



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

Universalisation of Education: India in a Trap

The ordinary meaning of education is knowledge of letters. To teach boys reading, writing and arithmetic is called primary education. A peasant earns his bread honestly. He has ordinary knowledge of the world. He knows fairly well how he should behave towards his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow villagers. He understands and observes the rules of morality. But he cannot write his own name. What do you propose to do by giving him knowledge of letters? Will you add an inch to his happiness...it is not necessary to make this education compulsory. Our ancient school system is enough... We consider your modern school to be useless.

Mahatma Gandhi, Indian Home Rule

There is hardly any need to dwell on the boon education endow to a human being anywhere under the sun. Nelson Mandela, the South African Nobel Laureate, underlined succinctly: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." People all over the world duly recognise its potential. There were vocal and sincere advocates in India to underline the need for education for all, irrespective of caste, creed and sex. Nevertheless, India is awfully backward. A nation that shuts up its educational avenues for all and sundry and favours the privileged alone has to rue in the long run for the selective hostility. With a vast humanity outside the pale of education, as is the case with India, ultimate prosperity eludes the country. Those left behind become an unmitigated and monstrous drag on its march to the pinnacle of glory and achievement. In his inauguration speech on January 20, 2009, the President of the United States of America, Barack Hussein Obama, drove this point home with his characteristic clarity and gush: "A nation cannot prosper long when it favours the prosperous." 1 India, known to favour the privileged since time immemorial, needs to note this warning with the seriousness it warrants.

Any yardstick can hardly underestimate the wisdom of the two observations cited above. They are so self-evident in their consequences that no proof is required. The moot question that needs to be grappled with for an answer is: why is India, boastful of glorious ancient civilisation and culture, a laggard in education?

Educationists Shied Away to Advocate Education for the Indian Masses

The road to national prosperity and happiness can be achieved by educating and thereby equipping every soul with modern knowledge and skills in every nook and corner of the vast country. Failure to do so is an inescapable prescription for pitfalls. The planned economy and its development are sure to falter sooner or later. The turmoil engaging rural India is the result of criminal negligence and disregard for education of the disadvantaged in the lower social strata. The apparent Indian prosperity in the upper crest is ephemeral and will dissipate sooner than later.

Prior to independence, India embarked upon framing her future Constitution. In the Constituent Assembly, one of its illustrious members, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), acclaimed as an educationist and philosopher, was the first to be called upon to deliver his maiden speech after the election of Dr Rajendra Prasad as the permanent Chairman of the august House. It was on Wednesday, December 11, 1946. On December 9, 1946 the Constituent Assembly was inaugurated with Dr Sachchidanand Sinha as the temporary Chairman. Dr Radhakrishnan had observed, inter alia:

Take the problems from which we suffer: our hunger, our poverty, our disease, our malnutrition—these are common to all. Take the psychological evils from which we suffer—the loss of human dignity, the slavery of human mind, the stunting of sensibility and shame of subjection—these are common to all: Hindus or Muslims, Princes or peasants. The chains may be made of gold but they are still chains that fetter us. Even the Princes will have to realise that they are slaves in this country.²

The damning national illiteracy, strangely, escaped the eminent educationist's attention. He did not stress that mass illiteracy should receive the highest national priority of official policy for attack in independent India. He was most eminently placed to demand that education and education alone for all, irrespective of caste, creed, sex and place of birth, should be the only agenda for the government of independent India. It would have befitted Dr Radhakrishnan if he had echoed the Japanese imperial declaration on education, which, in 1869, enunciated that there should be no village in the country with an illiterate household and no house with an illiterate inmate in Japan. In three decades, Japan emerged as the powerhouse of the world, undoubtedly the gift of education. But the eminent educationist, on whom India takes immense legitimate pride, turned a Nelson's eye to the colossal Indian illiteracy.



Our hunger, poverty, disease and malnutrition were serious problems to merit attack and nobody could have questioned any emphasis on these. But failure to accord mass education the pride of place in the scheme of prioritisation of the Indian social and political agenda is no accident per se. The Indian mind has been shaped and conditioned by its ancient religious scriptures and practices. Sacred scriptures have ordained against the lower social order getting education at all. Had some of the rulers of the Princely states (quite a number of them were there) in the Constituent Assembly ignored the need for education for the masses as a priority issue, no question could have been asked. But Dr Radhakrishnan adorned the offices of the Vice-Chancellor first in the Andhra University (1931-36) and next in the Benares Hindu University (1939-1948). Prior to it, he held the prestigious King George V Chair of Philosophy in Calcutta University. In Oxford University, he taught for over a decade (1936-1952). In 1931, the British Government knighted him for his services to education. The Chancellor of Delhi University (1953-1962), Radhakrishnan, chaired free India's first Higher Education Commission (1948-49).³ A Vice President for two terms as also the President of India (1962-1967), he was a towering personality to dictate the educational agenda for free India. His birthday is celebrated as the Teacher's Day. The first step for drafting the future Constitution was marked by noble sentiments and lofty ideals as India was emerging out of the shadows of colonial rule to the light of freedom. Nevertheless, the enlightened philosopher ignored, without any qualms of conscience, the issue of education for the masses. How come? Does it not throw poor light inasmuch as that his profession was not in his passion, nor in his vision? Though he taught, he lacked commitment to education. The psychological evils, for example, loss of human dignity, the slavery of human mind, the stunting of sensibility and shame of subjection of Indians, were results of a blinding darkness caused by widespread illiteracy. In colonial India, these evils afflicting Indians could be placed at the doorsteps of the rulers. Over six decades ago, they left the shores of India, consigning things to Indian hands to manage. Have we overcome the evils of loss of human dignity, the slavery of human mind, the stunting of sensibility and shame of subjection of vast section of Indians? Those evils have become the hallmarks of the lives of the underdogs. The elite Indians, who have been at the helm of affairs, are not really concerned about the well-being of the disadvantaged. They prescribe palliatives but do not want lasting cure of the diseases. Universalisation of education with commitment and sincerity would have

altered radically the situation long back. The elites had different calculations for the millions of deprived Indians.

Why Don't we have a Ripon?

See, in comparison, what the graduates of Calcutta University were told in one of the finest convocation addresses 127 years ago:

It is not desirable in any country to have a small highly educated class brought into contact with large uneducated masses: what is wanted is, instruction should be more equally distributed, that the artisans and peasants of the land should have brought within their reach facilities as may be possible under the circumstances of their condition, and that there should be no sharp line drawn between the educated few and the ignorant and untrained many.⁴

In these words Lord Ripon, the Governor General of India, addressed the students of Calcutta University on March 11, 1882. This alien ruler, whose regime saw the first Indian Education Commission with William Hunter as the Chairman, had issued a clear warning of impending disaster in store for the country if the sharp line between the educated few and the ignorant and untrained many was not erased soon. A deceitful, brutal and cliquish intellectual class since the colonial days had occupied the centre-stage of Indian education. They not only did not pull down the discriminatory line between the educated few and the ignorant and untrained many, they perpetuated it as a standing feature of the national life. The masses were not allowed any space for education. The educated few have penetrated in every layer of Indian polity and frustrated every attempt to ensure education reaching the common man. We have no parallel in authority with integrity and honesty to issue a warning as Ripon eminently did. On the contrary, illiteracy of the masses has been used, true to Ripon's apprehension, as opportunity by the "small highly educated class" to harvest golden dividends at the cost of the ignorant masses. In a word, the havoc wrought in India's education and consequent ills inflicted on national life can be attributed to none other than the educated few, who usually have assumed the role of self-proclaimed heaven-born guardians of the masses.

India Does Not Audit her Heroes' Performances

India is a land of hero-worshippers. The orchestra of relentless hype, more often than not builds up the perception of an idol in the hero here; he is projected as pious, blameless, faultless and peerless. By relentlessly dinning into unsuspecting ears, ignorant people are made to believe that their hero suffers from no shortcomings or frailty of human beings. Divine glow is smeared over him, making him look dazzling, supernatural and surreal. This ensures that no finger is



ever raised by any critic at such a luminary. Faults, frailty and failures in his character and actions are shoved out of sight. Anybody pointing a finger at him is stigmatised as blasphemous. Alas! we never attempted at auditing the public cost of negligence or failure to point out the faults of many of our noble and celebrated souls, particularly when they guided the course of public life in narrow lanes, if not to murky directions. The Indian “great men” are placed on high pedestals, far above reproach or critical analysis by the common man. Anybody doing or attempting to do so is hauled up before the public bar as a malicious campaigner or malcontent. Nobody questioned why Dr Radhakrishnan, the quintessential educationist and philosopher, was so apathetic to giving education its rightful place in the future official agenda in the august House of India on the threshold of freedom from British domination. India did not boast even of 20 per cent literacy in 1946. This is India’s disease, not the symptom.

Betrayal of Friends Responsible for Gokhale’s Death

Did our intellectual class fail to pinpoint this? They did not fail. It seems, they acquiesced in giving low priority to, if not displaying total neglect towards, universal primary education for reasons of their clannish convenience and benefit. The educated and privileged Indian elite did not want education to spread far and wide. They even brazenly offered opposition to education reaching the illiterate and unlettered millions, who have been beyond the pale of consideration for decent human treatment. Many would perhaps be surprised to note that Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, the earliest to launch the nationalist movement, soon after his dismissal from the ICS in 1874,⁵ vigorously opposed the Compulsory Education Bill of Gopal Krishna Gokhale in the Governor General’s Central Legislative Council in 1911. Indian history is replete with the bitter and vicious discourses that the Education Bill met with the colonial rulers’ vehement opposition leading to its defeat. This is not a fact. The truth, however, is just otherwise. Those who vigorously campaigned against and voted for the disgraceful rejection of Gokhale’s Bill included the political giants of the day like Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea.⁶ The reputed scientist and founder of Bengal Chemicals, Prof P.C. Ray, had long later bemoaned that Gokhale died not because his Bill was thrown out by the Central Legislative Council on account of bureaucratic arrogance, as it is often made out, but because he could not bear the shock of betrayal of his close friends who had back-stabbed him over it.⁷ Nobody called the bluff of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea.

Gokhale was Not Radical

In any case, the Bill, though eulogised in sonorous voices by the Indian intellectual class, has hardly any laudable or radical provisions to warrant notice. To drive this aspect home and to disarm adverse attack, I would quote just the central provision in the Bill:

In any area, where 33 per cent of the male population is already at school, there this principle of compulsion should be applied.⁸

No village in the subcontinent qualified during the colonial rule for enforcement of compulsion under the 33 per cent yardstick. Perhaps a few towns and cities, for example, Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Poona, Karachi and Lahore, had 33 per cent population already in school in 1911. Even today the urban population barely exceeds 30 per cent. Who did then actually benefit from the introduction of compulsory primary education as such in India? The answer is quite simple. Looking closely at such developments, one would be convinced that our heroes in history are more often than not creatures of shrill, orchestrated propaganda!

Legendary Educationist and Education Minister Frustrated the Dacca University Plan!

Truth, we were taught early in childhood, is stranger than fiction. We were asked to write stanzas or paragraphs on this theme. Often practical instances were waiting to understand the deeper implications of such a proverb. Here is one culled from the history of Bengal.

On revocation of the partition of Bengal in 1911, Lord Hardinge, the Governor General of India, declared that a university would be set up at Dacca [now Dhaka]. India had by then four universities at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Allahabad. This benevolent proposal was greeted by trenchant opposition from Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea and others. As an educationist, Sir Ashutosh till date is a legend in Bengal!!! Egged on and propelled by the geniuses like them, the Education Minister of Bengal, Provas Chandra Mitra, and their cohorts ensured that budget provisions on account of the proposed Dacca University were not passed by the Bengal Legislative Council year after year till 1921, when the university came into being.⁹ Rarely in history do saboteurs of the establishment of a university occupy as high a stature as Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea. The fifth university of India and second in Bengal could not be established as a result. We cannot imagine why Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea and Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee set themselves against a university at Dacca so pugnaciously. But we cannot, however, overlook a demographic truth that the overwhelming majority of the population in Eastern

Bengal was Muslims, low-caste Hindus and untouchables. The opposition of these luminaries of Bengal had dashed the aspirations for higher education of those educationally backward people. Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, who had emerged victorious by defeating Gokhale's Compulsory Primary Education Bill, conjointly with Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee throttled the Dacca University plan.¹⁰ Both actions synchronised in the immediate post-anti-partition agitation (1905-1911) era of Bengal. The elite and intelligentsia in general, and of Bengal in particular, have strangely overlooked the misdeeds and grave socio-political implications of these actions. These sordid episodes have been swept under the carpet lest it became embarrassing public knowledge.

Vidyasagar Opposed Education on Comprehensive Scale beyond Higher Classes

The Charles Woods Despatch, 1854 is considered on all hands as the Magna Carta of Indian education. It adopted a new policy towards 'mass education'. Hitherto the official focus was on the upper classes of population for education, euphemistically called the 'Down Filtration Theory'. In 1859, the government's education policy reiterated: "The spread of vernacular elementary instruction among the lower orders."¹¹ Upon this Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar addressed a letter on September 29, 1859 to John Peter Grant, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, underlining his perception:

An impression appears to have gained ground, both here and in England, that enough has been done for the education of the higher classes and that attention should now be directed towards the education of the masses... An enquiry into the matter will, however, show a very different state of things. As the best, if not the only practicable means of promoting education in Bengal, the Government should, in my humble opinion, confine itself to the education of the higher classes on a comprehensive scale.¹²

The words "higher classes" does not or should not construe in Bengali parlance anything but caste which ipso facto bestows or forfeits privilege of education on a person, as the case may be, by birth. The same renowned scholar earlier in 1854 had scoffed at the representation of the wealthy goldsmith caste of Bengal for admission in the Sanskrit College, Calcutta.¹³ His argument to deny their prayer was simple: he wrote that "in the scale of castes, the class (goldsmith or Subarnabanik) stands very low".

Since ancient times, there has been no advocate of education for the socially disadvantaged in India. Sympathy, if any, has been showered selectively on higher education as we have seen in the case of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea. We have also seen how the

prospect of higher education for the underprivileged provoked the ire of Bengali educationists and intellectual classes. No person in high position, irrespective of political persuasion or ideological affiliation, has ever been sincere in promoting education. We have not heard from any person of eminence to declare: "It is not at the summit of our educational system that improvement is most urgently required but at the base."¹⁴ Nor have we ever been warned by men in authority like Prof Rushbrook Williams, who observed:

It must be plain that until the proportion of literates can be raised, the masses of India will remain poor, helpless and prey to political dangers too serious to be contemplated with equanimity. ¹⁵

Social Superiority Education-centric

The census of 2001 revealed that India's literacy stood at 65 per cent. The definition of literacy has not overcome the colonial yardstick yet: ability to read and write small sentences is still considered as the objective of the Indian literacy drive. But why has the planned economic development failed to accord education its primacy in priority for the masses? It is not an oversight or accident but a calculated design to keep vast sections in the eternal abyss of ignorance, deprivation and segregation. The history of Indian education does not suggest a carefully designed roadmap for educational reform and development. An American researcher of repute, Prof Mayron Weiner of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has highlighted the aspiration of the dominant Indian society.

Education in India is regarded as a form of social superiority. Those who are educated dress and speak differently than those who are not educated. Those who are educated have power over those who are not. The educated can give commands to and shout at the uneducated and can expect deference and obedience.¹⁶

The most liberal, enlightened Indian does not want to forgo the advantages of the social superiority bestowed by birth. So they do not drive education in the direction its reform merits. The education that is being imparted across the country for the lower strata starkly lacks quality. The reforms in education face opposition from the mandarins of education themselves. They do not want such reforms in education that the men who work with hands would start working with brains. That would bring down the age-old distinction between men who work with brains and those who work with hands. They are afraid of this undesirable implication of the educational reforms, if any. The aforementioned MIT researcher found this out after prolonged interactions with a cross-section of



Indians including the officials in the Ministry of Human Resources in Delhi.

Can Election Commission of India Step In?

Education endows a man knowledge, which is power capable of equipping him with skills, tools and techniques, unknown to him or his forefathers. Education showers wisdom. An enlightened man has vision that opens up multiple avenues before him for prosperity and happiness. A visionary man sets up a mission for himself and the people. A man bereft of education is worse than an animal. India occupies almost the lowest rank in the human development scale by international reckoning. The illiteracy of the masses contributes maximum to India occupying that embarrassingly low position. The claim of 65 per cent literacy is not above genuine suspicion. In truth the actual level of education is far less than projected. A cursory visit to villages even within 30 miles of the national Capital would unfailingly convince any impartial man about the futility of the claim that the percentage of India's literacy is 65.

Elections to Parliament have come to a close. Before the end of the polls one wondered if the Election Commission of India could issue a commandment to political parties to accord the highest priority for quality universal education for the masses in their manifestos. The fundamental objective of a democratic polity is all-round uplift and actualisation of the aspirations for the happy and contented life of every citizen, irrespective of race, religion, caste, sex and place of birth. Illiteracy of a citizen denies him the fundamental right to life with dignity, happiness and freedom. Elimination of illiteracy is, therefore, the most urgent agenda of immense public importance for the nation. So a direction by the Election Commission to political parties contesting polls to incorporate universal compulsory quality primary education as the highest agenda in their manifestos would have gone a long way to combat the evil of illiteracy. Else the political parties have discovered goldmines in illiteracy among the masses. The illiterate and ignorant voters do not complain, nor do they pose questions to their elected representatives on issues seriously affecting them. Neither do they hold MPs, MLAs or MLCs accountable for failure to ameliorate their life and living. They deceive and cheat them with impunity. Look how a Chief Minister, otherwise known as suave and cultured, camouflaged his party's deceit on education as the official policy: "To us communism means land reforms, agricultural growth, industrial development and cultural progress."¹⁷ He was candid. Even out of pretension, education for the masses is not incorporated as an instrument of growth and development, though that is the solitary key for advancement of man. It is unnerving to

imagine that a cadre-based party with deep penetration among masses excludes universalisation of primary education as an ideological strategy for growth and development. It may be a tragedy but its ideology does not favour or encourage the masses getting education any more than literacy!!!¹⁸ Rushbrook Williams had correctly foreseen this danger nine decades ago. The illiterate masses have fallen "prey to political dangers". Illiteracy, left to ongoing political processes, will be perpetuated. India is in a deep trap.

Educational destitution forms the darkest chapter of Indian history. Alas! this chapter cannot be attributed to the enemies of India. We have per-force to point our fingers for this at our countrymen, hailed as noble, celebrated and dedicated. When will India come out of the blighting shadows and pernicious influences of the past legacy and present political trap?

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12. A. K. Biswas, "A Nation of Slow Learners", The Telegraph, Kolkata, December 23, 1993.
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14. Lord Ripon, op. cit.
15. Rushbrook Williams, India in 1919.
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18. This does not seem new or unfamiliar in the ideology-driven party of the masses. In the post-Bolshevik revolution era, the Soviet Union's police had resorted to brutal action against students. The great Russian novelist Maxim Gorky strongly condemned the action of the authorities. In September 1919, Lenin wrote in reply tersely to Gorky: "In general, as you probably know, I am not particularly fond of intelligentsia, and our new slogan 'eliminate illiteracy' should by no means be taken as expressing a wish to give birth to a new intelligentsia. To 'eliminate illiteracy' is necessary only so that every peasant, every worker can read our decrees, orders and appeals by himself without anyone's help. The goal is purely practical. That's all there is to it." Quoted by D. N. Ghosh, in an article captioned "A God that is failing" in The Times of India, Kolkata, December 6, 2007.

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NEWS

Australian University, IGNOU to train Indian primary teachers

An Australian university Tuesday joined hands with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) here to train elementary teachers in rural India and to help the country attain universal primary education.

The teachers training programme will be conducted through IGNOU centres across the country, authorities of the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) said.

Speaking on the programme launch here, Australian Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard said: "This joint collaboration between IGNOU, the world's biggest university, and QUT will help India attain its goal of universal primary education. It will transform primary school classrooms across the country, as the focus will shift from teaching to learning."

QUT deputy vice chancellor Arun Sharma added: "We have developed the curricula for the diploma programme on teachers training. Initially we will start our work from Bihar."

Sharma, who hails from Bihar, said while India will benefit from the programme, Australia too would learn new things that can be implemented back home.

IGNOU Vice Chancellor V.N. Rajsekharan Pillai said: "There is an urgent need for two million new teachers in the country. A big gap exists between the demand and supply for quality teachers. This collaboration would help the cause."

K.R. Srivathsan, the pro-vice chancellor of IGNOU, said that the university would set up small hubs in rural India, from where primary school teachers can be trained on new skills. "Rural community centres will prove to be of great help for this."

IGNOU Director of School Education M.L. Koul said the use of information and communication technology would be key to the success of this programme.

"Many of our elementary teachers are not trained. But to impart quality education, we need to upgrade their skill set. The new pedagogy methods will be taught through this programme," he said.

Both universities also signed agreements for two more courses - the Dual Doctoral Programme for Research and Teaching Assistantships and an online programme in Master of Intellectual Property Law (MIPL).

Source: New Delhi blog.taragana.com/ 1 September 2009

DU launches personality development course

Today, in a competitive job scenario, soft skills are becoming as important as academic qualifications. In order to address this concern, Delhi University (DU) recently launched a personality development course. Following a pilot project that was launched by the



university's Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILLL) last year, the institute has now decided to start two batches — of 40 students each.

The three-month course will be offering 75 hours of training to participants on various aspects related to one's personality. The university is charging Rs 2,500 for the course. The pilot project, last year, was meant only for DU students. However, this year, many non-DU students too had applied for the course and the university decided to keep it open for all.

Sumit Kumar, an engineering student from Krukhshetra University, is one of the participants. He said, "I think it is important to be confident and have leadership qualities. This course will help me develop those skills." According to Hemant Kumar, a student of School of Open Learning, the course will help him build a bonding and a network with fellow students and give him an opportunity to interact, thus developing his confidence.

Besides students, parents too are keen on sending their children for such courses, informed AK Bakhshi, director, ILLL. The institute also runs a course in English language teaching in a number of DU colleges. Bakhshi informed that the personality development course, too, will be started in various colleges. He added that many students withdrew this year because North Campus was inconvenient for them in terms of distance.

The course content includes topics such as understanding self and others, psychological assessment, communication, motivation, stress and time management, group discussion and interview, conflict management, leadership and holistic wellness.

Deepak Pental, vice-chancellor, DU, said, "Society is getting more and more complex. There is a difference in the way we travel, interact or work. Hence, it is important for all of us to know how to operate within these complex structures." While advising ILLL to include this aspect in the course, he added that a person should know how to run an organisation, institute or a department as well as learn to blend theory and practice.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/7](#) September 2009

Engineering graduates keeping all job options open

After bagging lucrative jobs in the IT and software fields just after stepping out of college, during the boom years, many students especially engineering graduates are now exploring other options including higher studies abroad this year.

While the US economy is in the midst of a recession that hasn't really deterred the spirits of students, as the programmes in many universities in the country are rated high. "Many graduates are now looking from a long-term angle. They are exploring subjects including specialised disciplines that meet their career options," contends C Vijayalakshmi of United States-India Educational Foundation (USEFI).

Mala Srinivasan, director (Delhi operation), Indo American Professional Education Network (IAPEN), which provides coaching for students who want to go abroad says there is a growth in new emerging fields for study after the meltdown. Thus, students are exploring post-graduate options in emerging fields such as biotechnology, bioinformatics and cloud computing to name a few.

Around 50,000 students from India appear for the GRE (Graduate Record Examination) every year. This exam is a pre-requisite for gaining admission into postgraduate engineering programmes in the US.

"Many US universities continue to offer excellent masters and doctoral programmes and that is one main draw that lures students abroad," says Anand Kannan, managing director, GreEdge.com that provides online coaching to crack the exam.

As per Open Doors 2008, published annually by the Institute of International Education (IIE) states that total foreign enrolment increased by 7% to touch a record high of 6,23,805 in 2007-08. Enrolments from India were up by 13% in 2007-08 to 94,563 students. Also, Asia remains the region sending most students to the United States, with a 10% increase this year.

While many US universities have seen a slump in their value of endowments in wake of the slowdown, grants from corporations for scholarship, research and equipment, is also expected to see a dip this year on account of the slowdown. This in turn would mean fewer scholarships and aid this year.

As per the Open Doors report, nearly 62% of all international students receive majority of their funds from family and personal loans. This segment ends up contributing over \$15.5 billion to the US economy through tuition and other living expenses.

Source: Chennai [/timesofindia/7](#) September 2009

Extended primary education to be free

The National Education Policy Formulation Committee has suggested extension of free primary education up to class VIII and secondary education up to class XII.

The committee yesterday submitted its final report on National Education Policy 2009 seeking to educate all



irrespective of their religion, gender, socio-economic condition and geographical location.

Even indigenous people and physically disabled children will be brought under the programme, the new education policy said.

The policy also recommends modernisation of Madrasa education, uniform curriculum in primary and secondary levels for students of all mediums and formation of a permanent education commission.

The committee Chairman National Professor Kabir Chowdhury and Co-chairman Dr Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad submitted the report to the education minister at around 12:00 noon at the secretariat.

After receiving the copy of the policy, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the government would start implementation of the new national education policy from December.

Seven education commissions and committees have been formed since independence but not a single recommendation of them has been implemented because of lack of political will.

The Awami League-led alliance government formed a 16-member committee on April 6 to review the report of Shamsul Haque Education Committee of 1997 to formulate a modern national education policy in line with the report of Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission of 1974.

The committee submitted the policy within four months from its first meeting.

The policy recommends introducing one-year pre-primary education for over five-year-old children.

It also recommends arrangement for textbooks and teachers for indigenous children so that they can learn in their own language.

Primary education (up to Class VIII) will be made free, universal and compulsory. Students of all mediums in primary level will have to study several compulsory subjects, the committee suggests.

The compulsory subjects are Bangla, English, Mathematics, Bangladesh Studies, Paribesh Parichiti (social environment and climatic change), Information Technology and Science. Besides, all students must study their own religions and receive moral education.

Pre-vocational education will be made mandatory for all students from class VI to class VIII, the policy recommends, adding that scholarships would be given from class V to VIII on the basis of final examination results.

The new policy also recommends that secondary education level would be from class IX to XII. Uniform

curriculum and syllabus in several subjects will be followed in all mediums including madrasa.

It says an examination will be held at the end of class X at upazila or pourashava or thana level on similar question papers and scholarship will be given on the basis of results.

About higher education, the committee advised the government to turn all three-year degree courses into four-year honours courses in phases.

Four-year honours courses will be considered as a terminal degree and a student having the course can be entitled to all professions except for teaching.

It recommended formation of a Non-government Teacher Commission for the non-government educational institutions for teachers training and selection.

The committee proposed decentralisation of the National University with centres in all divisions. The centres will later turn into affiliating universities for the respective areas in phases.

It stresses vocational and technical education and recommended establishing a technical institution in every upazila and increasing the number of polytechnic, textile and leather institutes to expand technical education.

According to the new education scheme, madrasa education will be modernised by including information technology and science.

"We would review the policy in the ministry and then send it to the prime minister. After that it would be placed in the cabinet," the education minister said.

He hoped they would implement the policy within the tenure of this government.

Committee Chairman Kabir Chowdhury said they had formulated the policy after taking opinions from all sections of people.

Dr Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said, "We have been able to reach a consensus because of our identical attitudes and objectives. We will put forward our proposals if any quarter proposes amendments to it."

While talking to The Daily Star he said, "We want to ensure education for all and even we would like to bring disadvantaged sections of people under the scheme of education."

The committee members were present yesterday during the submission of the report.

Source: [/thedailystar.net/3](http://thedailystar.net/3) September 2009

Grades for CBSE Class X exams this year

The grading system for class X examination will come into effect right away and will be in place for the 2010



CBSE board exams. A formal announcement of this just a few days away as the proposal for the option found general approval at the high-powered Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) meeting here on Monday.

Another of HRD minister Kapil Sibal's idea of having a core curriculum in science and mathematics at secondary and higher secondary levels across all education boards also received full support. But the timeline for doing it has not been worked out.

The class X option of a grading system instead of the board exams would be available only for students who will continue in the same school in class XI. Instead of board examination, stress will be placed on comprehensive and continuous evaluation system so that education standards do not suffer.

CABE fully endorsed the need for reforms at all levels of education and, barring Uttar Pradesh that said some barrier was needed at the class X level to ensure quality, the other states welcomed the move on the ground that there is a need to reduce examination stress but did not quite commit as to when will they follow suit in state examination boards.

Calling it a "historic" meeting of the CABE in which state after state lauded the Centre for legislating the Right to Education law, Sibal said there was general support on 14 issues including all the big legislations being planned by the ministry. He also announced that in order to depoliticise appointment of vice-chancellors in central universities a collegium of eminent educationists and Nobel laureates would be set up to suggest names.

As for consensus, it must be pointed out that despite repeated request by Sibal to state ministers to speak on reforms being proposed by the Centre, ministers mostly raised trivial bilateral issues. Only ministers from West Bengal, Orissa, Kerala and Meghalaya spoke on the reforms being proposed by the Centre.

Therefore, when Sibal read out issues on which there was consensus, the ministers said nothing. An objection by the West Bengal minister about accreditation of colleges has been noted in the CABE resolution. Educationist Vinod Raina's intervention that a CABE committee be formed to look into the policy for IT in schools was included in the resolution.

CABE approved ministry's proposal for an autonomous overarching authority for higher education and research. A task force constituted to follow up on the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research would consult states. The advisory panel also endorsed the need for a law to prevent, prohibit and punish malpractices in higher education. The proposal for brain gain policy was also

approved and so was the policy on educational tribunals.

CABE endorsed the proposal to establish a Central Madarsa Board but felt there should be a greater representation of academics, especially women, and should ensure that the Board would be overseen by non-theological education

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)1 September 2009

IGNOU portal for teacher training

With a view to enrich teacher-training programmes, which include diploma and certificate in primary education, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (Ignou) is developing a portal ([depssa.ignou.ac.in/wiki](#)). Talking about the relevance of the portal to be launched soon, KR Srivathsan, pro vice-chancellor, Ignou, says, "Today, there is an increasing emphasis to streamline teaching methodology to suit the learning requirements of individual learners.

Moreover, there is an overriding concern for teaching to be interactive and aid students in terms of correlation and self-reflection. This portal will enable teachers to upload multimedia publishing content and, hence, will serve as a valuable repository of teaching ideas. It will also help in engaging teachers in a democratic process of developing innovative teaching methodologies as fresh pedagogical structures can be deliberated and explored."

Srivathsan states that while there is a profusion of online content in terms of teacher training, there is no portal that helps in structuring that content into effective training modules.

"This is where the portal will be refreshingly different. A panel of experts will help in identifying relevant content and converting it into teaching modules for specific subjects," he states. Srivathsan adds that while experimentation in terms of teaching methodology is needed there has to be consistency in terms of availability of training materials and literature to ensure that teachers across the country conform to certain standards. "This is a critical need that our portal envisages to achieve," he observes.

The portal will also include an open course guide. "An objective of this portal is to make it resonate with the needs and aspirations of teachers in semi-urban and rural areas. Hence, the content will be translated into multiple languages," shares Srivathsan. "It will also be linked to community radio stations and other local media platforms," he sums up.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)7 September 2009



Imperial keen to set 'foot' in India

Established in 1907, Imperial College London is known for its research excellence. The Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings 2008 ranked it third in Europe and sixth in the world. Imperial attributes its success to its international demography. "Our criteria for selecting staff and students is excellence; irrespective of culture, country or religion. Around 40% of the staff and 45% of the student population is from overseas," says Roy Anderson, rector, Imperial College London.

However, he feels that with more students wanting an international education it is not enough for world-class institutes to attract students only to one campus. Imperial College London, too, he says, is devising a new international policy, under which the college wants to set its "footprints" in four regions — India, Singapore, China and the Gulf region.

Anderson was in India to explore the possibility of establishing a tie-up. Imperial College's relation with India is, however, not new. "Indian students have been part of Imperial College since the beginning. Over the years, we have had distinguished Indian students including Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India," he says. Currently the college has 250 Indian students in various disciplines such as engineering, medicine and business studies. Apart from this, the college's association with India has been in terms of research. It helped set up IIT-Delhi in the '60s. The Grantham Institute for Climate Change has partnered with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore. "We have also signed an agreement with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) for joint collaborative research in the field of civil nuclear energy and power," he informs.

But now, the college wants to explore new tie-ups. "Many less-distinguished international colleges have been setting their campuses in different countries. World-class institutes have been slow in that aspect. They feel that it will dilute the quality. However, I do not see why world-class institutes such as us cannot have an international presence. They can do it either by joint degree programmes or by having physical footprints in other countries like an MNC," he adds.

"At the moment it would not be possible to establish joint degree programmes with Indian universities because they lack a research environment," he says. According to him, Indian universities are known for their world-class teaching but they are not research-intensive. And it is on research that the Indian government has to invest. He says, "India has world-class research facilities either within industry or government institutes. But, it is important to note that

over 90% of the world's basic discoveries come from universities."

Anderson, who is also a professor of infectious disease epidemiology, delivered a lecture on 'Focus of global research institutes with emphasis on H1N1' as part of the Chevening lecture series. Indian institutes, he says, have great opportunities to do research on health and medicine.

Source: timesofindia/7 September 2009

MCI opposes 'single umbrella' formula

The Medical Council of India (MCI) has slammed the Yash Pal Committee's recommendation to subsume regulatory bodies such as itself into an all-encompassing National Commission for Higher Education And Research (NCHER).

In its comments on the report of the Yash Pal panel - formally known as the Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education - MCI has stated, "the Council is not in favour of creation of NCHER to replace the existing regulatory bodies." MCI has raised several objections to the observations of the Yash Pal Committee report, but there are three main arguments.

Firstly, on the observation that multiple regulatory bodies have fragmented higher education, MCI says that the panel is erroneous in its assumption and that "this is a modality for specific focusing of attention on specialised areas like medical education." MCI says that since it is the sole regulatory body, fragmentation is unlikely to arise.

Secondly, MCI claims that a distinction has to be made in respect of medical education as it is connected to the treatment of patients.

This was in response to the Yash Pal panel's claim that all of higher education has to be treated as an integrated whole.

The MCI says that treatment of patients cannot be delinked from medical services being provided by the affiliated teaching hospital, which will not be the case with other higher areas of education.

Thirdly, MCI questions the utility of bringing distinct professional fields within the ambit of a single higher education authority. "As professional education of all fields is distinct in each case, no useful purpose can be served by bringing all these different fields within the ambit of a single higher education authority." It points out that such an authority will have to deal with different facets of professional education through separate divisions.

Academic functions

MCI also strongly opposes the Yash Pal panel's recommendation of divesting academic functions from regulatory bodies, and leaving it to universities, with councils qualifying tests for professionals in their respective fields. MCI points out that as far as professional courses such as MBBS are concerned, education and practice are inter-dependent, and therefore cannot be segregated.

It also says that currently, only the broad framework of the curricula was prescribed by MCI, and universities were left to implement and augment them.

Source: Bangalore [/expressbuzz/](http://expressbuzz/) 1 September 2009

Oz education minister moots better ties

Julia Gillard, Australia's deputy Prime Minister, announced the launch of the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding, located at the University of South Australia.

The Centre is dedicated to research that seeks to define, understand and transcend the divide between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures and has already attracted \$10 million (Rs 40 crore) in funding support from the Australian government and the South Australian state government.

This was among a host of initiatives announced by the Australian leader during her recent visit to India. Gillard is also the minister for education, minister for employment and workplace relations and minister for social inclusion.

Gillard announced a funding of \$8.106 million (Rs 32 crore) to support the Australia-India Institute. The University of Melbourne and its university partners in Australia, the University of New South Wales and La Trobe University, will invest another Rs 8 crore in the institute, bringing the total investment in the project to more than Rs 40 crore over the next three years.

The institute will work closely with the Australia-India Business Council to support mutual trade and investment. It will also provide consultancies on issues of national priority, and host international conferences, community engagement and cultural dialogues.

She also launched a diploma on primary education at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (Ignou). Developed by Ignou and Australia's Queensland University of Technology, the diploma programme will provide an understanding of the primary school curriculum and skills required to implement it effectively. "This will potentially benefit hundreds of thousands of primary school teachers in India," she said.

On the alleged racist attacks on Indian students in Australia, she said, "Our government has very clearly said that it has got zero tolerance for any form of violence against Indian students or against anyone else in Australia and we pride ourselves as a multi-cultural nation." She said that the state governments in her country have "geared up with police crackdowns. There are now more police visible on the streets patrolling those areas where there have been problems."

Source: [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/) 7 September 2009

Partnering to promote science education

In an effort to strengthen science education in the country, an inter-institutional collaborative project, 'Enrichment of Resource Material for Science Education,' was recently launched in the Capital. The project attempts to reconceptualise science resource material and focus on the potential and scope of 'science kits' to popularise the subject. These low cost portable science kits vary depending on level, theme or even needs.

The project has been jointly undertaken by the National Council of Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), Ministry of Science and Technology; Unesco, Central Institute of Education (CIE), Delhi University; and Society for Education and Social Development (SESD). The project also has an active involvement of experts from the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE) Mumbai, Delhi University Centre for Science Education and Communication, Institute for Life Long Learning (ILL) Delhi University, Jamia Millia Islamia University, colleges of Delhi University, IP University, Ignou, DIETS, schools of Delhi, among others.

While announcing the launch of the project, Warren Mellor, director, Unesco, said that the outcomes of the project would have an impact not only at a national level but in other countries as well. On teacher education, Mohd Akhtar Siddiqui, chairperson, National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), emphasised that it's the teachers who make all the difference in making a subject interesting and not textbooks or curriculum, hence, they need to be empowered. "This project would validate the science resources and also popularise them across the country," he added.

The focus of the project would be to pedagogically evaluate the sampled science kits from sources like department of science and technology (DST), HBCSE, NCERT and to enrich them further. The kits would be accompanied by manuals/handbooks and ICT backup so that it can be further disseminated. These packages

would be tried out with teacher educators, teachers and students in schools of Delhi, to begin with, and with community based organisations.

Elaborating further, US Sharma, general secretary, Society for Education and Social Development, said: "The project will be completed in two phases and we also plan to take it to an international level."

On the need for such an initiative, AK Bakhshi, director, ILLI, said: "The problem with the current education system is that we are producing rote-learners since we are not encouraging children to think out-of-the-box. Students do laboratory work without understanding the logic behind it. This needs to be addressed. We emphasise ICT in learning because classroom teaching is still confined to the chalk and talk method, which has its limitations. Thus, we need to inculcate creativity in students and our strategies need to be focused, only then can we nurture the scientific temper in students."

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia.com)7 September 2009

PhDs need no longer clear NET/SET

Pune Colleges affiliated to the University of Pune (UoP) will now be able to fill in around 1,000 posts of associate professors (lecturers) lying vacant for a long time. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has said respective universities will decide whether the PhD degrees of candidates aspiring for the job are at par with the National Eligibility Test (NET)/ State Eligibility Test (SET). So clearing NET/ SET will not be compulsory for taking up the teaching job.

The UGC has come up with the new guideline for M Phil and PhD degrees to ensure strict benchmarking for doctoral research. The UGC had initially decided that it would on its own check whether the PhD holders aspiring for teachers' job were competent. It has already initiated the process but as the process is likely to take time, it will allow the respective universities to take a call.

The recruitment procedure of various colleges affiliated to the UoP was on hold as there was no decision on treating PhD degrees of the UoP at par with NET/SET. "Those suffering due to the delay are the students. We hope the situation will change," said Gajanan Ekbote, senior member of the UoP senate.

A letter sent to the vice-chancellors of the central, state and deemed universities by UGC joint secretary K C Pathak said, "The filling up of various vacant positions of assistant professor or equivalent positions in various universities, colleges and institutions, the Commission has decided, as an ad-hoc measure, to leave it to the concerned universities, colleges and institutions to decide as to whether the degree of PhD awarded to various candidates is in

compliance to the provisions of UGC regulations, so as to exempt them from the requirement of minimum eligibility condition of NET/SET."

However, the UoP has not received the letter. UoP acting Vice-Chancellor Arun Adsool said the PhD of UoP was at par with the NET/SET

Source: Pune [/expressindia.com/](http://expressindia.com)5 September 2009

Prime Minister launches "SAAKSHAR BHARAT"

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh launched, here today, SAAKSHAR BHARAT, one of the major new initiatives that form part of the Government's agenda for the next 5 years as announced by the President in her address to the joint session of the Parliament. This programme will strive to create a Literate Society through a variety of teaching learning programmes for non-literate and neo-literate of 15 years and above.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that the launch of this mission reaffirms our national commitment to literacy. He said, "I would like to repeat today what I have stated many times before. Our government is committed to providing good quality education to each and every child in our country. Resources will not be a constraint in the quest of achieving this goal. Today, as a result of our efforts in the last 5 years, elementary education is now within the reach of all children in our country. We have increased enrolment and significantly reduced dropouts' rate. This has helped us check further accretion to the population of illiterates. But we need to do much more to reduce and ultimately eliminate illiteracy among the adult population. We need to renew the efforts of the 1980s and the 1990s when we were able to make a significant dent in the problem of illiteracy."

The Prime Minister underlined the importance of literacy, especially female literacy. He said, "Our Government has started a number of progressive programmes and legislations for the empowerment and welfare of the common person, the aam aadmi. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the Right to Information Act, the Rural Health Mission, the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and the National Mid-day Meal Programme are all efforts in that direction. Literacy is central to the success of all these programmes and initiatives. Female literacy is especially so. Female literacy is a force multiplier for all action for social development. This is self-evident and does not require any elaboration. In fact, many observers have seen infrastructure development in the economic sector and female literacy in the social sector as two very critical factors that impede India's



steady climb to a higher and sustainable level of growth and development. Female literacy is also absolutely necessary to empower the Indian woman in her every day struggle in dealing with multiple deprivations on the basis of class, caste and gender.”

The Prime Minister expressed the sincere hope that the Saakshar Bharat Mission will fully involve the local community in its implementation, and utilize the potential and promise of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the women’s Self Help Groups. Expressing his happiness that the implementation of this programme has been entrusted to the Gram Panchayats, he said he would also expect the mission to make use of innovative strategies and technology to impart sustainable literacy to millions of non-literates in a reasonable period.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal said that the Panchayati Raj institutions would be the fulcrum of the adult literacy programme. He stated that the programme activities will be planned and implemented by the community and Panchayats at the grassroots level and all management and supervisory structures, right from the national up to the village level will be instituted accordingly. Adequate representation of women in these structures, especially in decision-making roles will be ensured, he added.

Shri Sibal stated that a web based Management Information System (MIS) will be put in place for real time monitoring of this Mission, which would be critical for optimizing its outreach and impact. He said, “Each individual learner will be digitally tagged and tracked for his/her progress in learning. Gram Panchayats will be made responsible for furnishing data at the block levels, where it will be entered on the central MIS system. Thereafter the data will be in public domain. This will ensure transparency and accountability.”

The HRD Minister stated that the ministry was working on an innovative model of Just-in-Time online release of funds up to the last level as well as real time book keeping and accounting that will continuously remain in the public gaze. We are hopeful that this model will become a national benchmark, he added.

Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for Human Resource Development in her welcome address appealed to all women’s organizations and NGOs to participate with the government in making this fresh mission a success.

The Saakshar Bharat Mission has 70 million targeted beneficiaries, of which 60 Million will be women and nearly 50% of the target group will comprise of

SCs/STs and minorities. Since illiteracy is far more widespread in rural areas, as compared to urban areas, the programme will concentrate on rural areas, especially in the districts that have low (50% and below) female literacy rate. Nearly 1.70 lakh Gram Panchayats in 365 districts will be covered. Residual illiteracy in urban areas will be addressed through innovative partnership with NGOs, private sector convergence etc. The total estimated cost of the Mission is Rs. 6502.70 crore of which 4993.02 crore would be central shared. The sharing between the Centre and the State would be 75:25 except for the Northeast where it will be 90:10.

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

Problems galore with higher education

The fee structure in state universities has not been changed since 1995 and government’s grant has not increased since 1998, resulting in financial crisis.

The teacher-taught ratio is 1:120 against the ideal 1:60. besides, due to the old syllabi, there is no employability after courses. Self-finance courses have high fees but are poor in quality. Enrolment in higher education in UP is less than 8% against country’s 10%. Only 25 universities/colleges out of around 500 have NAAC accreditation. Instead of calling a conference of vice-chancellors of all the universities -- general, technical, medical, law and agriculture -- on a single day, vice-chancellors felt that separate meetings should have been held as each university has different problem.

"If Lucknow University, Gorakhpur University and Kashi Vidya Peeth are reeling under fund crunch, universities in Jaunpur, Meerut, Jhansi etc have quality concern. And, if for the technical university large number of affiliated colleges are a problem, for medical university private practice by regular teachers is a bigger issue," they said. The governor/chancellor has called a separate conference of vice-chancellors on September 10 to find out the problems of state universities.

Source: Lucknow [/timesofindia](http://timesofindia)/5 September 2009

Proposed national edu body gets PM's support

The HRD Ministry’s plan for setting up a commission that will replace existing regulatory bodies like UGC and AICTE is understood to have support from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The Ministry made a presentation before the Prime Minister on August 28 with regard to the proposal for starting National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER).



The presentation was made by Higher Education Secretary R P Agrawal in the presence of HRD Minister Kapil Sibal.

Officials said the Prime Minister was inclined to the proposal and even suggested setting up of a task force to see how to go about it. The task force will also coordinate between states and other wings of the government on the issue.

As per the proposal, the NCHER will subsume the existing regulatory bodies like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Distance Education Council (DEC) and National Council for Teachers' Education (NCTE).

The concept of NCHER was recommended by the government-appointed committee on 'Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education', headed by Prof Yashpal.

As per the proposal, the NCHER will act as the apex regulatory body in the field of higher education in India and create enabling environment for universities to become self-regulatory bodies.

It will be the premier advisory body to the Central and state governments on policy issues on higher education. The proposed body will prepare and present a report on the state of higher education in India every year to Parliament.

Yashpal committee has suggested that the proposed body will serve as a think tank on higher education policy in the country and provide a vision on higher education to be reflected in the curriculum framework, set benchmarks for universities and compare institutions globally.

The proposed commission would create norms, processes and structures for ensuring quality and accreditation of universities. It will establish transparent norms for entry and exit of institutions.

The proposed NCHER will develop mechanism for funding for universities and other institutions. It will provide the mechanism for national database on higher education.

Besides, the commission will create an environment in academic institutions that will encourage young people to take up academia as a career.

The Central Advisory Board of Education, the apex advisory body on education in the country, has already approved the proposal for setting up of the NCHER. The HRD Ministry has prepared a draft bill on it.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)6 September 2009

Pvt. engineering colleges fail to disclose info on facilities, faculty

Several self-financing engineering colleges, in Tamil Nadu continue to demonstrate lack of transparency about their academic and administrative set-up despite the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) mandating them to make public certain critical aspects of their functioning.

The AICTE has made it mandatory for engineering colleges to disclose updated information relating to the management, teachers, students and fee structure as on August 31 every year. This mandatory disclosure has to be displayed not just on the website of the college concerned but also on the website of its affiliating university.

However, a perusal of the websites of self-financing engineering colleges reveals that colleges either have completely ignored this mandate of the apex regulatory body for technical education or have subverted the mandate by making only partial and vague declarations about the institution.

Only a miniscule section of the engineering colleges has declared the mandatory disclosures in a professional manner. The Anna University (Coimbatore) has hosted mandatory disclosures of some of its affiliated engineering colleges on its website.

As per AICTE guidelines, the colleges must provide details of the courses offered by them, the year in which the courses were instituted, whether the course is being offered full-time or part-time or under self-financing mode, the annual fees for each course and the basis on which students were admitted. The colleges must declare if admission is based on merit, if so, whether it is done on the basis of a national level test, state level test or university / college level test.

The colleges are also bound to disclose the number of students admitted in each course, the composition of the students native candidates, other State students and non-resident Indians and their performance in the final examination with break-up of the number of students who appeared for the examination and the number of students who had passed.

In addition to these, the management has to provide the complete profile of teaching faculty members including the year of joining, designation, qualification and number of research papers published by them in local, national and international journals and presentations made in conferences.

Besides, the college has to elaborately explain the infrastructural facilities on the campus.

The purpose behind the mandatory disclosure was to help students and parents make an informed choice while joining engineering colleges. However, many



colleges have failed to provide the details on their websites.

When asked about this, Anna University (Chennai) vice chancellor P Mannar Jawhar said "I will issue a circular to all affiliated colleges to adhere to the AICTE guidelines immediately."

Source: Chennai [/timesofindia/4](#) September 2009

Soon, foreign faculty to teach at IITs

HRD minister Kapil Sibal's meeting with IIT directors on Wednesday resolved the salary imbroglio that saw IIT faculty go on strike. A detailed presentation by the ministry -- showing that IIT faculty after revision got more than UGC scale and even DRDO scientists -- seems to have done the trick. The few unresolved issues, Sibal promised, would be immediately looked into.

Though a final decision has not been taken, there is a possibility that common counselling for AIEEE and JEE could be held for successful candidates of both entrance tests from 2010. However, a decision on merging IIT-JEE and AIEEE to become a common entrance test will be taken later.

The meeting, a sequel to Sibal's earlier meeting with IIT directors on June 30, discussed progress of new IITs. It also saw the minister assuring the directors that a special cell would be set up in the ministry to facilitate entry of foreign faculty in IITs. The meeting also discussed the need to create, subject to ministry's approval, an international pool of faculty for IITs. The matter will be discussed in a separate meeting of IIT directors.

To deal with faculty shortage, IIT directors have been told to double PhD intake and prepare a list of students who were awarded PhD degrees this year. The list may be exchanged with directors of other IITs who can consider them for appointment as faculty.

Told about the Bologna Accord, Sibal said India should also evolve its own model. Bologna Accord, specific to European Union, aims to create European higher education area by making academic degree standards and quality assurance standards comparable and compatible throughout Europe. Most of the EU countries are its members.

IIT directors were told about the white paper promised by them on research and development in IITs including details of publications in high impact journals, patents, and other educational details.

The ministry told IIT directors about the Supreme Court order that asked IITs and other educational institutions to help SC/ST students at each stage. IIT Delhi has already been asked to reconsider its

decision of expelling some students from this section on account of their poor academic performance.

As for new IITs, the meeting was told that PhD courses were started in IITs at Hyderabad and Patna. IIT Hyderabad has also started MTech courses in the current academic year. Conversion of IT, BHU into an IIT is also under consideration. Board of governors for new IITs is also under consideration.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/3](#) September 2009

Task force on education regulator set up

The process for replacing UGC, All India Council for Technical Education and National Council for Teacher Education by the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) and a national testing scheme on the lines of GRE for university admission has begun.

A task force, set up by the HRD ministry for the purpose, will also advise the government on the creation of 14 world class innovation universities. HRD ministry has already moved a concept note on the innovation universities and is seeking the views of stakeholders.

Parallel to the Bill being framed for the NCHER, the task force will oversee how the transition to the new regulatory body will take place.

The task force consists of IIT Madras director M Anandkrishnan, social scientist Mrinal Miri, Planning Commission member Sayeeda Hamid, scientist Govardhan Mehta and a member of the Planning Commission to be inducted later. Hamid was named as a member of the task force in her own capacity and not as member of Planning Commission.

The task force will advise the HRD ministry on how the interest of employees of the existing regulatory bodies can be protected and what the proposed NCHER should be like. The task force will also advise the government on the NCHER Bill. UGC employees have already begun protesting against the move to set up NCHER on the ground that the Yashpal Committee that recommended winding up of UGC did not consult them.

Another major issue before the task force will be to evolve the national testing scheme for college admission. To be based on the pattern of GRE, the test will be open to all the aspirants of university education. The test will be held more than once a year. Students would be permitted to send their best test score to the University of their Choice. The Yashpal Committee on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education proposed the national testing scheme.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/10](#) September 2009



UGC guidelines on PhD to be implemented later

The new guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC) to curb growing complaints against substandard doctoral degrees and research programmes are likely to take more time before being implemented in the universities.

The delay in implementing the new guidelines comes in wake of a recent letter of UGC, wherein it has allowed the universities to self-evaluate the quality of PhD degrees, albeit as an ad-hoc measure.

The UGC notified minimum qualifications for a PhD degree in institutions recently in a bid to tackle growing complaints against substandard doctoral degrees and research. It had observed that several institutions were allegedly running PhD programmes through distance education, allowing students to pick their research guides. The commission had said that it would evaluate the quality of doctoral programmes in various universities and prepare a list of institutions awarding PhD degrees, which meet the new standards.

Now, the latest order of UGC, (F.No. 1-1/2002 (PS) Pt file-III) signed by joint secretary KC Pathak mentions that since UGC is at present unable to identify candidates of various institutions, who have been awarded PhD degrees in compliance of the newly set standards, it is allowing individual universities to evaluate on their own the quality of PhD degrees of aspiring teachers.

In the new order sent to vice-chancellors, the UGC has informed the universities that the process of implementing the new guidelines is likely to take time. Hence, keeping in view the interest of candidates aspiring for various vacant positions of assistant professors in various institutions, the UGC has decided, as an ad-hoc measure, to leave it to the institutions concerned to decide as to whether the degree of PhD awarded to various candidates is in compliance of the provisions of UGC regulation, 2009.

Source: Allahabad [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/) 1 September 2009

UGC order on deemed universities stayed

The Madras High Court has stayed the operation of an order of the University Grant Commission (UGC) restraining the deemed to be universities from using the word 'University'.

Justice P Jyothimani granted the injunction on Tuesday while passing interim orders on a writ petition from Shanmuga Arts, Science Technology and Research Academy (SASTRA) in Thanjavur, challenging the order. The matter is posted for further hearing after eight weeks.

According to petitioner, following a direction from the Supreme Court, the Secretary, Higher Education, AICTE and the UGC formed a committee and decided to permit the deemed to be universities to use the word 'University', in 2006.

While so, a public interest writ petition was filed in the Delhi High Court, to restrain the deemed to be universities from using the word University. When notice was ordered on the petition, the Centre directed the UGC to withdraw the permission granted to the deemed to be universities to use the word 'University'.

Accordingly, the UGC issued letters informing the deemed to be universities about the withdrawal of the permission granted earlier in 2006 to use the word 'University'. Aggrieved, SASTRA filed a writ petition in the Madras High Court. The sudden withdrawal of permission would badly affect the reputation of the deemed to be universities, senior counsel G Rajagopal contended. The permission given once could not be withdrawn subsequently, he added.

Directive to MRF rival: The Madras High Court has directed the MRF United Workers Union and the MRF Arkonam Workers Welfare Union to establish the strength of their respective unions for acquiring recognition from the management of MRF Limited. The First Bench comprising Chief Justice HL Gokhale and Justice D Murugesan gave the direction while passing orders on a writ petition from the MRF United Workers Union.

Source: Chennai [/expressbuzz.com/](http://expressbuzz.com/) 9 September 2009

UK-India education exchange on fore

The British Council has arranged UK-India higher education exchange programme, through which two-way visits, inward and outward mission, would be arranged.

According to the university spokesperson, rector, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Prof BD Singh would be one of the five persons taking part in the inward mission. The other members are Dr RG Pardeshi, principal AF Fergusson College, Pune, Biju Abraham Narayamparambil of Rajagir School of Engineering and Technology, Kochi, MV Satyanarayan, director, PES Institute of Technology, Bangalore, and Rajib Chanda, director, NSHM, Kolkata. They would visit various institutions in the United Kingdom during September 6-12.

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for education opportunities and cultural relations. During this mission of higher education, BHU rector would visit University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, University of Bath, Wesser House, University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, University of

Exeter, Morthcote, University of Plymouth, Plymouth and other places. This visit would be the basis for outward mission in which higher education officials and academicians from UK would visit India at later stage.

Source: Varanasi [/timesofindia/4](http://timesofindia/4) September 2009

Vice-President gives away National Awards for Teachers-2008

Shri Kapil Sibal calls awardees teachers role models; asks teachers to upgrade skills

The Vice-President, Shri Hamid Ansari has felicitated the teachers selected for the 'National Awards for Teachers-2008'. While speaking at the awards ceremony, here today, he said that the teachers' life-long service has been recognized today. The Vice-President gave the awards to over 300 teachers, which, include Primary, and Secondary School Teachers nominated by various State Governments, teachers nominated by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), Central Tibetan School Administration (CTSA), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Novodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and Sainik Schools.

Shri Ansari said that the Right to Education Act passed by the Parliament last month is a historic step and probably more empowering, in terms of its impact, than the Right to Vote. But, he underlined that the time has now also come to assess whether formal enrolment has been translated into meaningful educational outcomes.

The Vice-President pointed out that today we have a situation in which, teachers are politically empowered and professionally disempowered which is a disservice to the cause of education. The need of the hour is to painstakingly rebuild the professional identity of our teachers, nurture their skills and professional competence through continuing education, he said. The society on its part needs to recognize their work and reward them appropriately, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal called upon teachers to upgrade their teaching skills, as teachers are the window through which children see the world. He said that the dedication, the motivation and the commitment of the teachers nurtures the young, who are the future of the country.

Shri Sibal saluted all teachers on the occasion. Congratulating the awardees, he said that he has the highest personal regard for them, adding that each of them is a true leader and a role model.

The HRD Minister underlined the need for rapid change in the education system. He said that the government's commitment towards this end could be recognized from the fact that the 11th five-year Plan sees a near 5-fold increase in the outlays for education, over the previous plan.

In her welcome address, Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for HRD said that India is one of the few countries in the world having set aside a day to honour teachers, which signifies the regard we have for our teachers. Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, in her address while congratulating the awardees, expressed the hope that they would continue their good work.

Source: New Delhi [/pib.nic.in/5](http://pib.nic.in/5) September 2009

Foreign university education in India to be cheaper

White skin or Oriental eyes aren't a common feature even in India's top educational institutions, the IITs and IIMs. However, the mixed campus could well become a reality when the international universities come to India—particularly because these schools aren't planning to price themselves out of the reach of locals.

As they have done in Singapore, most foreign varsities will bring down the price tag involved in getting a foreign degree, largely thanks to the lower cost of living and ancillary expenses in India. But, more interestingly, they will also have fees that match those charged by private institutes in India, HRD minister Kapil Sibal told this paper.

"A number of foreign universities, and I'm talking about quality institutions, have met me to express interest in establishing a campus in India," he said. And students can get a far more cheaply priced degree from, say, Harvard University or Imperial College, if they sign up from the India campus? "Exactly," concurred Sibal. "For years, thousands of our students have travelled abroad for higher education. Now, let's build India into a hub of top-class higher education to which the world comes."

In a complete turn-around of the government's stand on foreign universities, Sibal said that foreign institutes coming here would be considered on par with private unaided universities.

When asked if the government would control fees and push quotas, the minister rebutted, "When we don't control fees in private unaided institutes, why should we do so for foreign universities?"

However, the accreditation and assessment agency that will monitor the quality of Indian institutes will also rate the international universities. The Foreign Education Providers' Bill is likely to be presented in the



upcoming Parliament session in November, Sibal added.

University presidential delegations from Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Carnegie Mellon and Purdue have come to India in the past few years to learn more about and from the country. Last week, a team from Imperial College met Sibal and also visited Maharashtra. Several foreign universities keen on coming to India have already moved beyond the spadework—Georgia Tech has bought land in Hyderabad and the Schulich School of Business at York University is “committed” to setting up a campus in Mumbai. To mark its presence in the financial capital, this Canada-based management school is offering MBA programmes by partnering with the S P Jain Institute of Management and Research.

If all goes as planned, the world will be in the classroom called India by 2010.

Source: Mumbai [/timesofindia/](#)12 September 2009

UGC finds fault with proposed higher education commission

Three months after the Yashpal Committee gave its report and the government having already moved forward to create the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), UGC has said the panel's "recommendations do not appear to be in accordance with the thinking of the framers of our Constitution".

UGC has also said that the committee "missed the historic opportunity to undertake a comprehensive review of the higher education system and of the functioning of UGC which is overdue since the report of the education commission (1964-66)".

Asked for his comments, UGC chairman Sukhdeo Thorat, who was a member of the Yashpal Committee, said, "It is a confidential communication to the ministry. I have been advised not to talk."

UGC employees have been protesting against the creation of NCHER asking what will happen to them once the new body comes into being.

UGC's comments sent to HRD ministry late last week and accessed by TOI, not only finds fault with the way the committee dealt with its terms of reference but also the methodology adopted and the concept of NCHER and the powers proposed to be given to it. Agreeing that higher education needs reform, UGC says, "Creation of a single regulatory authority by subsuming the existing regulatory bodies, as suggested by the committee, does not appear to be the only viable alternative."

On the methodology, UGC points out that the full committee met only twice, "a period too short for any committee to document a full discourse on the evolving deliberations". UGC also said that the committee held consultations with a select group of stakeholders and bypassed an empirical study of the higher education system.

It also said that no discussion took place with the regulatory bodies. UGC has specially pointed out that "it was entitled to have interaction with the members of the committee but this was somehow not undertaken by the committee."

Disagreeing with the concept of NCHER, UGC has given two alternatives. One, create an inter-coordination council of higher education of all bodies, while retaining all the present regulatory bodies with necessary reforms in their regulatory framework. Two, reform UGC with a governing body comprising a full-time chairman with members from various streams. It should also have a governing council consisting of chairpersons of other regulatory bodies and state higher education councils.

As for powers of NCHER in the context of self-regulatory universities, UGC said developing universities as autonomous bodies would imply that the new body would remain an advisory and policy-making body. "Self-regulation is only meaningful if it is complemented by a proper regulatory framework and open-ended self-regulatory working of the universities is a problematic concept," UGC said. It also pointed out that role of NCHER also does not meet the requirement of law or of coordination.

Source: New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)15 September 2009

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

'Atmosphere of research is required'

The government has proposed to set up seven new Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) and eight new Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) over the Eleventh Plan period. On ground, the older IIMs are troubled by several concerns such as faculty crunch, low salaries and poor quality of research.

IIM Lucknow director Dr Devi Singh shares his views on existing salaries, attracting quality faculty and future plans in an interview. Excerpts:

What needs to be done to attract good quality faculty to IIMs and retain them when the private & foreign institutes as well as the industry offer better opportunities?

We need to inculcate an atmosphere of innovation and research across campuses. Better facilities, more sops



for research and ingraining a research orientation in the faculty are steps to take this forward. We need to encourage more collaboration between the industry and the academia as that could provide the faculty intellectual stimulation, provide path-breaking and topical research to the companies, and provide researchers monetary benefits.

At IIM Lucknow, we have decided to demarcate funds running into several crores to be offered as research grants for our faculty and fellowship programme participants. We also offer the highest stipend to our students of Ph D programme.

The IITs are protesting the pay revision for teachers of IITs and IIMs, as it is lower than the recommendations of the Goverdhan Mehta panel. What is the stand of the IIMs, especially when your students are paid well?

The latest pay regime is very unfair to assistant professors. They are not at par with their counterparts in the universities. We are going to represent to the human resource development ministry to ensure that no faculty member suffers.

Teaching is a vocation and it is unfair to compare the salary of the teachers with that of the students. Each professor at the IIMs is a teacher by choice, with the most impeccable academic and professional background.

In fact, our faculty is the favourite hunting ground of the corporates that are constantly trying to entice them to cross-over to the other side. While the salary of the faculty is nothing to write home about, we are committed to providing them with enough to maintain a decent standard of living.

What would be the challenges the six new IIM would face?

Faculty crunch is the biggest challenge that will affect all institutes, new or old. While the number of students is increasing day by day, the lack of effective research and fellowship programmes would see the faculty shrinking.

What needs to be done to foster research across IIMs?

To create an environment of research, much needs to be done — more incentives for research programmes, making research mandatory for faculty, putting in place strong faculty exchange programmes with premier global business schools, and participation in, and organising of, international conferences and seminars.

We will also have to reduce the teacher:student ratio such that the faculty has enough time to undertake meaningful research. That apart, a strong industry interface is required where the industry is made to

realise the value of research conducted at premier institution such as IIMs.

The government also needs to be encouraged to pass on more policy-based research assignments so that changes that can make a difference to the economy and society can be taken on board.

What are your focus areas at IIM Lucknow? What about the Noida campus?

Over the next 4-5 years, we are going to be focusing on research and faculty development at IIM Lucknow. We have several new initiatives in the offing. We are looking at creating a centre for sustainable development and inclusive growth, providing thought leadership for programmes relating to environmental management, creating a balance between business and society, and increasing interaction and exchange programmes with top business schools globally.

We also propose to optimally utilise the Noida campus, which has been specially created for providing excellence in executive education. We plan to make the Noida campus a hub for executive training in the global context, offer training to Indian policymakers as well as foreigners who wish to understand the nuances of Indian socio-political-economic parameters.

Source: Lucknow [/economictimes/](http://economictimes.com) 10 September 2009

Changing phase of pre-school education

Times have changed now. A lot of research has gone into the field of education as it is of utmost importance. Now, education is a lot more high-tech. A lot of softwares have come out to help children learn in a better, fun and a more interactive way.

Pre-schooling started probably just 30 years ago or so. With the competitive and changing world, the education for the children needed be to changed. They had to start earlier than usual to make a mark in this world.

Ten years ago also there was a massive competition between the children as well as the parents. Everyone wanted their child to be the best in everything. Pressure from the school, pressure from the parents and pressure from the society. Children as small as two years old were sent to school. They didn't even know how to pronounce their own name properly but no they had to get up early in the morning and go to school.

Times have changed now. A lot of research has gone into this field as it is of utmost importance. Now, education is a lot more high-tech. A lot of softwares have come out to help children learn in a better, fun and a more interactive way. Now the child's need is of

paramount importance. "We don't want to pressurise or burden the child in any way. Now, the idea is not only academics but the over all development of the child," says Radhika Bhushan, directress of a renowned pre-school.

For admission in a school, the intelligence of the child is just 10 per cent of what they actually see in a child. The admission now is taken under three criterions- motor skills, which is how well they can walk and balance themselves as well as how independent they are, emotional development and social development. They see if the child is clinging to its mother and crying or are carefree and open. "They are just two-three year old; we cannot expect them to answer our questions always. Sometimes, they might know the answer but may not feel like answering it," states Nalini Murarka, principal of another such pre-school. One of the most important requirements for admission is language skills. How well the child can speak and how well can he form and pronounce words. The child should be able to express himself.

The parents now a day look for a pre-school, where their child would have no strain or stress. Earlier they used to look for the school with the best education but now, the first thing they see is how many activities the school will have. They want that their child should be free.

The pre-schools these days are expensive if you compare them to the normal primary schools. Its very difficult to pay the fees for some parents. But it is compensated in a way because in a pre-school there is one teacher for twenty students and in a primary school, one teacher for fifty students, so, there is more personalised attention and it is also tough to handle younger children and to take care of them and their needs. Therefore, the pay scale of the teachers has also increased. It is not necessary but it is happening all over India. So now, people have started judging schools by how expensive they are because they think it will have more activities and better quality education.

To hire teachers, the most important quality any school looks for is patience. The teacher should have compassion, no harsh words are allowed, and hitting students is a complete no-no. "If a teacher even scolds a child these days we get a complaint the next day by a parent that the child doesn't want to come to school," says Prerna Musaddi, principal of Candy Floss Pre-School. The teacher's language is taken into account because it is said that a child learns the maximum in the age of two to five. If he hears a bad word, he will learn it.

According to Nalini Murarka, education is getting more and more important so, pre-school education

will definitely stay and become more and more competitive and because of the researches, the pressure on the students is decreasing every year and thus the future of pre-school education is extremely bright.

Source: merinews.com/9 September 2009

GLOBAL: Researchers in dangerous times

In Guatemala, a leading anthropologist received death threats while excavating mass graves to look for evidence of war crimes. The Turkish government on 41 charges, for researching torture cases, imprisoned an academic. A researcher in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was held for eight months without trial and tortured for his research on ethnic conflict. In Chad, government agents threw a grenade at a scholar who had researched and written about a past oppressive regime.

It is not hard to decipher which research areas are among the most dangerous to be employed in if you read the recent global study on oppression against academics published by the Institute of Education based in New York.

Scholar Rescue in the Modern World, by Henry G Jarecki and Daniela Zane Kaisth of the International Institute of Education and released earlier this year, examined the plight of 847 academics who applied for their programme, which gives grants for relocation to a safe institution elsewhere, as well as the cases of 140 grantees from the 2002-2007 period.

Countless examples are given of academics threatened, arrested or tortured for research on human rights, exposure of government war crimes or corruption, or writing about minority groups, religion or any other sensitive topic.

"What these cases have in common is that the persecuted scholar's academic work is viewed by his or her government or by non-governmental actors as a threat," said Jarecki and Kaisth.

In some countries, any research linking academics to peers across the world or taking them to international conferences immediately puts them under suspicion from a repressive government.

Two leading international researchers were sent to jail in Iran in January, convicted of co-operation with the US government in fomenting a "velvet revolution". Dr Kamiar Alaei and his brother Dr Arash Alaei were found guilty of "communicating with an enemy" because they had taken part in international meetings on HIV/AIDS.



The doctors are both experts on the disease and have worked for many years on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment activities in Iran and internationally.

Rob Quinn, Executive Director of the Scholars at Risk network and founder of the Scholar Rescue Fund, said in many cases the attacks were about maintaining power.

"This is about a very narrow vision of what education is for, both for the individual and for society," Quinn said. "It is really using education as a chance to enforce an alternative world vision, one that says it is okay to structure things through brute force."

The highest number of applications came from countries in the Middle East and North Africa and from Sub-Saharan Africa. The top 10 countries by number of applicants were Iraq (111), DRC (47), China (46), Zimbabwe (34), West Bank & Gaza (30), Nigeria (28), Burma (26), Cameroon (25), Ethiopia (25) and India (25). Iran was close behind with 23.

A UNESCO study, *Education Under Attack*, published in April 2007, found that 286 academics had been killed in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003. Since then, dozens more have been killed.

Source: universityworldnews.com/6 September 2009

India and its Literacy Mission

September 8th of every year is observed as International Literacy Day. India has put its Literacy Mission high on agenda with the government initiating a number of measures including the adoption of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education, to achieve higher literacy rate in the country. The measures also include the recasting of the National Literacy Mission to focus on literacy of women, reduction in the dropout rate of children at school levels and introduction of Public-Private Participation in the school education. The Human Resource Development Ministry has set a target of achieving 80 per cent literacy for women by the end of the 11th Five Year Plan and have recast the National Literacy Mission to National Women's Literacy Mission to provide a thrust to it. With its new slogan, Literate India, the Mission will be launched soon in about 365 districts in the country, where the literacy rate is below 50 per cent. The Government is also trying to reduce the gap between literacy levels of men and women at All India level, which is 21 per cent at present. Through this Mission, the Government is planning to educate 70 million adults, out of which 60 million would be women. The Centre has also decided to set up 6,000 high quality model schools at the block level, at the rate of one school per block, as benchmarks of excellence. The first phase of the

scheme to set up 2,500 Model Schools in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) under the State Governments was launched in November 2008.

Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill, 2009

Recently, the Government has adopted the Right to Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill 2009. It provides that every child in the age group of six to fourteen shall have the right to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school till completion of elementary education. The measure will lead to significant reform in the elementary education system besides ensuring universalisation of elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality. The measure provides that appropriate government and the local authority will establish elementary schools in such area or limits of neighbourhood as may be prescribed. The Bill's enactment was also a part of the UPA Government's agenda during its first 100 days of governance.

Measures to reduce Illiteracy

As per UNESCO'S Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006, the number of illiterates in the population aged 15 plus was estimated to be 771 million in the world, out of which 267 million are in India. The Centre has taken several steps to improve the literacy scenario in the country. They include renewed focus on low literacy areas with special emphasis on female, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and minorities, enhanced budget allocation for adult education and significant enhancement in access and quality of elementary education to reduce the influx into the pool of adult illiterate population. At present, the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) is in progress in 95 districts of the country. About 127.45 million persons in the country have been made literate since the launching of the National Literacy Mission in 1988 till 2008-09.

Enrolment of Children at Primary and Secondary Levels

The Government has adopted a multi-pronged approach for improving the enrolment of children at primary level and their retention. The Gross Enrolment Ratio at the primary level was 111.24 in 2006-07 and the drop out rate for that level has decreased from 31.5 per cent in 2003-04 to 25.43 per cent in 2006-07. The National Programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), aimed at achieving Universal Elementary Education, launched in 2001, provides for, among other things, opening of new schools, strengthening of school infrastructure, and inclusive education for children with special needs. The Government has allocated Rs.71,000 crore as its share during the 11th Plan. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme is supported by the National Programme of Mid Day Meal scheme in schools. At the secondary level,

various schemes like Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in secondary schools, scholarship for girls have been started. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher educations is estimated to be about 12.4 per cent as compared to estimated world average of 26 per cent. In order to achieve the targeted GER of an additional five per cent by the end of 11th Plan, a substantial increase in plan allocation has been made for the expansion of higher education, by way of setting up of institutions such as Central Universities in uncovered states. The Government also plans to increase the GER to 21 per cent by the end of 12th Five Year Plan period. The GER of Scheduled Tribe students has increased from 86.06 per cent in 2003-04 to 109.48 per cent at the elementary level and the dropout rate has reduced in the same period from 70.05 per cent to 62.54 per cent.

Public Spending on Education

The Government has accorded very high importance to the education sector during the 11th Plan. An allocation of Rs.2,69,873 crore has been made to the Human Resource Development Ministry. The allocation includes Rs.1,84,930 crore for the Department of School Education and Literacy. This constitutes 19.4 per cent of the total 11th Plan allocation compared to 7.7 per cent in the 10th Plan. This is a very substantial effort on the part of the Central Government towards raising the public spending on education towards the goal of 6 per cent of GDP. The overall progress towards this goal will however, also depend on the efforts by the State Governments. The Government favours active support and involvement of private sector participation for funding and management of educational institutions subject to reasonable surplus earned and the same being ploughed back for development of institutions. The 11th Plan document as approved by the National Development Council, also mentions the need to explore private sector initiatives and various forms of Public Private Partnerships in the education sector. A proposal for setting up of 20 new Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIIT) in various parts of the country under Public-Private-Participation (PPP) mode is also under consideration of the government.

Empowerment of Women in Education

The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986, as modified in 1992 provides that education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. The removal of illiteracy among women and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority through the

provision of special support services and effective monitoring. The University Grants Commission (UGC) also implements various schemes for educational empowerment of women like Indira Gandhi Scholarships for single girl child for pursuing higher and technical education, construction of women's hostels, women's study centers in universities for gender studies and policies in respect of empowerment of women and their role in the society. The positive impact of above schemes has resulted in increased enrolment of girls, decrease in dropout rates of girls, improved learning achievement level of girls/women and the overall reduction in gender gaps.

International Scenario

Despite many and varied efforts, literacy remains an elusive target globally. About 776 million adults lack minimum literacy skills, which means that one in five adults is still not literate; 75 million children are out-of-school and many more attend irregularly or drop out. This year's International Literacy Day puts the spotlight on the empowering role of literacy and its importance for participation, citizenship and social development. Literacy and Empowerment is the theme for the 2009-10 biennium of the United Nations Literacy Decade.

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/7 September 2009

'Indian teachers still not trained to tackle dyslexia'

Until 10 years ago, India was not dealing with learning disabilities like dyslexia in school. While the picture has changed somewhat in Delhi, other states have made little progress even now, says teacher-writer Meenakshi Dave.

"It is easy to understand learning disabilities if you have seen 'Taare Zameen Par'. It shows everything that a dyslexic child has to suffer in school. A teacher has to be sensitive and trained to tackle unhappy children with learning disabilities," Dave told IANS.

She is author of a new book, "Intelligent Otherwise: Identifying, Understanding and Tackling Learning Disabilities in Children". Published by Wisdom Tree, it was released this week by Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, who has also written the foreword.

"In India, even 10 years ago, we were not dealing with learning disabilities in school. The Bachelor of Education (BEd) training programme for teachers in India does not have any special module to identify learning disabilities in children and address them.

"There are a few schools in the capital now like Educare, Orchid and Action Dyslexia, but the states have no such facilities," Dave said.

The US, in comparison, where nearly 27 percent of children suffer from learning disabilities, have training



schools for those who want to teach children with learning flaws.

"In India, researchers say only 10 percent of children suffer from learning disabilities, but the number is growing because of parents' expectations and faster lifestyles.

"In some schools, especially in Maharashtra, the authorities and the state government are making concessions for dyslexic students like reducing the number of examination papers, plying less homework and providing scribes to children with slow writing skills during examination," Dave said.

The relaxations stem from a Bombay High Court order, the writer said.

Awareness about dyslexia was generated to a great degree in India by the film "Taare Zameen Par" by actor Aamir Khan.

The four most common forms of learning disabilities among Indian children, according to Dave, are "dyslexia, dysgraphia, attention deficit syndrome and dyscalculia".

Dyslexia, said Dave, was a language communication disability, which gave rise to problems in reading, spelling, writing and comprehension.

"Dysgraphia is difficulty in written language when a child mixes up 'p with q' and 'b with d'. It becomes difficult for a child to put his thoughts on paper. Dyscalculia is a problem with numbers when children slip in mathematics and muddle double-digit numbers," Dave said.

But most children with learning disabilities can overcome them if they receive help in the early stages and even develop an IQ above the average.

"A child with learning disabilities usually has unique strengths. Many of them are good in music, arts and sports. It is up to the teacher to identify them and change the methods of teaching," said the writer, who has been a teacher for the better part of her life across the world.

Divided into three segments, the book begins with an introduction to general learning disabilities and subsequently lists their characteristics and causes. It then tries to assess and identify the disorders and probes each one of them separately.

The last section looks at learning disabilities in the Indian context and informs parents, teachers and readers about the government support system for children with special needs.

"I have a degree in teaching children with learning disabilities from the Washington Lab School and have also taught dyslexic children in the US when my husband was posted there," Dave said.

Some of the famous "children" with learning disabilities who grew up to be geniuses, as Dave lists in her book, are "Albert Einstein, the mathematical genius, who did not speak till three, Nelson Rockefeller, who had a serious problem with reading, Thomas Alva Edison, who was mentally addled; and former US president Woodrow Wilson, who did not learn his letters till he was nine years old".

Source: New Delhi prokerala.com/5 September 2009

Plan to recapture romance of science

The country's brightest students — and their parents — scouting for a research-based undergraduate course grounded on classical sciences may soon have an option before them.

The Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore is planning to start elite undergraduate programmes for the first time in its 100-year history, reinventing itself to face challenges to its pre-eminent position among the science research institutions in the country.

The IISc is planning to introduce a unique four-year, research-based undergraduate programme, including interaction between the students and its researchers, to lure — and retain — the best young brains into path-breaking science and engineering.

"We will face some birth pangs. But I believe we will survive," Professor S.K. Biswas, the dean of the IISc and head of the team that drafted the course, told The Telegraph.

The course, drafted by a team picked by institute director P. Balaram, is likely to be finalised later this month after which the plan may be formally unveiled.

The draft course prepared by the institute received the stamp of approval from the faculty at a meeting on September 2. The faculty had rejected an earlier draft.

The move comes at a time when the institute, celebrating 100 years of its existence — created as a result of Jamshedji Tata's vision in 1909 — faces unprecedented "churning" over its future course, institute sources said.

All major research universities in the West — such as Harvard, California Institute of Technology or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology — have strong undergraduate programmes linked with opportunities in cutting-edge research.

"Wherever research has flourished, it has been backed by great undergraduate programmes," Biswas said.

The Prime Minister, senior government officials and top scientists have in recent years frequently expressed concerns that India is lagging behind China



and other developing nations in both output and quality of research.

The IISc, institute officials said, wants a greater role in reshaping the nation's higher education system, often criticised for its disconnect between undergraduate studies on the one hand and postgraduate and research programmes on the other.

This disconnect is often blamed for the low retention rate in postgraduate sciences and engineering, of students who complete undergraduate studies even at apex institutes like the IITs or top university colleges.

The initiative comes at a time some parents and students are doubting the merits of celebrated but highly competitive professional courses — like at the IIMs — which guaranteed substantial financial rewards till recently. The economic downturn and the inability of some young professionals to cope with the grim outcomes have stoked interest in higher education viewed as more fulfilling.

“The injection of young talent into the IISc will alter the character of the institute and offer fresh challenges to the faculty. This move is a part of a larger plan for the growth of the IISc over the next 100 years,” Biswas said.

The institute is hoping the undergraduate programme emerges a model for other institutions involved in higher education and research to follow. It will be titled a bachelors in science (BS) programme in a specialisation of the student's choice — for instance in physics, chemistry or biology.

But good undergraduate programmes invariably also help create a larger public profile — like with the IITs — and funding from the government and industry, which Institute sources admitted were key motives behind the move.

The move also comes at a time when sections of the faculty at the IISc are warning that the gap in research productivity between Institute and the IITs is narrowing.

IISc sources were tight-lipped about the selection process they plan to use to pick students for the course, but said it would be restricted to around 500 of the “brightest” students interested over the first five years.

“If there is a strong public demand for expansion, we can always increase the intake subsequently,” a source said.

The undergraduate course structure drafted by the institute will in the first three years -- over six semesters -- aim at strengthening basic knowledge of

classical scientific, mathematical and engineering subjects in students.

Students will have to study humanities -- they can pick from courses in areas of history, philosophy, sociology and the management of science and technology.

After the first three semesters, students will have to pick a “stream” of their choice -- a subject within the sciences and engineering that they wish to pursue in greater detail than other subjects.

While majoring in their chosen stream, students continue to study a certain minimum number of courses in other streams -- to keep the course interdisciplinary.

The final year of the course will largely be devoted to a research project each student must undertake.

Source: New Delhi [/telegraphindia/](http://telegraphindia.com)5 September 2009

Sibal plans to reform higher education too

He ushered in radical reforms in school education within the first 100 days of his tenure as human resource development (HRD) minister. Now, Kapil Sibal is set to change the face of higher education as well.

Sibal will initiate the second phase of reforms in the higher education sector with a number of laws, including one that will make taking capitation fee a criminal offence.

The ministry has proposed the Educational Malpractices Bill, under which medical and technical institutions as well as universities found guilty of demanding capitation fee can be penalised up to Rs 50 lakh. Criminal courts and special educational tribunals will adjudicate such matters. Sibal is expected to announce the reforms in the next few days.

He is also expected to announce legislations to set up a parallel redressal system of educational tribunals in the Centre and the states. And Sibal clearly has the political backing for his reforms agenda, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday publicly praising him as “one of the finest minds” in the government. While launching the revamped literacy mission, Saakshar Bharat, Singh said, “Our government gives the highest importance to human resource development and that is why some of the finest minds have been chosen for this ministry.”

“The Sibal and (minister of state for HRD) D. Purandeswari team is one which any country can be legitimately proud of as national leaders,” the Prime Minister said. So, the HRD ministry is on a fast track with this new ‘team’ at the helm of affairs. It has already sent the Educational Malpractices Bill to the



law ministry for final inspection. The Bill will enable people to lodge a complaint with a criminal court or an education tribunal against an institution that charges capitation fee or misleads students on the infrastructure, faculty, courses and facilities it provides.

The Bill will provide civil as well as criminal recourse, giving the HRD ministry teeth to take concrete action against offenders. An HRD ministry official said, "Till now, we had no way of taking action against wrongdoers, even when we received complaints of students being cheated by unscrupulous institutes. This Bill will empower us to do that."

The Rs 50-lakh penalty on guilty institutions should also act as a deterrent, he said. Also, the setting up of educational tribunals will bring about a landmark shift in the education sector, similar to what consumer courts did for consumer rights. It has been decided that a retired judge of the Supreme Court and a retired judge of the high court, respectively will head a national educational tribunal at the Centre and tribunals at the state level.

There will also be the option of appealing to the national tribunal if one is not satisfied with the state panel's verdict. These panels will not only adjudicate over the Educational Malpractices Bill but will also deal with disputes between students and institutions, teachers and institutions and between institutions themselves. They will also hear complaints against regulatory authorities like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

Sibal is also expected to announce a compulsory accreditation system for all higher education institutions. Government agencies like the National Assessment and Accreditation Council and professional bodies like NASSCOM can enlist with the ministry for this.

The accreditation process will involve giving credit ratings for educational institutions based on pre-decided criteria to ensure uniformity of ratings. All government and private institutions will need to get themselves rated through any of these multiple agencies. "This will help students and parents to get a clear idea about the standing of the institution," said the official.

However, of the main policy changes that the ministry had targeted for the 100-day agenda, the 'Brain Gain policy' to attract talent to new institutions from across the world has not been able to make much headway. As the proposal for giving autonomy to such institutions had met with mixed reactions, the ministry has gone in for extensive consultations and this is likely to take some time.

Source: New Delhi [/indiatoday/](#)9 September 2009

Student seek out higher edu during recession

The economy is one of many factors influencing students to enroll. In the midst of a recession, students are flocking to MU and universities across the nation in record numbers. But the economic climate is only one of many factors driving these increases.

According to an MU News Bureau release, total enrollment at MU increased by 1,070 students or 3.6 percent this year. Minority enrollment figures also reached record levels with the number of Hispanic and African-American students increasing by 16 and 14.7 percent, respectively.

Vice Provost of Enrollment Management Ann Korschgen said in an e-mail those numbers were not influenced by the economy. Instead, she attributed the increase to many things, including the university's environment.

"Certainly a part of the growth is related to the increase in high school graduates in the last few years," Korschgen said. "But it is also related to the excellent educational experience that students receive here, the academic reputation of the university and the efforts made to recruit students."

Economics professor Cory Koedel said the economy is one of many factors that encourage students to go to college.

"When the economy is doing bad, it's cheaper for students to go to college because they have less outside opportunity," he said.

Labor Economics professor Peter Mueser also said students are more likely to go to school during a recession because their forgone earnings are less.

"One of the biggest costs of going to school is the time you give up when you could be holding a job," Mueser said.

Mueser said the return on a college education has increased in the last 15 years, so the incentive to go to school, even during a period of economic growth when forgone earnings are high, has gone up.

He said a college education is beginning to pay more because of the growing importance of technology in the workplace.

"College students are going to be more likely to be productive in an environment where computers are important," he said.

MU Career Center Senior Coordinator Amanda Nell said students who are enrolled at MU are leaving their options open and anecdotal evidence is showing more students are considering graduate as opposed to entering the workforce.



"Some students are saying 'Well I might as well do it now,'" Nell said.

The news release stated graduate student enrollment at the university rose to 6,018 students, an increase of 207 from last year.

Large universities are not the only places seeing more students on campus.

According to a news release from the Missouri Department of Higher Education, the state's 12 public community colleges saw average enrollment increases of 12.5 percent.

In the release MDHE Commissioner Robert Stein said this growth was attributable to the economy.

"In focus groups we conducted in rural and inner city parts of the state this summer, middle and high school students expressed a nearly unanimous desire to go to college," Stein said. "Many told us they have seen their parents struggling economically and they wanted to avoid that by preparing for a high-paying job."

Source: [/theman eater.com](http://theman eater.com) 4 September 2009

Summary Record of Discussion of the 56th Central Advisory Board of Education

1. The Fifty Sixth Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was held on 31 August 2009 at Hotel Ashok, New Delhi. The Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal, chaired the meeting. Minister of Rural Development, Shri C.P. Joshi, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. M.S. Gill, Minister of Tribal Affairs, Shri Kantilal Bhuria, Minister of Labour and Employment, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Smt. D. Purandeswari, Member Planning Commission, Dr. Narendra Jadhav. and Ministers in-charge of Education from various States/UTs attended the meeting. The Board also has eminent educationists, authors, artists, linguists etc. apart from Heads of different autonomous organizations and Secretaries of different departments of the Government of India as its members.

2. The CABE is the highest advisory body to advise the Central and State Governments in the field of education. It was reconstituted by the Government on 12 December 2008 with the mandate to review the progress of education and implementation of education policies and to advise regarding educational development in the country. The CABE also acts as a forum for coordination and exchange of views between Central & State Governments/Union Territories and Non-

Governmental Agencies and eminent persons from different walks of life on education policy and progress.

3. The meeting focused on the vision for the future with Child Centric education as mentioned by Shri Sibal in his opening address, and reviewed various initiatives by the Ministry of HRD both in School Education & Literacy as well as in Higher Education. The meeting also focused particularly on the legislation for Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – flagship programme for universalisation of elementary education; Mid-Day Meal Programme meant for improving nutritional standards and health status of school-going children and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan for universalisation of access to secondary education and Education Reforms.
4. In the area of Higher Education, the Central Advisory Board of Education deliberated on planning and progress in expansion of Higher Education envisaged under the 11th Five Year Plan. The meeting also focused on initiatives like opening of new Central Universities. Central assistance for the 374 new degree colleges in educationally backward districts, opening of new IITs, IIMs, NITs, IITSERs and IIITs, National Mission on Education through ICT, educational advancement of minorities, Reforms in Higher Education and creation of an all encompassing National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) a constitutional body.
5. The Following Reform on School and Higher Education was discussed in the 56th CABE
 - (i) CABE unanimously endorsed the general need for reforms at all levels of education and felt that while there may be different viewpoints on the pace and process of reforms, there was unanimity on its direction in the interest of children who are India's most precious assets. Members reiterated their commitment to a meaningful partnership between Central and State Governments, non-government and civil society organizations in the national endeavour for the future of children in our country. The national endeavour should encompass:
 - (a) Expansion of the existing education system to allow choices to children.
 - (b) Inclusion so that no child is left out, and special priority given to child belonging to SC/ST and other disadvantaged groups, including children with special education needs so that they receive the same educational opportunity as other children.

- (c) Opportunity for excellence for all children.
- (ii) CABE welcomed the new legislation on Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education, which would lead to significant systemic reform in the elementary education sector, including SSA. CABE endorsed the RTE mandate for ensuring universal access, attendance and completion on elementary education, and recommended that quality benchmarks in teacher qualification, quality of teacher education and curriculum reform be expeditiously established. CABE also welcomed the shift in approach from provision of incentives and benefits to child rights and entitlements. CABE endorsed the need for synergy between the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education and the literacy and continuing education programme.
- (iii) CABE emphasized the need for all States to modify their curriculum, syllabi and textbooks based on NCF 2005, so that all children in the country have access to child-centric, constructivist teaching and learning process. CABE emphasized that curriculum, textbooks should be fully in line with constitutional values, and child centered pedagogies.
- (iv) CABE endorsed the necessity of a core curriculum in science and mathematics at secondary and higher secondary levels across all Education Boards in the country, so as to provide a level playing field to all students to join professional courses.
- (v) CABE noted the efforts of CBSE to introduce a grading system in lieu of marks for its Class X examination from next year with the objective of reducing unhealthy competition, and thereby reduce stress, and suggested to the States that they explore the possibility of following suit.
- (vi) CABE was unanimous that there is a need to reduce examination stress among students. CABE noted the attempt of CBSE to make class Xth examination optional for students who will continue in the same school in Class – XI, while replacing the same with an efficient comprehensive and continuous evaluation (CCE) system so that standards of learning outcome are not compromised.
- (vii) CABE agreed to set up a Committee to draw up guidelines regarding ICT in School Education.

Higher Education

- viii) CABE approved the proposal for an autonomous overarching authority for higher education and research with its policy related

functions being distinct from regulatory functions— some States felt that there should be scope for the involvement of States. The Task Force constituted to follow up on the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research would consult States in this regard. CABE also approved the proposal of a self-selecting Collegium of eminent persons for greater objectivity and assistance to search committees in the selection of Chairperson and Members of the proposed National Commission and in the selection of Vice Chancellors and other eminent academic and research positions.

- ix) CABE endorsed the need for a law to prevent, prohibit and punish malpractices in higher education – some States felt that the scope of the proposed law should be widened to include all sectors of education, and it was explained that the present proposal was in keeping with the legislative competence of Parliament.
- x) CABE approved mandatory assessment and accreditation in higher education – the proposed law should take into consideration the concerns expressed by some of the States with regard to the autonomy of the processes of accreditation.
- xi) CABE supported the proposal to establish Educational Tribunals at the national and State levels for fast track adjudication, without undermining the authority of universities.
- xii) CABE also supported academic reforms in Central Universities, State Universities and Colleges, especially the need to revise curriculum and update teacher competence with appropriate support from Centre and States.
- xiii) CABE welcomed the proposed policy to attract talent to teaching and research to higher education system generally.
- xiv) CABE endorsed the proposal to establish a Central Madrassa Board, which it felt should have greater representation of academics, especially women – and should ensure that only non-theological education would be overseen by the Board in respect of Madrassas volunteering to be affiliated to the Board.

Source: New Delhi pib.nic.in/ 1 September 2009

'Teaching process should be more interesting'

The Times of India Group in association with Shivalik Public School organized a seminar titled "Road to Reform: Rethinking the School Curriculum" on Friday at PHD Chamber of Commerce. The one-day seminar had more than 100 delegates participating including teachers, principals and eminent personalities from the

field of education. It dealt with a range of issues that continue to plague the education system in our county and was aimed at devising solutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Y Sreekanth from National Council of Educational Research and Training, Delhi, said there was a need to make the teaching-learning process more interesting and productive.

Advocating the grading system in place of board exams, he said that there had to be flexibility in curriculum. Asha Sethi, who is director of education research at Institute of Development and Communication, Chandigarh, delivered the keynote address on ways to integrate school teaching with the higher education system.

Other speakers included CBSE joint secretary for the region, Kendriya Vidyalaya's Hargopal and deputy commissioner of Navodaya Sangathan, PS Rana.

Rana stressed that reforms should start from grassroots level. During the seminar, a jury comprising IBS Passi of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, former editor of Dainik Tribune, Vijay Sehgal and Rana honoured 10 teachers for excellence in their field.

The winners included Lucy Sebastian of Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School, Sarbjeet Kaur of Ajit Karam Singh International School, Sector 41-B, Oma Dani of DAV Senior Secondary Public School, Sector 9, Panchkula, Saroj Bali of MRA Senior Secondary Model School, Sector 27, Suman Kapila of St Stephen's School, Sector 45, Bhupinder Sharma of Shishu Niketan School, Sector 22, Anupama Sharma of Hansraj Public School, Sector 6, Panchkula, Poonam of DAV Model School, Sector 15, Renu Puri of Vivek High School, Sector 38, and Mamta Goyal of DAV Public School, Sector 8.

Source: Chandigarh [/timesofindia/5](#) September 2009

Training 21st century teachers

At first glance, she is highly motivated. A master trainer (MT) coached by the Intel Teach programme, Lalitha Bilgi is now a successful social entrepreneur. She runs Swayam, a highly motivated parent support group based in Bangalore that works to educate and empower children with special abilities.

Swayam was born out of Lalitha Bilgi's strong determination to work towards empowering differently abled children, after the birth of her son Kushal, who has Down's syndrome. So after her training as an MT, she decided to use her skills as a teacher.

Swayam is now engaged in a slew of activities to make learning fun for differently abled children. They are trained to scan photos and signatures of

employees, which are then uploaded for online submission of declaration of forms to the Employees' State Insurance Corporation. They currently do this for a Bangalore-based BPO.

Like Lalitha, many others have benefited from Intel Teach Programme, which helps classroom teachers effectively integrate technology to enhance student learning.

Lalitha feels her exposure to the programme gave her the impetus to be successful in her pursuit. "I realized the realm of technology does not limit itself to downloading information from the internet. It also gives a platform to upload our opinions, raise concerns over issues and improve them. This led me to do something to empower children with special needs," she says.

Launched in February 2000 in India, the programme has impacted over 1 lakh teachers across 19 states, and 73 teacher education universities, 10 State Councils for Education Research and Training (SCERT) and Central government associations like Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

Intel believes students everywhere deserve to have the skills necessary to become the next generation of innovators. And to be successful in a global knowledge economy, young people need to develop 21st century skills like digital literacy, problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration. It requires that they use technology to access the extraordinary wealth of knowledge available through the internet.

Source: Bangalore [/timesofindia/4](#) September 2009

UGC draws up scheme to address faculty shortage

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to tap all available resources in the country to address the problem of faculty shortage and upgrade the skills of college/university teachers as the country seeks to expand higher education facilities across the country.

Since faculty shortage cannot be addressed overnight, the UGC has drawn up a scheme to involve academics from outside the university system to enhance faculty resources of universities, particularly at the post-graduate and research levels.

In particular, the UGC is eyeing research organisations, Research and Development units of Central and State public-sector undertakings and business corporations, Non-Resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin working with academic, research and business organisations overseas, and foreign academicians and researchers having a demonstrated interest in Indian studies.

Two modalities have been evolved for their engagement with the university system: The 'adjunct faculty' route for younger and mid-career professionals within the target groups, and the 'scholars-in-residence' avenue for senior professionals and specialists.

The UGC has sanctioned 706 adjunct faculty positions for the entire university system in the country, with Central universities allowed five such positions each, State universities two, and deemed universities one each.

Adjunct faculty positions will be tenure appointments for one academic year or two semesters, and such individuals will be offered a token honorarium of up to Rs.1,500 per teaching hour/session, subject to a maximum of Rs.30,000 per month.

In the case of scholars-in-residence, there will be 512 faculty positions. Each Central university will be allowed two such positions, while State universities and deemed universities can have one position each. Again, these will be tenure appointments ranging between six months and two years. Selected individuals will be offered a consolidated remuneration of up to Rs.80,000 per month, an annual contingency grant of Rs.1 lakh, and accommodation.

And, to hone teaching skills, the UGC has identified 40 institutions affiliated to universities which can conduct orientation and refresher courses that are mandatory for promotion from lecturer to Reader. Presently 56 Academic Staff Colleges conduct such courses.

Most of these 40 identified institutions specialise in certain fields of study, and the UGC has drawn up a scheme whereby they can approach the Commission for conducting refresher and orientation courses. And, if the Commission's Standing Committee clears the courses, they will be recognised for promotion of lecturer to Reader. They will be cent per cent funded by the UGC through the affiliating universities.

The scheme has been drawn up keeping in mind the knowledge explosion that is taking place, the purpose being to provide a systematic mechanism for teachers to keep abreast with the latest and train themselves in modern processes, methodologies and techniques of teaching. With this in mind, the UGC wrote to all universities asking them to identify affiliate institutions willing to run such courses.

Some of the institutions that the UGC hopes to rope in through this route are the National Institute of Advanced Studies and the Institute of Social and Economic Change (both in Bangalore), besides the New Delhi-based Institute of Public Finance and

Policy and the Institute of Studies in Industrial Development

Source: New Delhi thehindu.com/31 August 2009

What makes a good teacher?

Remember the 'Miss' who wore different floral-printed frocks to class. You admired her flair for English as well as how she handled nervous parents and a noisy class of children.

Some of the first impressions of your primary school days and the class teacher who shaped you are just a few things that should make the job of a teacher both satisfying and bring immense happiness about this noble profession.

If you were caught awe of Ram Kumar Nikumbh, the art master played by Amir Khan in the Hindi film **Taare Zameen Par**, then make sure you are ready to take up many more unconventional roles on the job. At least that is what the younger generation look for from a teacher.

Caring attitude

Today's students are not only looking for information from the teacher, but a fruitful company, a friend and a caring person. Meera Gopi, who has been teaching for around 15 years, talks about how she orients herself to the work.

"Having become a teacher I constantly introspect everyday and bring about small changes in my day-to-day action," she says. Ms. Gopi says that a teacher must understand that there are different styles and multiple levels of intelligence among children, and if teaching is based on this then every child is an achiever.

"Change your yardstick for every child and one must be open to various kind of teaching," says the Head of primary section at TI Matriculation Higher Secondary School. But, like many, if you think teaching is not your cup of tea after a few years, make sure you quit rather than sticking to a profession you are not enjoying. Also, the pay for a teacher is not very lucrative, so it should be a profession where one joins out of choice and not by chance.

For most people who undertake the course, it is a journey of self-discovery. Montessori and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) are the two popular degrees preferred by schools.

While Montessori stresses more till age six, the later is for even higher age groups. Of late, schools are increasingly investing in offering teachers new learning modules to update them as well as bring in attitudinal change.



EZ Vidya, a Chennai-based company that offers schools learning modules, believes in experimental or participatory model to bring in a difference and add zeal to the teachers' role.

“We go into the ‘why’ of teaching, while in lesson plan we bring out the core objective of a topic. The whole idea being to make the teacher feel better, think better and that leads to better performance,” explains Chitra Ravi, founder and CEO, EZ Vidya.

Child psychology, art skills, methodology in teaching... there are different aspects covered in a professional teaching degree, which one generally takes up after a bachelor's degree in any stream.

According to N. Vijaya, course director and a Montessori consultant, Sri Venkateswara Montessori Teachers Training School, Chennai is a hub for Montessori training and there are around 10 institutes offering a diploma.

“As requirement for teachers is high, we have intakes twice a year for the Integrated Montessori Kindergarten and Gurukul System.

The course ranges from six months to one year and one is absorbed into the job even before they complete the course,” says Ms. Vijaya. With a number of institutes coming up, the fee for the course has also come down. One needs to spend between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 20,000 for the course.

Source: [/hindu.com](http://hindu.com)/8 September 2009

Enrollment and graduation of teachers in decline

The delivery of quality learning in any education system depends on a sufficient supply of quality teachers. The demand for teachers can be influenced by factors including the educational aspirations of a society, and the skills needs of the economy.

In addition, the changing patterns of teacher demand since the development of modern mass education systems means looking not only at the size and at scope of the education system, but also at the quality and length of teachers' working lives.

Teacher Graduate Production in South Africa by Andrew Paterson and Fabian Arends (HSRC Press) looks at the supply and demand of teachers within a national context that acknowledges an impending shortage of teachers.

The monograph specifically focuses on the changing demography of education students at South African higher education institutions. It explores a broad overview of the enrolment, graduation and throughput characteristics of students registered for programmes in the education field, both in the Initial Professional Education and Training (IPET) and Continuing

Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) fields - which apply to new students and qualified teachers, respectively.

Making use of data covering the period 1995 to 2006, the publication covers a key period in South African history, coinciding with the first decade or so of democracy. It also covers a key issue in South African society, as the supply of education graduates has become a matter of national concern.

The extended time period is additionally important because while teacher challenges are felt in the present, changes in graduate production that affect teacher supply may be identified by looking back at enrolment and graduation trends over a number of years.

By exploring key questions such as how many people enrol and graduate within the field of education, which they are in terms of gender, population group and age, and at what levels do student graduate, a pattern can be discerned in teacher graduate production in South Africa.

The publication confirms the suspicion that there was a decline in the number of African women aged 30 and younger entering teacher-training; which is a major cause for concern given that African women constitute the majority of South Africa's teachers.

There has also been a decline in the number of teachers applying for bursaries to enter primary-phase teaching. And there are low numbers of students with mother-tongue competence in African official numbers.

Further factors noted in the study include a decline in teacher recruits from rural areas, and the marked affect of HIV/AIDS on the teacher population, while the closure of the former education colleges nationwide is noted as a key factor in falling teacher-training numbers.

The findings produced in Teacher Graduate Production in South Africa by Andrew Paterson and Fabian Arends (HSRC Press) should provide a useful basis for dialogue and further research on questions of teacher supply and teacher quality, which are high on the agenda of the national Department of Education. Ultimately, the research should provide a solid starting point for policy debate and decision-making.

Teacher Graduate Production in South Africa is by Andrew Paterson and Fabian Arends and published by the HSRC Press. The monograph forms part of the Teacher Education in South Africa series, and is the first of a number of publications falling under the theme of teacher supply and demand.

Copies of *An overview of research, policy and practice in teacher supply and demand, 1994–2008* are



available from leading booksellers nationally, and from hrcspress

Source: [/skillsportal.co.za/](http://skillsportal.co.za/) 10 September 2009

Making right to edu a reality through technology

The application of IT is fairly widespread by now in India in the private sector. However, when it comes to public governance, India has been a laggard in the utilisation of IT.

There are several reasons for this. One is the monopolistic nature of public governance. It is the customer, in this case the “aam aadmi”, who has to like or lump whatever is offered by the public institution. He has no alternative. A second important reason for the slow start off the block, particularly of e-governance, is that it enables transparency and cuts down avenues of corruption.

The common man has benefited from the e-governance measures implemented so far. Perhaps the best example in India of how e-governance can lead to order out of chaos and put paid to the machinations of the ungodly is the replacement of the old ballot system by electronic voting in elections.

Despite these advantages, e-governance has not yet made much headway in government in India. Government spending on IT accounts for only about 15 percent of India’s \$12 billion domestic IT market. Out of 30 “Mission Mode e-governance projects” totalling \$6 billion in IT spends that were drawn up by the centre back in 2006, only three have been awarded so far.

Education as a sector has remained relatively untouched by e-governance. This is most distressing, considering that education is the cornerstone of our efforts to build up the future generation. Even in the Right to Education Act there is little mention of implementing e-governance in our education system.

As it stands today, our education system is chaotic, to say the least. It is characterised by a high dropout rate, teacher truancy, obsolete syllabi, inadequate infrastructure, unemployable graduates and the lot. The tiny proportion of quality output that emerges from it is more a case of serendipity and the determination of the students belonging to this micro-minority. This is because the present system lacks means of continuous monitoring, meaningful evaluation of the teacher and the taught, constant feedback to the players concerned (administrators, faculty, parents and students) and appropriate timely control and correction mechanisms.

If the quantity and quality of output from our education system have to be substantially improved, then there is no alternative to introducing e-governance in this

sphere. However, to be really effective, the e-governance system deployed will have to go beyond mere computerisation of records or processes. It has to be able to provide the management of the educational institution information about the Why of a happening or a trend besides the What, When and Where, so that adequate prophylactic action can be taken. It should be able to provide answers to queries like: Why is the performance of a class dropping in a particular subject? Why is a particularly bright student lagging in performance in the last two terms? Which teacher has produced the best consistent results for her class?

Then again, considering the paucity of funds in our state-aided educational institutions, an e-governance system which is inexpensive to install, simple to use, easy to maintain and can be conveniently expanded will be much more acceptable.

One such e-governance system for educational institutions — the M-Star Education Expert System — has been piloted in scores of schools in India. This system currently runs in a variety of schools and colleges in the country.

M-Star has been developed by MGRM NET after a deep study of educational systems. It is highly flexible in that it can apply to any educational system and yet be customised to a very high degree to fit in with all the required parameters and diverse needs of an institution.

It takes the life cycle approach and works all the way up the education chain — from kindergarten right up to the university level — for all kinds of curriculum and structures. The system bridges the gap between different stakeholders in a school, such as students, parents, teachers, principal and education administrators.

For administrators like school boards and education directorates, which have to keep tabs on the functioning of many schools, M-Star offers immense value to monitor academic performance of individual schools as well as impact of schemes like mid-day meal or Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Campaign).

The application runs on proprietary OmVcard or an Online Multi-domain Value Card, costing just a few hundred rupees. Every child and staff member are given the OmVcard which they can insert into any computer where the application is loaded.

Incidentally, the card can be used to check the oft-quoted issue of teacher truancy. Teacher performance in a ‘single teacher’ school can be monitored by his supervisor remotely, not merely by looking at his or her attendance records, but by gauging the effectiveness

of teaching as borne out by the academic performance of the pupils.

Ultimately, if the Education Expert System gets linked to other national e-governance systems, such as the national ID project headed by Nandan Nilekani, then the possibilities are endless. It could analyse the reasons of dropping out from the system and the teachers become more accountable. The Right to Education could thus become a reality through technology.

Source: [blog.taragana.com/9](http://blog.taragana.com/) September 2009

RESOURCE

IIT Kharagpur receives Charles Babbage grant from Synopsys

(Nanowerk News) Synopsys Inc., a world leader in software and IP for semiconductor design, verification and manufacturing, today announced that the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IITKGP) is the first institution of higher education in India to receive the Charles Babbage Grant from Synopsys. Through the grant, IITKGP receives licenses of Synopsys' comprehensive electronic design automation (EDA) software and intellectual property. The grant also enables the Institute to purchase compute hardware for the planned Synopsys CAD Laboratory at IITKGP, which would focus exclusively on core EDA and CAD research. Although details are yet to be finalized, additional funding provided by Synopsys is planned to assist with the operational costs of the lab as Synopsys and IITKGP faculty collaborate on joint research goals and establish milestones to further expand VLSI education at the Institute. Synopsys also intends to provide support and training to the students working at the Synopsys CAD Laboratory to help them maximize their research efforts.

IIT Kharagpur and Synopsys have had strong and enriching research collaborations, especially related to verification methodologies, for close to a decade and a half. The two organizations have taken leading steps in fostering state-of-the-art education and research in the domain of VLSI and EDA. Synopsys was a co-founder in the Advanced VLSI (AVLSI) Design Laboratory at IIT Kharagpur and subsequently in the AVLSI Consortium, both being the first of their kind in India. The establishment of the Synopsys CAD Laboratory at IIT Kharagpur would further expand the collaboration between Synopsys and IIT Kharagpur, and extend the focus of their advanced and industry-relevant education and research beyond verification to other areas of core EDA.

"IIT Kharagpur and Synopsys have closely collaborated over the last decade to foster state-of-the-art research and education in the domains of VLSI and CAD," said Dr. Partha P. Chakrabarti, professor in the Department of Computer Science & Engineering and Dean of the Sponsored Research & Industrial Consultancy at IIT Kharagpur. "We are further expanding this relationship by working to establish the Synopsys CAD Laboratory at IIT Kharagpur, which will be utilized for advanced, leading-edge research in the EDA space, including CAD. The Laboratory would not only serve as a platform for the creation of new methodologies and tools, but also allow students the opportunity to use the latest EDA technologies, thus helping to develop the next generation of industry leaders." Dr. Chakrabarti continued, "At IIT Kharagpur, we greatly appreciate our time-tested, close collaboration with and support from Synopsys, and look forward to continuing to produce high-impact results with them."

Access to industrial design tools for advanced research and microelectronic design is a common challenge facing universities today. Synopsys helps resolve this issue through initiatives like the Charles Babbage Grant and its Worldwide University Program, which provide select universities with design software for modern electronic design flows and leading IC fabrication processes. Previous grant recipients in the USA include Case Western Reserve University, North Carolina State University, Purdue University, San Jose State University, Southern Methodist University and Syracuse University. Other recipients include the Chinese Academy of Sciences in China, Moscow Institute of Electronic Technology in Russia and Southampton University in the United Kingdom.

Chi-Foon Chan, president and COO at Synopsys, formally opened the Synopsys CAD Laboratory during a September 8th ceremony at IIT Kharagpur and delivered an invited Institute Lecture to students and faculty.

"Many of the early EDA pioneering efforts in India were carried out by a handful of technologists, many of whom have their roots at IIT Kharagpur. Synopsys has been working very closely with IIT Kharagpur for longer than a decade on verification-related challenges," commented Manoj Gandhi, senior vice president and general manager of the Verification Group at Synopsys. "Through the Charles Babbage Grant and our expanded scope of collaboration, Synopsys will help enable the university to further its reputation as a leading academic institution and give its students access to the latest EDA tools and equipment."



"Synopsys India has been actively associated with IIT Kharagpur through the inception of the Advanced VLSI Laboratory, Advanced VLSI Consortium and now the Synopsys CAD Laboratory," added Pradip Dutta, corporate vice president and managing director of Synopsys India. "We intend to use this grant to help carry out research in multiple areas of EDA tools and also enable IIT Kharagpur to enhance its reach in the field of VLSI education."

About the Charles Babbage Grant

The Charles Babbage Grant provides select universities worldwide with state-of-the-art EDA tools, training, support and technology. It enables institutions of higher education to enhance their expertise in microelectronics circuits and system design. Use of the Synopsys tools on modern, powerful computers from the grant helps universities to better prepare their graduates for the future by providing hands-on experience with current industry practices, modern design techniques, and actual design tools and compute hardware. This enhances their understanding of how learning applies to the real world of IC design. The grant is named after British mathematician and inventor Charles Babbage, who designed and built mechanical computing machines on principles that anticipated the modern electronic computers of today over 150 years ago.

About Synopsys

Synopsys, Inc. is a world leader in electronic design automation (EDA), supplying the global electronics market with the software, intellectual property (IP) and services used in semiconductor design, verification and manufacturing. Synopsys' comprehensive, integrated portfolio of implementation, verification, IP, manufacturing and field-programmable gate array (FPGA) solutions helps address the key challenges designers and manufacturers face today, such as power and yield management, software-to-silicon verification and time to results. These technology-leading solutions help give Synopsys customers a competitive edge in bringing the best products to market quickly while reducing costs and schedule risk. Synopsys is headquartered in Mountain View, California, and has more than 65 offices located throughout North America, Europe, Japan, Asia and India.

About the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur was set up by an Act of Parliament and was formally inaugurated in the year 1951. As the oldest and most diversified among the IITs, this institute is synonymous with the world famous "IIT System." Today, IIT Kharagpur has come a long way to its present position of pre-eminence with nineteen departments, seven centres,

seven schools of excellence and several sophisticated laboratories and central facilities. The institute has the student strength of about 8,000, faculty strength of more than 500 and a large base of supporting staff. In the recent convocation, the institute awarded more than 1,600 degrees including about 600 Bachelor's degrees, 800 Master's degrees and 228 Ph.D degrees. Recently it has ventured into intellectual property law and medical science and technology. It has carried out sponsored research worth more than Rs.171 crores in the last financial year.

Source: Synopsys [/nanowerk.com/](http://nanowerk.com/) 9 September 2009

Rs 31,000 cr to upgrade higher education sector

The Centre will spend around Rs 31,000 crore to support the state universities across the country to improve the quality of higher education, said the Union minister for Human Resources Development (HRD), Kapil Sibal.

Improvement in quality of higher education is required to arrest the brain drain, he observed. Sibal made these remarks while inaugurating the first Central University in the state at Koraput on Saturday.

The minister said, about 1.6 lakh students go abroad every year for higher studies. It could be checked if the quality of education is improved within the country. At the time of independent, he recalled, there were only 20 universities and 450 colleges with combined strength of one lakh students.

The number of educational institutions in the country has increased manifold and there now 480 universities and 22,000 colleges with 1.25 crore students and 5 lakh teachers. But the quality of education is not up to mark at many places.

Stating that the government is encouraging establishment of educational institutions in the public private partnership (PPP) mode, Sibal asked the corporate houses to participate in setting up of world-class educational institutes in the state. Efforts are being made to invite private partners from within the country and overseas to participate in opening up of high quality educational institutions in the PPP mode, he added.

He announced that the Center had planned to establish 2500 model schools and 200 Kendriya Vidyalayas in the country in the next two years to improve the primary education. In order to check the high dropout at the primary and middle school level, he said the government has recently introduced Right to Education Bill. This will help to reduce the dropout rate among the students. Out of every 100 students enrolled in primary classes, only 12 complete graduation in the country.

Chief minister Naveen Patnaik and higher education minister Debi Prasad Mishra and several others also spoke on the occasion.

The Central University will start its classes from Monday. The classes in English, Oriya, Sociology, Anthropology and Journalism and Mass Communication will be held at the Council of Analytical Tribal Studies (CATS) on temporary basis till the institute builds its own campus near Sunabeda.

The vice chancellor of the Central University, Surabhi Banerjee said the university has plans to introduce the school of health science, biotechnology and bioinformatics from the next year. A state-of-art audio-visual studio and community radio station would also be set up in the university campus, she added.

Source: Kolkata/[business-standard](#)/30 August 2009



Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to aserf@apeejay.edu

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

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