and they owe no explanation to the people for the huge losses caused. An education that fails to inculcate basic values in the people is worse than ignorance and illiteracy. For flimsy reasons, politicians go on making new parties and most of them rise to power and prominence because of ego clashes. One would not know the number of political parties exist presently in a tiny state of Manipur. It is time we change our attitude to achieve wonders in revamping our education system. All of us should join hands and focus on this one cause so that there will be a perceptible change in the quality of life among us. One would agree with me that, true education is of inculcating values but not knowledge of facts. True education leads us to the reality of life, peace, nature and survival of human race. The saying words of Pu. L.Richard Haokip, Head master, greenwood academy, churachandpur goes like this, “during my 15 plus years of experience in education, I have studied my school students and ex-students very deeply and I have found that the ‘values’ inculcated by the school, the society or the home by the age of 18 to 20 years become more or less permanent. Therefore, schools are the only institutions to provide true education to the child”. It shows that the role of a schoolteacher is

more important than that of a college teacher in propagating education and nation building. The teacher should be a person with iron will. Apart from knowledge of his subject, he should have a thorough knowledge of approach to life, national goals, history, geography and cultural diversities, national and international policies. He should stand before the child like a learned saint and be able to satisfy all queries of the child. As Webster defines education as the process of educating or teaching. It means to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of students.

Source: [/kanglaonline.com](http://kanglaonline.com)/3 August 2009

Thread of light in dark rooms

ISMU students train slum women in *rakhi* making

After the success of their child literacy programme, Kartavya, a social group of the Indian School of Mines University (ISMU), has embarked on a mission to make slum-dwellers self-sufficient.

The group has initiated three training programmes for men and women of Lahbani village to inculcate various skills so that they can earn a decent living as well as contribute to the education of their children.

A *rakhi* training programme was organised for women in the library of Centre I of Kartavya at Lahbani village, situated near the institute. The programme ended yesterday with the trainees preparing over 300 *rakhis* during the course of the two-week training. Of these about 80 *rakhis* have already been sold.

Pankaj Kumar Jain (third-year mechanical engineering of BTech), who is also the art coordinator of the group, said about a dozen enterprising women of the bustee was selected for the programme. "They have been trained in the art of making *rakhis* and apprised about how they should sell them at the training," said Jain.

He added that from tomorrow kiosks would be put up on ISMU campus to sell the *rakhis*. The shops near the varsity have also been roped in to sell the thread of love there, the BTech student said.

"The programme was aimed at making the women skilful to help them become self-dependent," said Jain, adding that the other two programmes launched during the same time were copy making for men and women's education.

"Unemployment and the resultant frustration had forced many young men of the village to take recourse to alcohol. To find them a suitable job to sustain themselves and their family we initiated this programme so that they could earn their living. The copy-making training will help them to become self-sufficient," he said. The group is providing the raw material like paper and stapling machine.

The major consignment of copies goes to the campus, as the students need it.

Another programme, women's education is also underway. "The educated women of the village are taking the classes. They are teaching uneducated women so that they can go home and help their children with their studies," he said.

Source: Dhanbad [/telegraphindia.com](http://telegraphindia.com)/3rd August 2009

Towards quality teacher education

To improve the teacher education system in the country, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), which sets norms and standards for quality teacher education and ensure planned and coordinated development of teacher education, is conducting a nationwide [study](#) on the demand and supply of teachers and teacher educators at the school level, for the years 2007-08 to 2016-17. In addition, to upgrade the BEd curriculum and other teacher-training programmes, a revised National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) in synchronisation with the NCF 2005 is being finalised by the NCTE.

Mohd Akhtar Siddiqui, chairperson, NCTE, said; "Though NCTE was formed in 1973 and given a statutory status in 1993, there was no groundwork done to identify the demand of teachers in the country. Only once we have the data, can we address the problem of shortage of teachers." The study, which started last year, is being conducted in all states and UTs and scheduled to be completed in a few months. The trends, as reflected in the study, already indicate over supply of teachers in several states and under supply in eastern states. Steps are being taken to correct this unbalanced growth.

According to the Council, institutions not following regulations and norms of teacher education programmes are being shut down. Further sharing NCTE's plans, Siddiqui added; "We are planning to prepare model curricula for different teacher training programmes and detailed syllabi and quality study material once the NCFTE is approved by the Council. Also, we have set up a committee to evaluate the material available on teacher education as part of our aim to continuously monitor and upgrade."

An online teacher education portal with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) is also on the cards. "The portal would address all stakeholders involved in teacher education, for example, teachers, aspirants, teacher-educators, among others. It would provide comprehensive data on teacher education including courses, institutional data, skill update, etc," he added.



Siddiqui emphasised the need for continuous professional development and skill upgradation among teachers and teacher educators. The NCF that is being prepared also contains a full chapter on Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers. "There should be a chain of professional development centres, supported by the government, devoted to CPD. What we need essentially is a cumulative model for teacher education and development and not just a one-off workshop for teachers or a short-term course," said Siddiqui.

Further, he proposed a 'national test for employment' for teachers. [Students](#), having completed BEd or DEd would be eligible for the test. Further, there are plans to advise state governments to conduct 'standardised aptitude tests' for aspirant teachers.

On ICT in education for teachers, NCTE recently launched a project to integrate [technology](#) in teacher education — X-elerated Professional Development in the Integration of Technology in Teacher Education (XPDITTE) in collaboration with Intel Teach Program. The programme aims to help teacher educators learn how to integrate technology to improve [teaching](#) and learning and to make student teachers ICT savvy in their own classrooms.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)3rd August, 2009

Universities should be given full autonomy: Yashpal

Advocating the need for complete overhauling of the present higher education system, a renowned educationist today asked the government to give "full autonomy" to universities to decide their curriculum and implement it.

"The universities should be given free hand in deciding their design of curriculum and the way to conduct different courses," Prof Yashpal, who headed a government-constituted committee, aimed at suggesting reforms in higher education, said here.

Addressing a debate session at the Indian Council of Social Science Research, he said an inter-disciplinary approach was required to boost innovation in the system.

"Interaction among students belonging to different streams at college and university level is necessary to bring out innovation and new ideas which come through the boundaries of discipline," Yashpal said.

Source: New Delhi [/ptinews.com/](#)8th August 2009

RESOURCE

Ahemdabad IIM to expand in Hyderabad

In a symbiotic move the Andhra Pradesh government and the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, have agreed to set up a 'seamless' campus of IIM-A on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

The decision was taken at a meeting between the Board of Governors of the the IIM-A and Andhra state government officials here last week. The IIM has set up a committee to work out the modalities," an IIM source said.

The 110-acre IIM campus in Ahemdabad is fully saturated and there is no scope for expansion. "The AP government has offered about 150 acres of land almost free of cost or at a nominal amount of Rs 1 per acre as well as a grant of Rs 100 crore. The seamless campus at Hyderabad would be bigger than the Ahmedabad one and have ultra-modern facilities," the official said.

According to sources, IIM-A can benefit immensely by having an extension in Hyderabad. "The PGDM course is the brand-building one but does not generate much money. The institute can generate money only through short-term executive courses and the IT, biotechnology and infrastructure hub that Hyderabad is, would attract many to join," sources said.

According to sources, the faculty from abroad is keen to join the institute and would be motivated by the access that the Hyderabad international airport would provide to them. "IIM-A is the top management institution in the country and Hyderabad is the hub of the emerging economy. Both will tremendously benefit with the setting up of the seamless campus," Andhra state government officials said.

The YSR Reddy government thought of the seamless IIM-A campus after the Centre made it clear that a new IIM cannot be granted for Hyderabad since it already has an IIT. "And there is no provision for an IIM for Andhra Pradesh in the 12th Five-Year Plan (2013-18) as well. A seamless IIM-A campus would be an extension of the one at Ahmedabad and not another new campus.

This way, the Union HRD ministry will also have no objection as it need not give any financial assistance," the sources said.

According to the sources, the IIM-A board was highly appreciative of the facilities that were being offered by the state government for the growth and expansion of the institution. "Their efforts in the last few years to grow including opening a campus in Mumbai came a cropper. Besides, former HRD minister Arjun Singh

shot down all the expansion plans of the IIMs. Therefore, the offer from the AP government was welcomed with open arms by IIM-A authorities," officials said.

Apart from the flagship PGDM course, the seamless campus in Hyderabad would offer a slew of new ones as well as optional courses that the student from Ahmedabad can enlist for a short-term, the sources said.

"In short, the seamless campus in Hyderabad can further cement the grip of IIM-A as the topmost management institute in the country," the sources added. The committee set up by the IIM-A authorities is expected to submit its proposals shortly to the board of governors after which the institute will seek a formal approval from the Union HRD ministry.

Source: Ahemdabad [/academics-india.com/](http://academics-india.com/)

Aura of excellence

Bangalore is not only the hub of pure sciences research; it has several institutions that have other distinct areas of study.



Bangalore has the distinction of playing host to a number of premier research institutions in the country. Several factors have helped the capital city of Karnataka achieve this. One is its location, far away from the borders and away from the coast, which is ideal for sensitive scientific and defence institutions. Another is its pleasant climate.

In the early years of Independence, several public sector companies were set up in Bangalore and some existing manufacturing units in the city were taken over by the Central government. These include Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) and Hindustan Machine Tools (now HMT). The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was set up in 1972.

No discussion of Bangalore's premier institutes will be complete without mentioning the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). Set up in 1909, it has consistently set benchmarks in terms of quality in scientific research.

The institute was the result of the vision of Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata. Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, the progressive Maharajah of Mysore, enthusiastically contributed the land required for the institute.

The role of the rulers of Mysore has been immense in the development of the State as a centre of education and research. Before Independence, the princely state had a reputation of being led by enlightened kings in the company of far-sighted diwans such as Sir K. Seshadri Rao, Sir M. Visvesvaraya and Sir Mirza Ismail, and it was one of the most progressive states in the country. A modern system of education was established in Mysore in 1833. Maharaja's College (a constituent college of the University of Mysore now) was founded in 1864 and became a first-grade college in 1894. The University of Mysore, the first university in the region and the sixth founded in the country, was established in 1916. An engineering college was founded in 1917.

Among the Central research institutes situated in the city are the National Tuberculosis Institute; the Coffee Research Centre; the National Dairy Research Institute (South); the National Institute of Animal Nutrition and Physiology; the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences; the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bangalore; the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research; the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research; the National Centre for Biological Sciences; the Central Institute of Medical and Aromatic Plants; the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research; the National Council for Teacher Education; the Indian Statistical Institute; the Regional Institute of English; the National Power Training Institute; the Project Directorate on Animal Disease Monitoring and Surveillance; the Society for Integrated Circuit Technology and Applied Research; the Indian Veterinary Research Institute; the National Bureau of Agriculturally Important Insects; and the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute.

Apart from these, there are a few institutions that have achieved a special place for themselves in the areas of research and training. These include the Central Power Research Institute (CPRI), the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST), the Indian Plywood Industries Research and Training Institute (IPIRTI), the National Law School of India University (NALSIU), the Raman Research Institute (RRI), the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), the Apex Hitech Institute (AHI), the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC). The Central and State governments consult these institutions regularly and they play an important role in policy formation.

Central Power Research Institute



The role of the CPRI becomes paramount at a time when the country is facing a severe power crisis. The institute was established by the Government of India in 1960 and comes under the Ministry of Power.

Says P.K. Kognolkar, the Director-General of the CPRI: "The institute functions as a centre for applied research in electrical power engineering assisting the electrical industry in product development and quality assurance. It also serves as an independent authority for testing and certification of power equipment."

With its state-of-the-art establishments, the CPRI has full-fledged facilities for testing power equipment up to 400kV class and facilities are being set up for testing equipment up to 1,200kV class. Armed with all the national and international accreditations and affiliations, including the prestigious membership on the Short Circuit Liaison International Forum, the CPRI is fully geared to meet the growing requirement of the Indian power sector.

One of the major functions of the CPRI is to conduct research in the areas of generation, transmission and distribution of power in order to assist the utilities to supply reliable and quality power to consumers. "Besides in-house R&D, the CPRI also undertakes sponsored research projects from manufacturers and other agencies in different areas of specialisation," said Kognolkar.

Over the years, the institute has successfully executed over 300 research projects. This has led to the publication of over 450 technical reports and the presentation of more than 2,200 research papers at national and international fora. The CPRI manages the Research Scheme on Power, a research fund of the Power Ministry, to carry out need-based research, including solving operational problems encountered in the power system. A second scheme under which the CPRI gets funds is the Research Contingency Fund. This focusses on augmenting and improving power generation and distribution. A third, and more

focussed, source of funding for the CPRI, is the National Perspective Plan.

The CPRI established the Centre for Collaborative and Advanced Research (CCAR) in 2006. It has signed memoranda of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, IIT Madras, and Banaras Hindu University, among others for undertaking collaborative research. The comprehensive testing facility on its spacious campus enables the testing of power systems using real-time digital simulation. The testing of direct-cooled and frost-free refrigerators and air-conditioners are done as per the standards stipulated by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

The CPRI has established a mobile diagnostic facility for power plant-specific equipment. All these services helped it achieve an all-time high revenue of Rs.73 crore in 2008-09, an increase of more than Rs.20 crore from the previous year. The CPRI is also a valued consultant to both domestic and international clients. Its revenue income was Rs.12.50 crore in 2008-09. It has also contributed to the Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme and the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyuthikaran Yojana of the Central government. The quality of the services rendered by the CPRI is of international standard.

Apex Hitech Institute



The AHI, which functions under the Directorate-General of Employment and Training (DGE&T) of the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, was set up in 1993 with assistance from the World Bank. According to S.J. Amalan, Director of the AHI, it is "the nodal institute for training trainers for various technical institutions in the country. Its Bangalore campus is technically advanced as it uses edu-sat technology to impart uniform training across the country." The AHI maintains a database of instructors and monitors their progress in capacity building. The main idea behind the AHI is to nurture, promote and build world-class resource centres dedicated to training and consulting activities for manufacturing and technology industries.

Its mission is to train and develop personnel in providing smart solutions to organisations by combining key technologies and best industrial practices.

The AHI provides state-of-the-art training facilities in computer-aided design (CAD), programmable logic controller (PLC), microcontrollers and microprocessors and is in constant interaction with hi-tech industries for identification of and planning for training resources.

The AHI provides training in high technology for employees, and graduate and technical apprentices and trainers from industry, the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and engineering colleges; provides didactic support and curriculum development for institutes and training centres in India and abroad; offers consultancy services by networking resources for engineering manufacturing industries and the information technology industry; provides foreign consultancy services in the guise of technical assistance; and coordinates and monitors hi-tech training at seven Advanced Training Institutes and 10 ITIs.

While this is fairly routine work for the AHI, what is particularly exciting is that the institute provides the entire software support for the implementation of the Modular Employable Skills (MES), a skill development initiative of the DGE&T. "This useful scheme provides industry certification for myriad skills that so far have been practised in an unorganised manner.

The objective of the scheme is to provide vocational training to school leavers, existing workers and ITI trainees in order to improve their employability by optimally utilising the infrastructure available with the government, private institutions and industry," said Amalan.

The existing skills of a person are tested and certified under the MES. The DGE&T offers training in close to 450 skills, which include wall painting, plumbing, craftsmanship, cooking North Indian food and toymaking. The MES programme aims at equipping workers in the unorganised sector so that their skills get recognition and they get certification from industry personnel.

Indian Institute of Astrophysics



The IIA is devoted to studies in astronomical sciences. While its main campus is in Bangalore, the observatories are located at four field stations – Hanle at Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir, Gauribidanur in Karnataka, and Kavalur and Kodaikanal, both in Tamil Nadu. The Centre for Research and Education in Science and Technology (CREST) is located on the IIA's Hosakote campus in Bangalore Rural district. CREST houses the remote control room for the two-metre Himalayan Chandra Telescope located at Hanle. Scientists use the telescope through a dedicated satellite link. The IIA, which became an autonomous research institution in 1971, comes under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology. It owes its origin to the scientific spirit of the British who first set up an observatory in 1786 in Madras (now Chennai). The observatory was shifted in 1899 to Kodaikanal. The IIA is in the middle of another major phase of expansion.

The IIA has its own optical, infrared and radio facilities and has just completed the installation of a high-altitude gamma ray array at Hanle. ASTROSAT, India's first fully dedicated astronomy satellite that is scheduled for launch in 2010, is a collaborative project of the IIA and ISRO. The satellite's ultraviolet payload, consisting of an ultraviolet imaging telescope (UVIT) and its associated instrumentation with capabilities in both near ultraviolet and visual wavelengths, is designed at the IIA. The institute has taken the responsibility of fabrication, testing and final integration of the payload with the satellite. The IIA has proposed to build a large solar telescope with an aperture of two metres as a national facility.

According to Dr. Siraj Hasan, IIA Director, some of the recent initiatives of the institute include starting two PhD programmes – an integrated programme in Physics in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Open University [IGNOU], and an integrated M.Tech-PhD (Tech) programme in Astronomical Instrumentation. This was started in 2008 in collaboration with the Department of Applied Optics and Photonics of the University of Calcutta. Students come to the IIA after completing part of the course in



Kolkata. This is the first time that a PhD programme is being offered in India in such an area of research.

The institute recently established a generous post-doctoral fellowship called the Chandra Fellowship. The IIA also has a public outreach programme to create awareness about astronomy and astrophysics through exhibitions, lectures and movie shows. According to Siraj Hasan, the IIA is planning to have 100 hours of contact lectures with the general public this year.

Raman Research Institute

The RRI maintains the image of Bangalore as the hub of research in pure sciences. Founded in 1948 by the physicist and Nobel laureate Sir C.V. Raman, and named after him, the RRI was lucky to have him as its Director until his death in 1970. In December 1934, the Government of Mysore gifted a plot of land in Bangalore to Professor Raman for the creation of a research institute. In the same year, Raman founded the Indian Academy of Sciences. Some years following the creation of the RRI, Raman made a gift of movable and immovable property to the Academy for the use and benefit of the RRI.

The RRI is now an aided autonomous research institute engaged in research in basic sciences and receives funds from the Central Department of Science and Technology. The main areas of research at the institute are astronomy and astrophysics, light and matter physics, soft condensed matter and theoretical physics. The research activities include work in chemistry, liquid crystals, physics in biology, and signal processing, imaging and instrumentation. The astronomy and astrophysics group in the institute is engaged in understanding the events that led to the evolution of the universe and a variety of phenomena associated with cosmic bodies. One of its current projects is outfitting the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) near Pune. The RRI has participated in several telescope projects, including the building of the Decametre Wave Radio Telescope at Gauribidanur along with the IIA.

According to Professor Ravi Subrahmanyan, the RRI Director, "RRI astronomers are also working to create a new long wavelength radio telescope in the Australian outback."

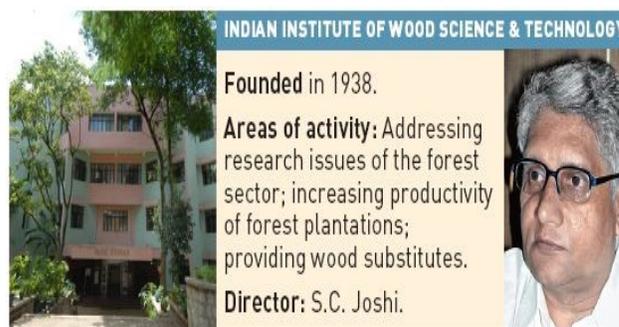
The light and matter physics (LAMP) group is engaged in the study of light-matter interaction, which is a combination of atomic, molecular and optical physics, and intense laser field studies of plasmas. The group explores light-matter interactions through experimental, numerical and theoretical methods. Established in the 1970s, the soft condensed matter group has primarily focussed on research in the field of thermotropic liquid crystals, covering a broad

spectrum of activities ranging from the synthesis of new liquid crystalline materials to display electronics.

Discoveries of the columnar phase formed by disc-like molecules, and pressure-induced mesomorphism are two of the early significant contributions made by the group. With the aim of focussing on basic science research, the group has since diversified into other soft matter systems, nano-composites and biological systems. Members of the group often seek collaborations with academics with complementary expertise in experimental skills and relevant theory.

The fourth group at the RRI, the theoretical physics group, works primarily in four areas – statistical physics, soft matter physics, including physics in biology, gravitation and the foundations of quantum mechanics. This group has members in two broad areas – general relativity and statistical mechanics. Subrahmanyan said: "The RRI attracts students who are responsible for their work and know the value of their work."

Indian Institute Of Wood Science and Technology



The IWST is tucked away in the green corridor encompassing the IISc. campus. It is the only institute in the country involved in the research of wood science and is also one of the eight institutes that come under the control of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE). The ICFRE is an autonomous council of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). India is home to 1,600 timber species. This makes the role of a research institute in wood science important. It also has the added responsibility of addressing research issues of the forestry sector of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Goa at the regional level. The institute was founded in 1938 as the Forest Research Laboratory by the Maharaja of Mysore.

According to its Director S.C. Joshi, an Indian Forest Service officer, the institute's areas of focus are efficient utilisation of forest products, increasing the productivity of forest plantations, conservation of bioresources through pest and disease management,

and providing wood substitutes using modern technologies.

Joshi laments that although the IWST has made significant advancements in wood science, this is rarely conveyed to the general public because of the disinterest of middlemen and contractors in the wholesale and retail sale of timber trade. Explaining a project to enhance the durability of wood, Joshi said, "We are involved in the process of enhancing the utilisation and life of wood but the middlemen are not interested in this procedure as it would reduce their profits. There is a great deal of ignorance on the part of saw millers and wood depot owners to such useful advances in wood science technology."

Among the other important work carried out by the institute is the identification of 30 substitute timber species in lieu of commercially important species such as teak, rosewood, deodar and red sanders. The institute provides integrated pest management strategies for conserving forests. It is developing techniques to replace energy-intensive metals and plastics with reconstituted wood products such as wood polymer composites.

The institute formulates tree improvement strategies and has a standardised nursery, and macro and micro propagation techniques to produce quality planting material of high-demand and hard-to-grow species such as sandalwood, teak and Malabar neem. In tune with the efforts to meet the demands of both the organised and unorganised sectors, research on industrially relevant and other local species are carried out.

The institute holds regular meetings with representatives of State forest departments, non-governmental organisations, farmers, fishermen and industry, and conducts short-term training programmes in processes relating to wood science. "The work we do at the IWST is useful, especially considering the depletion of forests. The knowledge of changes in wood science will help in better use of timber," Joshi said.

[Indian Plywood Industries Research and Training Institute](#)



The IPIRTI, another institution under the MoEF, is an autonomous research organisation and is mandated to carry out research and development, training and education, testing and standardisation and extension in the field of plywood and panel product manufacturing. The only such institution in the field, the institute has been closely associated with the development of the plywood and panel industry and has been instrumental in its growth.

The institute is headed by Dr C.N. Pandey, a scientist who worked for almost three decades with the Forest Research Institute (FRI) in Dehra Dun. Ever since it was established as a cooperative research laboratory in 1962, the institute has remained an industry-driven one, keeping track of the changes in the plywood industry and working closely with it. The institute's Research Advisory Committee is headed by a leading industrialist.

The IPIRTI pursues two strategies to bridge the gap between the demand and supply of industrial wood. It is involved in the development of appropriate processing technologies for efficient use of plantation-grown tree species for manufacturing quality wood products and is evolving technologies for using non-wood renewable fibres to manufacture alternatives to wood, such as environment- and people-friendly products from bamboo. In recent years, bamboo has assumed importance as a source of renewable fibre for manufacturing industrial products, some of which are excellent alternatives to wood. The institute has developed successful technologies for manufacturing several mat-based industrial products from bamboo, such as bamboo mat board, bamboo mat veneer composite, bamboo mat moulded items and bamboo mat corrugated sheet for roofing. According to Pandey, the products made from bamboo are successful substitutes to traditional products.

The IPIRTI was instrumental in establishing the common facility centre (CFC) on the outskirts of

Bangalore where primary processing of bamboo and mat-weaving have been established. About 300 families belonging to tribal communities traditionally involved in making bamboo-based utility products work at the CFC. The institute provides guidance and technical support and the grants received from the National Mission on Bamboo Applications (NMBS) to the CFC.

With a view to developing environmental guidelines for glues/adhesives, the IPIRTI has established a facility to measure the emission level of formaldehyde as per international specifications. It is using biomaterials obtained from natural renewable sources instead of petroleum-based chemicals for the manufacture of boiling-water-resistant grade plywood.

The institute offers a one-year postgraduate diploma course in Mechanical Wood Industries Technology. More than 460 alumni of the course have found placements in various wood and wood-based industries. The IPIRTI is recognised by the FRI for pursuing research leading to the award of PhD. The institute also plays a significant role in formulating/amending the Indian standards for wood and wood products through active participation in various committees of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). The IPIRTI has a vibrant extension and enterprise development programme and liaisons between the government and the industry.

National Law School of India University



NATIONAL LAW SCHOOL OF INDIA UNIVERSITY

Established in 1988.
Flagship course: B.A. LL.B (Hons.) degree; offers LL.M, MPhil and PhD.
Facilities: Has eight centres specialising in various aspects of law.
Vice-Chancellor: R. Venkata Rao.



The NLSIU has been consistently ranked as the number one law school in the country by a variety of ranking bodies. The school is situated on the outskirts of the city on a 23-acre campus abutting the leafy and large campus of the University of Bangalore. Established in 1988, the NLSIU demonstrated its stellar position in the first year of its existence when

the first batch of students admitted to the school won the prestigious Bar Council of India National Moot Court Competition.

The flagship course at the school is the five-year undergraduate B.A., LL. B. (Hons.) degree programme for which 80 students are ordinarily admitted every year. "The students are admitted after a highly competitive national entrance exam and compulsorily have to stay on campus as this is a fully residential course demanding full-time attention from the students," Professor (Dr) R. Venkata Rao, Vice-Chancellor of the NLSIU, said.

The NLSIU offers a two-year master's programme LL.M., and MPhil and PhD programmes in law. "There have been several instances where students have been admitted to other law schools but waited a year and then re-applied to the NLSIU because they could not make it in their first attempt," Rao said.

The NLSIU has eight centres specialising in various aspects of law. These are the Centre for Women and the Law, the National Institute for Alternate Disputes Resolution, the Centre for Child and the Law, the Centre for Environmental Education, Research and Advocacy, the Centre for Intellectual Property Research and Advocacy, the National Institute of Human Rights, the Institute of Law and Ethics in Medicine and the Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy. The school has retired Chief Justices of India on its faculty. The faculty with its diverse and varied expertise and scholarship is the backbone of the law school. The school publishes four journals pertaining to aspects of law.

According to Rao, the credit for the establishment of the NLSIU must go to N.R. Madhava Menon, the first Vice-Chancellor of the school. "We have become a great institution and the alumni of this institute are spread all over the world." The school, which has 100 per cent campus recruitment year after year, will soon be starting a course in Cyber Forensics. "Normally people take pride in referring to the NLSIU as 'Harvard of the East', but our mission should be to make people refer to Harvard as 'Bangalore Law School of the West'," Rao said.

Institute for Social and Economic Change



INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

Established in 1972; functions under the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

Area of research: Involved in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research and training in the social sciences.

Thrust: Integrated harnessing of social science skills for understanding the social and economic changes.

Director: R.S. Deshpande.



The ISEC is a premium postgraduate research institute in the social sciences. Bangalore is well known for research institutes in the pure sciences but with the establishment of the ISEC in 1972, the gap in social science research was filled up. Established by the great visionary and renowned institution builder, Professor V.K.R.V. Rao, after he set up the Delhi School of Economics and the Institute of Economic Growth, the ISEC has become one of the best institutes for advanced social science research in the country.

“The major thrust behind the institute is an integrated harnessing of social science skills for identifying and understanding the social and economic changes taking place in our country, linking it with its programmes of economic growth and social development and evolving policies and proposals for stimulating change in the right direction and increasing the well-being and welfare of vast masses of our people, who stand today below the poverty line,” Rao said at the inauguration of the institute in 1974.

The ISEC is the largest research institution functioning under the aegis of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) involved in inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research and training in the social sciences achieved through both macro- and micro-level studies. One of the major missions of the institute is to improve the quality of policymaking at the local, State, national and international levels, with several faculty members acting as chairpersons and members of various policymaking commissions and committees. The current Director of the ISEC is R.S. Deshpande.

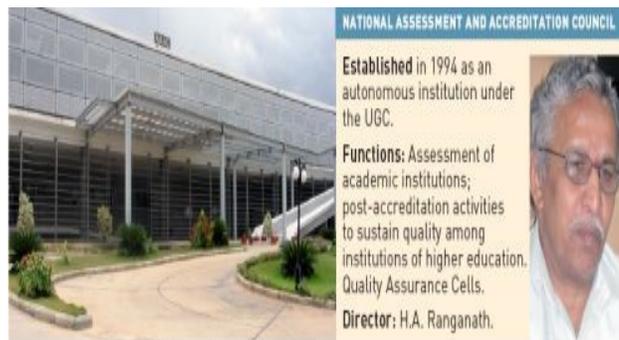
The research activities at the institute are organised under eight centres, which cover the diverse array of social sciences. There are 40 distinguished scholars on the faculty at these centres. The audience of the ISEC includes students, teachers, doctoral and postdoctoral scholars, government officials, legislators, NGOs, other research institutions and staff of national and international organisations.

While the expertise of the ISEC’s faculty extends to economic and social issues at the State, national and international level, the development issues of Karnataka are of particular concern to the institute. It publishes a biannual multidisciplinary journal called **Journal of Social and Economic Development**.

The institute formulates its research agenda on a five-year basis and some of its current thrust areas are theoretical and applied research on micro- and macro-economic issues in the Indian economy; Indian agricultural policy; and human development process and indicators. The institute completes about 30 research projects in a year, many of them sponsored

by the Central, State and local governments and national and international agencies and some of them its own. Its faculty has published about 350 books and over 4,500 technical articles. Efforts are made to support doctoral students financially.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council



In the vicinity of the ISEC and the NLSIU is another interesting and pioneering body, the NAAC. It was established in 1994 as an autonomous institution under the University Grants Commission (UGC) with its national headquarters in Bangalore. The idea behind its establishment was to accredit the quality of education imparted by institutes of higher education.

According to Prof. H.A. Ranganath, Director, if an institute of higher education expresses an interest to be assessed by the NAAC, an impartial team from the council would visit the institute, prepare a self-study report (SSR), and give a final decision in the form of a grade. A voluntary process, it has gained immense popularity because of the cachet of the NAAC and the fact that the whole process of external assessment and self-evaluation becomes a reality check for the institution. Until July 2009, 4,082 institutions of higher education, including 148 universities, have received NAAC accreditation.

The assessors are drawn from the ranks of senior academics who are of undoubted integrity. National consultative committees in various areas provide the necessary inputs to establish and strengthen the process. Vice-Chancellors of universities, professors, deans, heads of departments in various universities, directors and professors of IITs and IIMs provide expertise and leadership for the academic activities of the NAAC.

The council has also taken up several post-accreditation activities to promote and sustain quality among institutions of higher education, particularly the accredited institutions. This is done by encouraging the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC). The prime task of the IQAC’s is to develop a system for consistent and catalytic improvement in the

performance of institutions. The NAAC has also brought out more than 150 publications that cover diverse aspects of higher education. Its assessment reports on various colleges, which are available on the Web, will help prospective students.

The council has taken up several initiatives such as establishing quality assurance coordination committees and sponsoring quality assurance cells in different States. It promotes the concept of lead college and cluster of colleges for quality initiatives and provides research grants for the faculty of accredited institutions to execute projects on different themes/case studies. The impact of a body such as the NAAC on the higher education scenario in the country has been immense with the result being that there is a better understanding now of the concept of quality assurance among institutions of higher education.

The council has also signed MoUs with several government, national as well as international agencies, including the prestigious Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), the Commonwealth of Learning and the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) of which the NAAC is the founder member. In April 2007, the council organised an accreditation award ceremony, at which more than 200 delegates from various universities and colleges received accreditation certificates.

Source: Chennai flonnet.com/ 11th August 2009

IIT Kanpur students develop a Nano satellite

The students of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur have developed a nano satellite, which is expected to provide real-time data on drought, flood, vegetation and forestation. It will be handed over to ISRO, which is expected to launch it end of the year, says a PTI report.

“This satellite will have specific function of sending imagery on ground conditions. We will set up a tracking station in our institute where we will get the real-time data on drought, flood, vegetation and forestation,” IIT-K Director Prof G Dhande said on August 2.

A team of students led by Agrawal, an M.Phil student, has developed the satellite, costing Rs 2.5 crore.

The nano satellite, which will be named ‘Jugnu’, has a mass of less than 10 kg. It will piggyback on larger launches, avoiding the need for a dedicated launch.

“There will be no dedicated launch of this satellite. These kinds of satellites are launched from the belly of large satellites,” Dhande said.

These nano satellites have hardly any relation with nano technology. The nanosats, as they are called, are appealing because their small size makes them affordable and opens up potential for a swarm of satellites.

IIT Kanpur embarked on this innovative venture after the ISRO started accepting satellites developed by countries and universities.

“We took it as a challenge. We thought why should not we develop a satellite and give it to the ISRO. Then 20 students got inspired idea and started its designing and fabrication,” Dhande said. This satellite is not geosynchronous and will have low earth orbit. The data can be accessed when the satellite is visible from the tracking station, Dhande added.

This initiative is part of the institute’s Golden Jubilee celebration starting this month. The celebration will continue until December next year.

Dhande said nanosats are the new-age satellites prepared for specific purposes. While larger satellites weigh about one tonne, these smaller varieties weigh less than 10 kg and have smaller electronic components.

As of now, there is limited research in the area of nanosats. The space companies and institutes mainly focus their research on the larger ones.

Source: New Delhi academics-india.com/



Contribute

If you are an academican, 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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