



## 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](http://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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All the News, views and opinions are available from the mentioned sources

## ASPECT

### Tuition Culture

*Tuition is seen as a minimum requirement for any kind of achievement in our academic scene, which is marked by competitive pressure and high aspirations.*



ONE of the more remarkable features of our education system is the way it has allowed and even encouraged the proliferation of private tuition outside the regular school system. This is something relatively unique to India, as it is not found to this extent even in countries where education is completely commercialised and privatised, such as Singapore.

The practice has become so widespread that no one even thinks that it is a concern. The very ubiquity of the activity puts pressure on children and parents to participate in it for fear that avoiding it will have adverse consequences on performance. Newspapers and handbills in urban areas regularly advertise the merits of tutorial colleges. Those who succeed in competitive examinations and in school board examinations proudly thank these teaching shops or their individual tutors when they are interviewed by the media.

#### Pressures

This is not a phenomenon confined to the rich or the middle classes. It seems that even in less-privileged circumstances, the pressures to send children for private tuition are just as great, if not greater. Survey data show that even children from poor households, in both urban and rural areas, regularly take private

There are numerous cases where schoolteachers themselves egg parents on to send their children for separate and paid tuitions. Where these classes are conducted by the teachers themselves, there is a direct conflict of interest, but the incentives are substantial in terms of less pressure of teaching at school.

In cities and towns across the country, children regularly sit down with private tutors, either in their own homes or in the teachers' homes. They typically pay much more than the regular school fees for such tuition. The practice is now so widespread that among the elite and the middle classes not going for tuition is seen as abnormal. Even among poor families, parents are under tremendous pressure to send their children for private tuition once they start lagging behind in school.

This is something that is evident in urban India, especially among middle-class households, where children are geared from an early age to prepare for competitive examinations for admission into professional courses. But the urge to invest in private tuition and the growing dependence of pupils upon it seem to have spread even to rural areas.

Thus, the Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) 2007, brought out by the Pratham Foundation, found that at least one-quarter of all pupils in elementary schools in rural India rely on private tuition in addition to attending classes at school. The problem is apparently most acute in West Bengal, where the survey found that more than 80 per cent of middle-school pupils in rural West Bengal were taking private tuition.

It is argued that this points to the poor quality of education in government schools, which forces children to go for private tuition. But this cannot be the main reason because the same survey found that the practice is just as prevalent among children of private schools. Indeed, in rural West Bengal the survey found the incidence of private tuition to be slightly higher among private school children in the lower grades and in Class VIII. The heavy reliance on private tuition in West Bengal probably reflects social attitudes that affect both parents and children.

The situation in the urban areas of the State, though not as well documented, is probably even more intense. For instance, a 2006 study by the Pratichi Trust of government-run primary schools in Kolkata found that the number of pupils of these schools taking private tuition was more than that in the ASER 2007 survey. It was 73 per cent in schools run by the

Kolkata District Primary School Corporation (KDPSC), 41 per cent in schools run by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and 50 per cent in the Shishu Shiksha Kendras (SSKs) of Kolkata. It is likely that the ratios are similar, if not higher, for urban children attending private schools.

The dominance of private tuition may reflect a peculiar academic culture where competitive pressure and high aspirations combine to create a milieu in which tuition is seen as a minimal requirement for any kind of academic achievement. Several surveys have found the performance of primary schoolchildren who did not go for tuition to be slightly poorer than those who did, but the difference in performance is not very large. At higher grades, the problem is self-reinforcing because teachers assume that their pupils go for such tuition and change their teaching methods accordingly.

This practice will be difficult to uproot simply because of the widespread acceptance, and even complicity, of all those involved. As a professor in a reputed college in Kolkata remarked, "We are all like the characters of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. As a teacher I am against those colleagues of mine who indulge in private tuition. But as a parent I send my son to private tutors. I think all of us teachers and parents have to rectify ourselves first." (**The Times of India**, June 21, 2001)

Yet, it is a problem that must be addressed because it has many negative effects. Dependence on private tuition may even be the most important feature militating against better quality in the school system, causing parents to expect and demand less in terms of actual teaching at school and reducing the incentives for teachers within the school as well.

#### No Longer Free

In addition, private tuition is obviously deeply inequalising because better-off parents are able to afford "better" tuition or even afford it at all. And it places a significant additional financial burden on parents even when the actual school education is ostensibly free. The Pratiche Trust study found that the average additional cost per child for private tuition was more than Rs.1,000 a year even at the primary level. Even at the SSKs for the less-privileged groups, the average expenditure per child on tuition was more than Rs.850.

Significantly, even poor households in slum areas were found to be making resources available for such tuition for their children, often by restricting the consumption of necessities. As a result, even when it is officially free, school education is effectively no longer free even for poor families in backward rural areas or urban slums

#### Public Interventions

There have been public interventions designed to combat this tendency. For instance, in West Bengal, where the problem is especially acute, in 2001 the State government banned private tuition by full-time teachers in government and government-aided institutions from the primary to the university level. It also promised to take the necessary legal steps to ensure the ban was enforced. This ban was supported by the teachers' associations as well. However, even the most recent survey evidence indicates the persistence of widespread dependence on private tuition.

But in other cases, even governments at the Centre and in the States connive explicitly or implicitly with the system of private tutoring. It is well known that almost all, if not absolutely all, successful candidates in entrance examinations for professional courses and the civil services have been through some private preparatory course. There are even scholarships for students from marginalised groups, such as the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled tribes, and Muslims and others, to help them attend such tuition classes. While the aim (increasing the access of such groups to higher education or the civil services) may be benevolent, this amounts to an official confession that private tuition is a necessary requirement for success.

Obviously, if this situation is to change, more than legal measures are needed. A complete overhaul of not just the school system but even more importantly the school board examination system and competitive examinations is called for. Even this may not be enough because, as the professor in Kolkata noted, we first have to change ourselves.

**Source:** [frontlineonnet/](http://frontlineonnet/)24 October 2009

#### **NEWS**

##### **40 deemed universities don't meet norms**

The reason why HRD ministry and even the otherwise forthcoming minister Kapil Sibal do not want to talk about the report on deemed universities by its own review committee is because the panel has said that over 40 universities, most of them private, do not deserve deemed status.

Highly placed sources said the committee found only 38 deemed universities to have excellent infrastructure. The report said 44 could retain deemed status after improving certain aspects of infrastructure, research and administration. The rest, a little over 40, were beyond redemption and could not retain deemed university status.



Sources also said of the deemed universities that do not deserve deemed status, three were in Haryana, two each in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The bulk of deemed universities not found fit are in South India, especially Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Sources said universities that could still improve were likely to be given three years time.

The reason why ministry does not want to talk about the report, sources said, is due to the fact that it will find it impossible to take away the deemed status of any university. Another reason for ministry's silence, they added, is that powerful politicians who run many of the deemed universities have been working to thwart any disciplinary action. Even legally, the ministry cannot take action as under the UGC Act, deemed status is given at the recommendation of UGC.

A similar process has to be followed in case of revocation of deemed status. But UGC's review committee of deemed universities has not found fault with any of them. UGC has also forwarded its report in case of nearly 65 deemed universities to the ministry. This will further tie ministry's hand from taking any action.

As already reported by TOI, the biggest inadequacy of deemed universities, according to the review report, is the manner in which they have started hundreds of study centres all over India. Fee and administrative structure of private deemed universities are totally unregulated and are run in a whimsical fashion, the report said.

Family members and relatives of promoters held a substantial section of the report deals with how higher education was being run as a business and academic and administrative posts.

Research output of most private deemed universities, the report said, was sub-standard and did not find place in SCOPUS, the largest abstract and citation database, which covers 16,500 peer-reviewed journals. A source said that during presentation, representatives of many universities did not know about SCOPUS. The idea to tally what the varsities claimed as research work with SCOPUS was mooted by Goverdhan Mehta, a member of the committee.

The report also found fault with government-run deemed universities, especially their administrative structure.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)29 October 2009

**Centre to implement project to improve tech education**

In a few years, at least 200 engineering colleges in the country are expected to have better faculty and research centres through the Union ministry of human resource development's Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP), the second phase of which is to take off in April 2010.

A project information document (PID) prepared by the World Bank says TEQIP II, taken up at an estimated Rs 2,350 crore, "will respond to two new issues preparing more postgraduate students to reduce shortage of qualified faculty and producing more R&D in collaboration with industry."

It says improving quality and learning outcomes would require tackling insufficient faculty qualifications and large faculty shortage. The government of India's estimate of the production of PhDs is just 1,000 a year for a student population of 1.7 million, compared to a PhD production of 9,000 in the US and 12,000 in China. "The consequence is teachers with bachelor degrees teaching bachelor students, and teaching methods which emphasise theoretical rote learning," the PID says.

TEQIP project co-ordinator C Chinnaraj says: "The project will strengthen around 140 institutions to improve learning and employability of graduates through the implementation of reforms and investments. It will offer pedagogical training to faculty of 60 participating institutions through a faculty development programme, and centres of excellence in 30 of these institutions."

The project is garnering a lot of interest in academic and industry circles because of what it has helped achieve in the first phase. In various technical institutes in Tamil Nadu, TEQIP I funded the procurement of sophisticated equipment, infrastructure development, academic reforms, and improved the interface between institutes through networking.

"It was because of the TEQIP project that 110 of our faculty were able to be trained in various fields in foreign universities in the last two years. It has also enabled professors from foreign universities to visit our institutions, interact with the faculty and students, which has inspired our students, and get inputs to develop our labs. We were also able to procure expensive equipment for our labs, each costing as much as Rs 10 lakh. In the first phase we were able to develop our infrastructure. In phase II, we hope to work on R&D and on developing PG courses," said Dr Ammasai Gounden, dean of TEQIP at NIT, Tiruchi. NIT, Tiruchi, is expecting to get Rs 15-20 crore in January 2010.

An advertisement seeking applications from interested institutions will be put out in November.

**Source:** Chennai [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)29 October 2009



## **FICCI Higher Education Summit 2009: Kapil Sibal, Yale President, VCs to speak on imperatives for higher education**

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), in partnership with United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF), is organizing the FICCI Higher Education Summit 2009 on 6-7 November 2009 at Federation House, FICCI, New Delhi. The theme of the conference is "Imperatives for Higher Education: Inclusion, Expansion and Excellence".

The inaugural address will be by Mr. Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India. There will be a special address by Smt D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for Higher Education, MHRD, Government of India. The keynote address will be by Prof. Richard Levin, President, Yale University, USA.

USA is the partner country and delegates from Canada, UK, Australia, Africa and CIS countries, other than India, are expected to participate.

The two day of the conference will witness deliberations on policy direction and sharing of knowledge and best practices. More than 500 delegates are expected to participate in the conference.

### Objective of the conference

Through this summit, FICCI endeavours to bring together key policy makers, educationists and corporates at both national and international level for deliberations and interactions that would lead to knowledge sharing, identification of policy and practice imperatives and propose an action plan that would facilitate the growth of quality higher education and enable the nation to sustain the desired economic growth.

### Key Speakers

The list of eminent speakers invited to speak during the event include: Dr. K Kasturirangan, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India; B. S. Baswan, Director, Indian Institute of Public Administration; Prof. Deepak Pental, Vice-Chancellor, University of Delhi; Dr. Seyed E. Hasnain, Vice-Chancellor, University of Hyderabad; Ashok Thakur, Additional Secretary, MHRD, Government of India; Prof. L. K. Maheswari, Vice-Chancellor, BITS, Pilani; Prof. Sanjay G. Dhande, Director, IIT Kanpur; Dr. P. K. Barhai, Vice-Chancellor, BITS, Mesra.

### Major highlights of the event

The following are some of the major highlights of the event:

- *The Big Debate* on the topic of "Effective Regulatory Framework and Quality Assurance in Higher Education"

- *Panel Discussion:* There will be four panel discussions on "Innovation for Augmenting Financial Viability and Affordability", "Public-Private Partnerships - Yes, But How To Make It Work For Both Partners", "Technology Integration For Better Outreach And Quality Improvement", "Education, Employability And Skills Are Today's Buzz Words In Higher Education: But How Do You Train In Employability".

- *Plenary session* on "Global Competitiveness Through Partnerships"

- *Master Classes* on "Regulatory Guidelines for foreign universities in India" and "How To Convert A Teaching-Learning Institution Into Research Institution"

- *Special lecture* on "Sustainability/Climate Change Practices In Indian Institutions"

The first FICCI Higher Education Summit was organized in the year 2004 and since then it has become an annual event, which is eagerly awaited by students, professionals and academicians. In the year 2008 the summit was organized under the theme of "Higher Education at the Crossroads: Imperatives for Policy & Practice" in partnership with Canada on 25-26 November 2008 at FICCI, New Delhi. The event was supported by Ministry of Human Resource & Development, Government of India, and the leading global consulting firm Ernst & Young was the Knowledge Partner.

MBA universe.com is the Online Partner of this important summit.

**Source:** [mbauniverse.com](http://mbauniverse.com)/20 October 2009

## **Follow AICTE guidelines**

The Madras High Court has upheld the orders of the principal secretary/ commissioner of technical education and chairman, board of examinations, directing the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya Polytechnic in Coimbatore, an autonomous institution, to follow the guidelines of the AICTE with regard to the curriculum and method of evaluation.

The polytechnic was granted an autonomous status in May 1980. The AICTE issued guidelines on the scheme of autonomous polytechnics and other diploma level institutions throughout the country. And by letters dated March 17 and April 8, 2009, the State Technical Education Commissioner directed the petitioner college to follow the guidelines and to take corrective measures with regard to curriculum and



evaluation methods; else the autonomous status may be withdrawn. The petitioner college filed the present writ petition contending that the directives tended to interfere with the internal administration, which was impermissible in law.

Being an autonomous body, it was free to prescribe its own curricula and method of evaluation, it added.

Dismissing the petition, Justice S Nagamuthu pointed out that the State Board had prescribed nine subjects for audit course to all the polytechnics in the State. The total number of marks awarded was 400. But the petitioner college awarded 1,300 marks for the same course, which included 100 marks each for value education and English communication skill and another 100 marks for any one of the subjects like community based services/cultural education/NCC/NSS/ physical education. When a student who had secured marks out of 400 was made to compete with a student who had secured marks out of a total of 1,300, there would not be a level playing field and this would create unnecessary complications.

**Plea to Protect Lake:** A writ plea has been filed in the Madras High Court for a directive to the authorities concerned to maintain the General Kumaramangalam lake in Ayyanavaram- Peravallur villages by constructing a parapet wall around the entire perimeter of the lake.

In his public interest writ petition, V Karunakaran, president of GKM Colony Consumer Federation Council, submitted that the lake was situated on a land spreading over five acres for many decades.

An Amman temple and a church, and many other politically influenced persons were now making attempts to encroach upon the lake. It had shrunk to about four acres. The encroachments were still on, he said.

**Order to Nilgiris Collector:** The Madras High Court has directed the Nilgiris district collector and Uthagamandalam municipality commissioner to appear before it on November 4 in connection with a writ petition seeking the demolition of unauthorised constructions in the district.

When the petition came up for further hearing on Friday, a division bench comprising justices S J Mukhopadhaya and M Duraiswamy observed that despite different directions issued on different dates, the authorities concerned had not yet demolished the unauthorised constructions in the area in question, particularly in Uthagamandalam.

“For proper assistance in the case, we direct the Collector of Nilgiris and the Commissioner of

Uthagamandalam to appear in court on November 4,” the bench said.

**Source:** Chennai [/expressbuzz.com](http://expressbuzz.com)/24 October 2009

### **Gap in pledge to IIM & draft**

*- Panel not to pick board members*

Human resource development minister Kapil Sibal's promise to hand over nominations of IIM board members to a proposed independent collegium of experts conflicts with his own ministry's plans, draft documents suggest.

The draft law that aims to create the appointments collegium — a panel of experts expected to be insulated from government influence — suggests that the body will steer clear of nominating members to boards of institutes.

If the draft law is passed without changes, the proposed collegium will have no role in appointing members to the boards of IIMs and IITs, currently appointed largely by the government. The institutes want selection of the boards to be freed from government intervention.

The collegium is aimed at rupturing a controversial umbilical cord that makes selection panels for education posts dependent on the government — and so potentially compromised in the choices they make.

**The Telegraph** has access to the draft law, the National Commission for Higher Education and Research bill, which aims to create an overarching regulator — the NCHER — and the collegium.

After meeting directors of the IIMs on October 16, the minister had announced that the collegium would recommend members to the institutes' boards of governors.

But the draft law states that the collegium's role will be limited to proposals for “executive” posts in higher education — vice-chancellors of central universities, directors of IITs and IIMs, and regulatory agency officials.

The collegium will nominate members for a proposed new accreditation watchdog — the National Authority for Regulation in Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions — apart from the NCHER.

Higher education department officials and sources refused to comment on the conflict between Sibal's promise and the draft law, which the ministry plans to introduce in Parliament soon.

However, the HRD ministry is now said to be “firefighting” to resolve the conflict between its own plans and Sibal's promise.



IIM boards may be allowed to pick members on the collegium who can then in turn assist the boards in picking their members — without the collegium as a body participating in the process.

The HRD ministry had specifically left appointments to the boards — of the IITs, IIMs or other top institutions — out of the ambit of the proposed collegium, sources said.

The collegium has been planned as a body of academic experts who will come together only when a series of appointments needs to be made.

The HRD ministry apparently did not want to burden the collegium with appointments to the boards — each of India's IITs, IIMs and the National Institutes of Technology has a board with over 10 members on average.

The collegium, according to current HRD ministry plans, is envisaged as a body consisting of experts drawn from 15 diverse streams of higher education.

**Source:** New Delhi [/telegraphindia/](#)26 October 2009

### Getting into IIT will get a lot tougher

From 2011, IIT aspirants will have a tougher time getting into the hallowed institution—they will need 80-85 per cent marks in their Class XII board exams to be eligible for admission instead of the current 60 per cent.

"This will not only help get rid of IIT entrance exam teaching shops that have mushroomed, but will also make students give more attention to the board exams," said human resource development minister Kapil Sibal on Monday. He was speaking after a meeting with the IIT Council, the apex decision-making body for India's premier engineering institutes.

An IIT committee is currently examining these reforms, and is expected to submit its report early next year. The changes in the eligibility criteria will be effective for those appearing for IIT-JEE (Joint Entrance Examination) in 2011.

Sibal said the IITs are concerned about the proliferation of coaching institutes, which results in "children giving scant attention to the board exams and focusing only on IIT entrance coaching". He said: "At present, students need to secure 60 per cent in their Class XII exams to become eligible for an IIT admission. This is not acceptable. The minimum marks required should be raised to 80 to 85 per cent." However, coaching institutes appeared nonchalant about the ministry's decision.

Aakash Chaudhry, director of Aakash Institute, which coaches students for IIT-JEE, said, "Coaching cannot be eliminated. As long as the IIT-JEE exam exists,

there will be need for coaching. Learning in schools alone is insufficient to crack the IIT-JEE. They focus on all-round development and extra-curricular activities, and not just academics. We focus only on academics."

According to Chaudhry, the government's move to raise the cut-off percentage will only raise students' stress levels. However, he also admitted it could make them more disciplined. He said schools and coaching institutes serve different purposes, with the latter focusing only on preparing students for IIT-JEE.

This is not the first time the call for reforming the IIT-JEE system has been given. In their previous interaction between Sibal and the IIT directors some months back, this issue was discussed, and a committee with representatives from all IITs is already working on this.

"We are working on methods to factor in the Class XII results in the selection procedure of the IITs," an IIT director said on Monday.

One of the methods is to increase the eligibility marks from 60 per cent to as high as 85 per cent. "We have noticed that students are under great stress due to the compulsion of attending these coaching classes even as they study for the board exams," the director said. "This is especially difficult for those students who cannot afford these expensive teaching shops. Hence there is a need to give greater importance to Class XII board exams." Another way could be to give some weightage to Class XII results in the final selection for IIT-JEE. "Fixing the weightage of the entrance exam and the Class XII board exams could help determine the final list of successful candidates," the director added.

Sibal said, "Coaching centres' training results in the students not studying seriously for the Class XII exams. We want to get rid of coaching centres by giving greater weightage to the board exams." But this would mean a giant logistical exercise for the ministry as well as the IITs as there are close to 30 different state boards in India, and the ministry would need to bring all these board marks at some parity.

**Source:** New Delhi [/indiatoday/](#)20 October 2009

### Global Indian Foundation to expand in US

The Global Indian Foundation, the largest Pan-Asian educational institute, built on education excellence and the winner of International Asia Pacific Quality Award 2009, second highest award in the field of education, is opening a school in United States of America.

The Global Indian Foundation is the first ever Indian educational institute in the world to set up a school at San Francisco, which will be offering American



curriculum .This marks a major milestone in the growth of GIIS, Singapore's largest international school with an enrollment of over 4,000 students.

Referring to GIF's commitment towards US, Atul Temurnikar, co-founder & chairman, GIF, said, "United States is home to huge number of Indian and Chinese nationals. With more multinational organizations choosing to base their regional headquarters in the US, many expatriate parents face school placement problems for their children .We endeavor to provide quality education to youth regardless of nationality and inculcate a sense of social and cultural integration for our students."

"It is our constant endeavor to deliver the highest standards in education to our students and replicate the Global model of excellence and bring the best practices to US," he added.

GIF has invested significant resources in improving quality at all levels of its schools, focusing on the needs of the student and continuous process improvements. It aims to meet the highest quality benchmarks and has been named as one of the world's most quality-conscious educational institutions by APAO- Asia Pacific Quality Organization

#### About Global Indian Foundation:

Global Indian Foundation (GIF) is a non-profit educational institution headquartered in Singapore It was started in 2002 with the objective of providing world class education to Indians and global citizens worldwide. GIF has established schools under the "Global Indian International Schools" which are K12 or Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools and Cultural centres . GIF is led and advised by internationally acclaimed & eminent leaders. Please visit [www.globalindian.sg](http://www.globalindian.sg) for more details.

#### About Global Indian International School:

Global Indian International Schools (GIIS),are non-profit schools offering Kindergarten to Junior college education including CBSE (India), IGCSE Cambridge (UK), and the International Baccalaureate IBO (Geneva). GIIS has over 17,000 students enrolled & 1500 teachers in its 18 schools in Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, India and New Zealand. More information on GIIS schools is available at: [www.globalindianschool.org](http://www.globalindianschool.org)

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)16 October 2009

### **Govt. scoffs at UGC leniency**

A Human Resource Development Ministry review has dismissed findings of a University Grants Commission probe that cleared many deemed universities.

A review panel appointed by HRD minister Kapil Sibal has argued that a clean chit in the UGC probe cannot be used by deemed universities to claim immunity from adverse findings in the ministry review.

The five-member panel yesterday decided to argue in its report to Sibal that its review could not be compared with the UGC probe, as their terms of reference were different, **The Telegraph** has learnt.

At its meeting yesterday, the panel finalised its report, which will now be submitted to Sibal and then made public online.

India has 130 deemed universities, mostly private-owned. Most of these were set up during the tenure of previous HRD minister Arjun Singh.

The decision to review the functioning of deemed universities were among Sibal's first tasks after taking charge of the ministry. The UGC was advised to launch a parallel probe.

The panel's decision to officially distinguish its role from that of the UGC probe is an attempt to ensure that the UGC probe is not used by dubious deemed universities to claim government approval, sources said.

It also seeks to clarify that in the event of any divergence between the findings of the two probes, the HRD ministry's review report will be considered supreme, the sources said.

The UGC probe involved on-site visits to each deemed university and an evaluation primarily of their infrastructure — teacher to student ratio, number and quality of classrooms, laboratories and other facilities.

The HRD ministry review team on the other hand asked each institute to reply to a questionnaire and deliver a presentation. The review team then grilled institute representatives. The team's report on an institution is based on replies to the questionnaire, the presentation and the responses during the grilling.

The review team plans to counter criticism that the UGC probe is superior because of on-site inspections by showing that the commission findings — on infrastructure — match almost exactly with replies to their questionnaire.

"The ministry team, sitting in Delhi, has received the same information on infrastructure that the UGC probe found by visiting the site. But their conclusions on many institutions differ," a source said.

The team consists of former Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, director Goverdhan Mehta, neurosurgeon P.N. Tandon, IIT Kanpur chairman M. Ananthkrishnan and former Indian Institute of Advanced Studies director Mrinal Miri.

**Source:** New Delhi [/news.hinduworld.com/](http://news.hinduworld.com/)20 October 2009



## **HRD may come down hard on Pvt. deemed varsities**

After more than three months of extensive videotaped scrutiny of 130 deemed universities, HRD ministry's review committee report, sources said, has labelled many of these institutions as being run like private limited family-run companies.

The report, to be finalised on Monday, has gone into each aspect of deemed universities and pointed out institution-wise irregularities. However, the final decision on taking action is being left to HRD minister Kapil Sibal. "Our brief is to give the factual position and not recommend action. We have highlighted inadequacies that UGC's review report does not state," a source said.

But HRD's report may turn out to be a whitewash since any action by the ministry can be countered by the deemed varsities through the clean chit they have got from the UGC panel. They can point out that as per the law, deemed status is given by the ministry on UGC's recommendation. Sources claimed that asking UGC to review its own action was a ploy by a section in the ministry to shift the focus away from the way the ministry and UGC were at one time hand in glove in giving the deemed status.

In case of private deemed universities, the biggest inadequacy, the report says, is the manner in which they have started study centres all over India. "Deemed universities of South have study centres in Delhi and UP with hundreds of students being taught by irregular faculty. Distance education has become a money making exercise. This has come about due to loopholes in the UGC guidelines and is in contravention of regulations," an official said.

Sources said most private deemed universities in South India and in UP are in appalling condition and do not deserve the status. "The fee and administrative structure of private deemed universities is totally unregulated. The report focuses on this aspect and states it in each case where it is unregulated," the official said.

The report points out instances of how a few days before making a presentation before the committee, non-family members were brought in as vice-chancellors. In some cases, when the committee asked who the VC was earlier, names of promoters' relatives came out. "There were many instances of family members making presentations on behalf of universities," the official said.

The research output of most of the private deemed varsities, the report says, is sub-standard and does not find a place in SCOPUS, the largest abstract and citation database that covers 16,500 peer-reviewed journals. An official said during the presentations,

representatives of many varsities did not know about SCOPUS.

The report also finds fault with government-run deemed universities, especially their administrative structure. "The report says many of them lack clarity," an official said.

The report categorises deemed universities into three groups. The first consists of universities with excellent facilities, the second has institutions that meet all requirements, and the last those which have been found lacking in many aspects. It has also criticised regulatory bodies like AICTE, UGC and NCTE for lack of coordination resulting in deemed universities exploiting the loopholes.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/) 19 October 2009

## **IIMs sharpen focus on foreign partnerships**

IIM-Ahmedabad has around 75 tie-ups while IIM-Calcutta has around 50 partnerships with B-schools abroad. Encouraged by the positive response they received from the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) on opening up campuses on foreign shores, some of the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) have also started scouting for foreign collaborations.

The IIMs reason that foreign tie-ups are important given the increasing demand for student and faculty exchange programmes and joint programmes in research and training.

The IIMs are also exploring increased international accreditation to help them gain better global access and aid them in forming alliances with international institutes. Global accreditation assists in attracting more foreign students & opening up opportunities for tie-ups with foreign universities.

IIM-Ahmedabad (IIM-A), for instance, is evaluating collaborations with three top international schools — the University of Virginia, Ohio State University and Duke University. The faculty from each of the three business schools are expected to visit IIM-A for discussions during the next several weeks. This is in addition to nearly 75 tie-ups that the IIM-A already has with different renowned business schools. Sources at IIM-A say more foreign collaborations is expected to help the institute become a globally acknowledged management school.

Likewise, IIM-Calcutta (IIM-C) is exploring more partnerships with foreign universities. Shekhar Choudhuri, director, IIM-C, says, "We are looking at increasing our international collaborations. Currently, we have 50 collaborations with foreign universities.



More foreign collaboration is important for student exchange programmes because at IIM Calcutta, student intake is increasing and each foreign partner institute takes only two-three students. So, this year, we have 408 students, next year we would have 460 students. We need more foreign partnerships with educational institutes so that we can send all our students overseas on various programmes.”

IIM-C is also exploring partnerships in countries where it does not have any collaboration yet. For instance, IIM-C is looking at universities in China and Australia. The institute already has collaborations with institutes in Germany, UK, France and Belgium. “We are looking at a few joint research papers in order to boost collaboration as well as improve overall quality of research. So, currently we are carrying out joint faculty research with MIT, US. Some of our faculty is also into joint research with Harvard Business School,” adds Choudhuri.

Both IIM-C and IIM-A are also concentrating on global accreditations in order to help them gain better global access and aid them in forming alliances with international institutes.

IIM-A took the first step towards global recognition by becoming the first management school in the country to have been accorded EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) accreditation. EQUIS is a leading international system of quality assessment, improvement and accreditation of higher education institutions of management and business administration.

IIM-C has sought certificates from the Association of Advanced Collegiate School of Business (AACSB). The institute is also seeking the European Quality Improvement System label from the European Foundation of Management Development (EFMD).

Till April 2008, nearly 550 institutions had been accredited by the AACSB, of which 96 are outside the US. Over 110 institutes had been accredited by EFMD in 33 countries till June 2008.

Simultaneously, the MHRD has expressed interest to tie up with the world’s leading universities to ensure that its “innovation universities” are a class apart from the pack. Among the American universities that are being approached are Yale, Stanford and MIT. The government plans to set up 14 innovation universities over the next few years.

The government proposes to set up these universities as “global centres of innovation” and would like to draw on the talent and expertise of leading universities. Among other things, MHRD is reportedly keen on chartered schools, vocational education options and twinning programmes at the higher education level.

Source: Kolkata/[business-standard](http://business-standard.com)/26 October 2009

### **IIT and IIM site identification panel to arrive today**

As a five-member MHRD team is reaching Rajasthan on Friday for physical verification of the proposed IIT-Rajasthan and IIM sites, it seems a battle won by state chief minister Ashok Gehlot.

MHRD sources informed that the department had already finalised to set up the IIT-R at Jodhpur and IIM at Udaipur and the committee visit was meant to complete the formalities.

The committee, headed by the additional secretary in the Union ministry for human resource development, Ashok Thakur, who is also the convenor of the committee, along with other members would visit Udaipur and Jodhpur on Friday and Saturday respectively.

The MHRD has reportedly agreed to set up the IIT-R at Jodhpur even though Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had recently questioned the MHRD as why Kota was not being considered for the premier institute. The PMO intervention came thanks to the efforts of senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh, who had assured the Kota people to set up the IIT-R there. Singh had given the assurance while campaigning for Congress winner Iyengar Singh during the Lok Sabha polls. Even the Vasundhara Raje-led BJP government had also recommended Kota to house the IIT-R.

Jodhpur is the home constituency of chief minister Gehlot and he has been strongly lobbying to set up the IIT-R there. The tug-of-war between the Congress leaders and initially among the Congress and the BJP has been a major hurdle in identification of the site for IIT-R, which is functioning for the past two batches at IIT-Kanpur. Among the seven states, where new IITs are coming up, Rajasthan is the only where the issue has still not been finalised.

The constituted Vyas Committee had recently recommended land at Mavli tehsil in Udaipur district for IIM and Karwad, Jhipasni and Ghadav villages, some 22 km from Jodhpur town on Jodhpur-Nagaur NH-65, as location for IIT-R. It was learnt that the committee members will visit these places to reassure their feasibility.

Principal secretary higher education Vipin Chandra Sharma, who is also one of the members of the search committee, said the team would arrive from Delhi on Friday. The other members of the committee are Prof Prem Kumar Kalra, director IIT Rajasthan, Prof Sameer Kumar Barua, director IIT Ahmedabad and Prof S S Mantha, acting chairman of the AICTE, New Delhi.



The team was supposed to visit the state earlier on October 7 and 8. However due to inconvenience of some members it was postponed. Sharma said the committee will inspect various sites proposed by the state government for the proposed IIM in Udaipur on Friday and leave for Jodhpur on Saturday to look into the site for the IIT in Jodhpur.

The state government had earlier constituted a high-power committee, headed by V S Vyas, noted economist and now a member of the Prime Ministers Economic Advisory Committee, to suggest suitable locations for the IIM and IIT had proposed Udaipur and Jodhpur for locations for the IIM and IIT respectively. Sharma said "currently we have no other cities in mind and we are focusing on these two sites already suggested by the expert committee."

**Source:** Jaipur [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)23 October 2009

### **IITs and Institutionalized**

As a new graduate student in the computer science department at Rutgers in the '80s, I was introduced to a faculty member whose immediate reaction was, "Ah so you are from India. You must be very bright." It was an interesting response. Regardless of whether I am bright or not, it was a reasonable assumption. The professor had taught many Indian students before and they had all been very bright. So if he generalized from experience and concluded that all Indian students that arrive at Rutgers are bright, he is justified in doing so. However, if he concludes from experience that all Indian students are bright, the conclusion is wrong because it suffers from sample selection bias.

The students that arrive at Rutgers and other elite US institutions from India are not randomly picked from the general population of Indian kids. Instead, they are from a rather severely restricted set - the set of students that have been lucky in the random draw of life. They were lucky to have been born to the right parents; parents who were rich enough to send their kids to good schools so that they got a sound foundation up to high school level. They were lucky in the random genetic draw of life: they were intelligent. As mentioned before, only about 2 percent of applicants to the IITs make it to an IIT. Being born to well-off parents and being born intelligent is not sufficient. One has to be lucky in not making careless mistakes at the entrance exam. Lots of luck is involved.

And here's the irony of it all: these lucky kids get a huge helping hand. They get almost free education at the IITs. The government charges only a fraction of the actual cost of education. The winners take it all.

There is no conceivable reason for subsidizing high-quality higher education. Higher education has high private returns. That means, the financial benefits of higher education are greater than the cost of the education. IIT engineers have higher salaries than what they would have had if they had not gone to an IIT and this difference is larger than the full cost of education. This is empirically verifiable. (I will not digress into how the social returns to an IIT education compares to the private returns. That's an issue we can go into later.) So at the very least, what should be done is to price higher education in elite institutions at full cost.

This may meet the obvious objection that this will price some people from getting an elite education. The response is equally obvious: give all those who require financial assistance educational loans that are repayable upon employment. No one should be denied the opportunity to get an IIT education merely because they are not rich. There are ways around credit constraints.

In any event, there's something absurd about subsidizing the education at elite institutions in a country where the general level of education is so abysmal. It is not my case that elite institutions are not required. Any population has people who are considerably smarter than the average. It's in society's interest to make the most of them. The absurdity arises in the selective support to unnecessary subsidies to tertiary education and that too at the expense of the needed support for broad-based primary and secondary education.

The numbers are stunning. About 90 percent of Indian children drop out of school by the 12th grade. So only about one in 10 goes on to higher education. Then of those who graduate from colleges, only an estimated 25 percent are directly employable. That gives an indication of the quality of instruction of the average Indian college. Not just the quality delivered but also the quantity of educational opportunities available is tiny relative to potential demand. Elite institutions like the IITs and IIMs probably accommodate around 10,000 a year. Other professional schools such as AIIMS for medicine and IISc for sciences perhaps add a few thousand more.

There is something perverse in attempting to raise the peak performance in education and not even making the feeblest attempts at raising the general level of education. The consequences of this are dire and we will look into that the next time.

**Source:** [/asiancorrespondent/](http://asiancorrespondent/)27 October 2009



## **IITs keen to break hold of coaching centres on students**

The IITs have been toying with various proposals over the years to reform the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and break the stranglehold of coaching centres. One of the ideas considered by a committee set up by the Joint Admission Board (JAB) was to permit only those students who were in the upper 2% of Class X and XII -- to be determined by school boards -- to take JEE.

This proposal was first made in 2005 but was not accepted by the HRD ministry and 60% in Class XII was fixed as minimum eligibility. When the JAB met in August, it was decided to reconsider the 2% recommendation.

JAB feels 60% criterion is "too low" to make a difference to the number of students taking JEE. "This number (IIT aspirants) is increasing year after year and the strain on the system grows without any sign of reaching a plateau," the JAB said in a note.

It said the "sole aim" of coaching institutes was to teach students to "crack" the JEE. "More seriously, the coaching institutions are making a mockery of our school education, exploiting the vulnerability of students and parents. Setting question papers to select 5,000 out of 3.5 lakh aspirants makes it mandatory for them to be set at a high level. JEE has thus become an examination, which can be cleared only by the coached though it is meant to find students with 'raw intelligence' at the higher secondary level. Students who have skipped three years of schooling to attend coaching classes to get through JEE acquire an 'ends justify means' attitude. It is these students who resort to habitual cogging in IIT subsequently," the note said.

Another recommendation was to admit students to IITs without allotting branches. The All India Rank, the note said, did not take into account the aptitude of students and consequently extraneous considerations played a major role in selection of branches.

**Source:** New Delhi [/timesofindia/](#)21 October 2009

## **'India has become an important global player'**

### Can you elaborate on the India strategy?

The strategy reflects Norway's increased focus on India. One of the new instruments is an India research programme in the Norwegian Research Council. We want to forge multiple and close links between institutions of research and higher education in India and Norway.

Norway is keen to pursue a knowledge-based policy towards India. We have established an India Forum in

Norway in order to further strengthen collaboration between the public and the private sector, academia, NGOs and cultural actors.

### What is the rationale behind it?

With its strong economic growth over the last 20 years, the dynamic development of its political system, and the world's second largest population, India has become an increasingly important global player. Co-operation between Norway and India is in a dynamic phase. It has changed from traditional development assistance, which started in the 1950s to today's modern political dialogue, institutional co-operation, commercial engagement and catalytic efforts in selected areas of societal development.

### What are the focus areas?

The main objectives include further strengthening of co-operation on societal issues and research between Norway and India. The ministry of education and research has a strong focus on the higher education and research co-operation through the follow-up of the Science and Technology Agreement between India and Norway (from 2006) and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Co-operation in the Field of Education between India and Norway (from 2008). We have recently had meetings with our Indian counterparts under the two agreements. These discussions make a good basis for future higher education and research co-operation between the two countries.

### Will there be any exchange programmes for Indian and Norwegian scholars?

The strategy introduces a programme to be administered by the Research Council of Norway, to promote research co-operation between India and Norway in certain priority areas. This programme will provide additional resource, help to ensure stability and a long-term approach, and also provide incentives for co-operation on regional challenges in South Asia. The strategy will also facilitate exchange of students and researchers.

**Source:** TNN [/timesofindia/](#)26 October 2009

## **India state changes madrasa rules**

Madrasas give an education to poorer students; Madrasas or traditional Islamic religious schools in the Indian state of West Bengal are to switch to English as the medium of instruction.

The programme will be introduced in phases, state Minority Affairs Minister Abdus Sattar announced. "We believe in modernising our traditional form of education so that our boys and girls can compete with the best," he told the BBC. He said that 10 madrasas in the state



will make the switch this term. The remaining 566 madrasas will follow within a few years.

### Curriculum modernisation

The overwhelming majority of Madrasas in West Bengal are either government-run or government-approved - both are subject to rules promulgated by the state's Madrasa Education Board (MEB).

Girls outnumber boys in West Bengal's Madrasas only handfuls are completely independent and do not fall under the board's remit. Seventy Madrasas in West Bengal opened this year - 34 exclusively for women.

Mr Sattar, himself once a Madrasa teacher, said the modernisation of the curriculum in religious schools has been taking place for a while and modern science and mathematics have already been introduced.

He said that both the US and Pakistan have sent teams to study the West Bengal Madrasa system to study the impact of earlier changes.

"But without English as the medium of instruction, our students cannot get the best education. So we recommended the use of English as the medium of instruction in all government Madrasas and those approved by government," said Sohrab Hossain, chairman of the MEB in West Bengal.

When the Marxists first came to power in the state, they did away with English at the primary level of education. But two decades later, they reversed their decision and reintroduced English at the primary level.

Their move came after huge criticisms that students from West Bengal were suffering in all-India competition, both in jobs and higher education, due to lack of proficiency in English.

Muslims comprise 26% of West Bengal's 80 million people - they are mostly poor farmers or small traders who can only afford to send their children to Madrasas to get an education.

"So unless we modernise the Madrasa system, we will not be able to provide quality education to most Muslim aspirants," Mr. Hossain said.

"Our Madrasas don't produce the Taliban, they will produce engineers and doctors."

**Source:** Calcutta [/news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)/16 October 2009

### **Meet on pharma starts**

A high-profile executive group comprising eminent personalities from across the country kicked off a conference on pharmaceutical sciences at the UGC Networking Resource Centre at Panjab University on Friday.

Following recommendations of the Task Force, established by the MHRD to promote research in basic sciences, UGC decided to set up the centre at the University Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

According to information, UGC has also sanctioned a whopping Rs 5 crore for the project. The objective of the centre is to foster research and provide training in higher education in the field of pharmaceutical sciences.

The centre will provide modern facilities for researchers and faculty of other institutes.

Exposure to modern facilities, latest techniques and training to post-graduates, researchers, entry and mid-level faculty in the frontier areas will be the central theme of this MHRD initiative. The programmes are open to candidates on All-India basis and selections will be made on merit.

Besides, in-house resources at UIPS, the project will embark upon the on-campus centralized facilities at Central Instrumentation Laboratory (CIL), Centre with Potential for Excellence in Biomedical Sciences (CPEBS) and allied departments on the campus.

The meet began with Prof Karan Vasisht, co-ordinator of the centre and chairperson of UIPS, apprising the committee members about its various initiatives.

The executive group meeting discussed various points pertinent to the success of the first-ever resource networking centre in the field of pharmaceutical sciences. The thrust areas for summer and winter school-training programmes to be adopted to attract researchers were discussed at length.

**Source:** Chandigarh [/timesofindia](http://timesofindia)/24 October 2009

### **Class XII marks to count more at IIT**

*The aim is to make students study equally hard for their school exams, discourage coaching centres*

Students aspiring for entry into the elite Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) were put on notice on Monday that it would be as important for them to perform well in their class XII boards as in the test that will qualify them for admission to the country's premier engineering schools.

The IITs, which are seeking to improve the quality of their student intake, will soon work out a way to give more weightage to an applicant's class XII marks in the IIT-Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE), the entrance test conducted for admission to the 15 IITs, the Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University, and the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad.

The aim is to make students study equally hard for their class XII boards as they do for the IIT-JEE and to discourage the mushrooming growth of expensive



coaching centres that prepare aspirants for entry into the country's premier engineering institutes, diverting their attention from the school-leaving exams. It's a part of a broad effort to revamp the elite institutions that claim to attract the best and the brightest of Indian students.

"Several teaching shops have mushroomed all over the country, which basically persuade students to get into the IITs," human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal said on Monday. "This makes students neglect their class XII exams. We want the money minting business of the coaching institutes to stop."

Seeking stronger schooling: Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi. Officials at the IITs argue that the quality of students who gain admission has been declining rapidly since 2005.

So far, students appearing for IIT-JEE have needed a score of 60% and above in their XII boards to take the exam. Students belonging to the scheduled caste or scheduled tribe categories require at least 55% to qualify for taking the test.

While the minister said he would ideally like the eligibility criteria of a minimum of 60% marks in class XII boards to be raised to 80-85%, officials at the IITs said the institutes were considering two ways of enhancing the weightage.

"One way is that the minimum eligibility criteria of 60% to write the IIT-JEE exams is raised to a higher percentage, say 70-80%. The other way is to work out a marking system where, while assessing a student for admission into the IITs, 70% of weightage is given to his score at IIT-JEE and 30% to his marks in plus two," said IIT Guwahati director Gautam Barua.

The announcement follows a series of reforms introduced in IIT-JEE in 2006, when the HRD ministry first approved the factoring in of school results in the admission process for the elite schools. Only those students who secure a first class or equivalent in the class XII examinations and pass JEE were made eligible for admission to the IITs.

The HRD ministry thinks that the eligibility cap of minimum 60% marks is not enough. "Weightage will be enhanced so that students who do not do well in their class XII boards do not get into the IITs," Sibal said.

The measure is part of broader reforms being considered for IIT-JEE, a report on which will be prepared in January. In more than 45 years of the exam, IIT-JEE has undergone several changes relating to its structure and content. Initially, there were four subjects in IIT-JEE, the English language paper being an additional subject.

During 2000-2005, IIT-JEE also had a screening test to reduce the heavy load on the main examination by screening only about 20,000 top-scoring candidates. In 1997, the admission test was conducted twice after the question paper was leaked in some centres.

In September 2005, an analysis group comprising directors of all the IITs announced major reforms in the IIT-JEE, implemented from 2006 onwards. In 2008, the director and dean of IIT Madras, M.S. Ananth, called for revamping the test, saying that the coaching institutes were "steering many less-than-best students" to crack the test and keeping female students from qualifying.

The current bid to enhance the weightage given to class XII exams stems from the concern at IITs that the present system does not allow for the 12 years of schooling to have a bearing on admission into IITs.

"More weightage to class XII marks will make the school system stronger. We want the JEE to stop playing havoc with it," said IIT Delhi director Surendra Prasad.

Officials at the IITs also argue that the quality of students who gain admission has been declining rapidly since 2005. Sanjay Dhande, director of IIT Kanpur, said coaching institutes were encouraging "artificial intelligence".

"Coaching classes create an input which is highly synthesized. The IITs need intelligent, high-quality students, which can happen only when one has done consistently well in school," he said.

Students with an annual family income of Rs4.5 lakh will be eligible for the merit-cum-means scholarship given at the end of class XII. Until now, those with a yearly household income of Rs2 lakh were eligible for the scholarship.

Sibal said the government is also setting up a committee to be headed by eminent scientist and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India Anil Kakodkar to suggest a road map for the IITs on research and attracting faculty.

Another committee will be set up to suggest curriculum reforms at the IITs. The committee will comprise science and technology secretary T. Ramasamy; secretary, department of biotechnology, M.K. Bhan; and director general at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Sameer Brahmachari. The committee will submit its report by January.

The government also announced the formation of a collegium for the appointment of directors at the IITs, a procedure also announced for the Indian Institutes of Management last week, to ensure greater autonomy in their administrative affairs.



Stressing the need for IITs to evolve, the HRD minister said in case foreign investment is offered in setting up of the new IITs, the government would work out details on how that can happen.

Faculty members at IIT will now also be eligible for additional performance-based incentives, details of which will be worked out by the IITs themselves, Sibal said.

The changes could make it easier for the premier institutes to attract talent.

**Source:** [/livemint.com/](http://livemint.com/) 19 October 2009

### **Govt. to amend admission criteria for IITs**

In a bid to make students take Class XII examinations seriously, the Government on Monday decided to change the criteria for IIT Joint Entrance Examinations.

Speaking to news persons after a meeting with the IIT Council, the Minister of Human Resource Development, Mr Kapil Sibal, said, "The present criterion is that students need to secure 60 per cent in their Class XII exams for appearing in IIT-JEE. This is not acceptable. The minimum marks required for IIT-JEE could be raised to 80-85 per cent."

The IIT Council is the apex decision-making body for the Indian Institutes of Technology .

The move is also aimed at checking the growth of coaching centres across the country.

Mr Sibal said, "The coaching centres are giving training for the IIT entrance. Students, therefore, are not studying seriously for the Class XII exams and concentrating on the entrance test. We want to get rid of the coaching centres by giving more weightage to the board exams."

The eligibility criteria for appearing in IIT JEE are expected to be raised from next year.

Meanwhile, Mr Sibal said a three-member committee has also been set up to look into the curriculum and the IIT-JEE system. The committee has been asked to submit its report within three months with its suggestions on the required changes.

Dr T. Ramasami, Secretary, Science and Technology; Dr M.K. Bhan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology; and Prof Samir K. Brahmachari, Director-General, CSIR, have been named members of the committee.

**Source:** New Delhi [/thehindubusinessline/](http://thehindubusinessline/) 19 Oct. 2009

### **Eying IIT; Score 80-85% in Class XII**

The race for an IIT seat may get tougher, with HRD minister Kapil Sibal calling for a greater weightage to the class XII examination results. By raising the importance of the school

-leaving examination, the minister hopes to curb the proliferation of coaching schools focused on JEE, which is the entrance examination for IITs.

"The coaching centres are giving training for the IIT entrance. As a result, students are not studying seriously for class XII exam and giving more attention to entrance exam. We want to get rid of the coaching centres by giving more weightage to the board exam," Mr Sibal said.

This decision to make the class XII exam relevant to the IIT admission process was taken at the meeting of the IIT council on Monday. It was decided to set up two committees. The first, headed by Atomic Energy Commission chief Anil Kakodkar, will draw up a vision statement for IITs.

Mr Sibal, who was unwilling to pre-empt the manner in which the class XII results will be made more relevant, has entrusted the task to the five-member Kakodkar committee. The second committee, which will comprise department of science and technology secretary T Ramasami, department of biotechnology secretary M K Bhan and CSIR director general Samir Brahmachari, will focus on the curriculum.

Besides finding a solution on "how to rid the system of the dependence on coaching and teaching shops", the Kakodkar Committee will focus on how to move the IIT system forward with a greater emphasis on research. "The emphasis of IITs has to shift from just undergraduate to research, with attention to national commitments and projects, where there will be no private sector interest," Mr Sibal explained.

The committee, which will have six months to submit its report, will also outline possible collaborations with the private sector. "The Kakodkar Committee will look at ways to increase the quantum of research, as it is research that creates wealth."

The curriculum committee will have three months to submit its report and will concentrate on new areas of study for the institutes. The minister said while some of the recommendations will be implemented in the 2010 academic session, all of these will be implemented by 2011 academic session.

Mr Sibal said that non-plan funding to IITs would be linked to the number of students. Explaining the increased financial outlay, the minister said he doesn't see the IIT system becoming financially independent, as a lot of the faculty members are solely concentrating on research and teaching. In this regard, Mr Sibal said the norms to attract investment from



foreign universities will be changed so that any overseas institute can invest in IITs in short duration of time.

At present, it takes about three years under the Foreign Currency Regulation Act for a foreign institute to invest in an Indian institute for research and other collaborations. "We have to make it possible for IITs to be more progressive about getting foreign funding. We need to evolve an IIT system that can compensate for expansion from internal accruals and external receipts."

IITs will also move to a system of appointing directors and board members through a collegium. The IIT council will meet once every six months. The council agreed to reduce fees for students from Africa and the SAARC countries. IIT directors will evolve the performance-related incentive scheme and submit to the government for approval. He said there was no discussion on the pay structure issue at the council meeting.

**Source:** New Delhi [/economictimes/](#)20 October 2009

### **Sibal keen to forge alliance with US varsities**

With the government deciding to set up 14 innovation universities, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal on Monday expressed keenness to forge an alliance with leading US varsities in shaping the structure of the proposed institutes.

"We hope that we can forge alliances with one or two top universities in the United States for partnering with us in the architecture (structure) of one or two innovation universities," Sibal, who is on a week-long visit to the US, said here.

Sibal would visit reputed universities in the US, including Harvard, Yale, George Washington and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and discuss on partnership and collaboration with elite Indian institutions.

The HRD Ministry has decided to set up 14 innovation universities in the XIth Five Year Plan to push research and development. India is the obvious choice for education investment; he said and added that in the near future Europe and Australia would seek human resources from India.

"The early bird catches the worm," he said, pointing out that while the US produced 75,000 engineers annually, Bangalore alone produced 65,000. As the service industry and the manufacturing industry are already in India, the minister predicted that the education sector would also follow.

"But the incentive could not be profit- motive although universities could generate a surplus," Sibal said.

Recalling that 88 per cent of students in India that completed the 12th grade did not go to college, Sibal stressed the need for more institutions to address the present disparity and growing needs both in terms of higher education and in terms of vocational training.

"What will they (students) do," asked Sibal and said poverty, hunger, and illiteracy were not local issues. "It is time for the global community to realise that they have as much stake in India's success as India has in its own success."

He also said that strong collaboration on the academic front was needed between India and other countries to battle big problems of climate change, health and poverty.

At an interaction, Sibal asked the audience, "Why should Harvard come to India?" The economics of it is very attractive educate more people with less money," was the answer.

George Joseph, assistant secretary of Yale, said that while the university welcomed the talks with the Minister, it was too "early in the process" to foresee what directions the dialogue will take.

"Yale education is not complete without an exposure to India and China. This cannot be achieved in one history lesson. An intense experience requires a strong connection."

**Source:** New York [/indianexpress/](#)26 October 2009

### **Sibal's 80% criteria for IITs takes Central Board by surprise**

*The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) which approved several reforms suggested by the HRD ministry only a month earlier, was not consulted on the latest proposal by the latter to raise the qualifying marks in the Class XII Board exams to 80 per cent to appear for IIT entrance examinations.*

The move has come out of the blue, said CABE member Vinod Raina. Given the national aspirational value in getting into an IIT, political anger is likely.

In an early reaction, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said he was opposed, for it would place students from the state at a disadvantage at the IIT entrance examinations. It is just an idea now and is likely to meet with more opposition, says Raina.

The CABE is supposed to be the apex body to advise central and state governments on education.

At its 56th meeting last month, it had approved a series of reforms, including development of a core curriculum for science and mathematics for school boards, a grading system in CBSE schools from this year and making class X examinations optional from the next academic session.



The government only a year earlier to review the progress of education and implementation of education policies reconstituted CABE.

It also acts as a forum for exchange of views between Centre, States, Non-Government Agencies, and others on education policy and progress.

#### Criteria to be raised to 80-85%

HRD Minister had announced on Monday that the eligibility criteria of 60 per cent marks in class-XII for appearing in IIT Joint Entrance Examination will be raised from next year to make students pay more attention to the board exam.

In a significant move to check the growth of coaching centres, which are thriving on imparting coaching to students for IIT-JEE, the government today decided to change the criteria, so that students' attention will be more focused on the board exam at Class-XII.

"The present criteria are that students need to secure 60 per cent at class-XII for appearing in IIT-JEE. This is not acceptable. The minimum marks required for IIT-JEE could be raised up to 80 to 85 per cent," HRD Minister Kapil Sibal told reporters after the meeting of the IIT Council, the apex decision-making body for the elite institutes, here.

The meeting was expected to frame a multi-pronged policy, including introducing scholarships and reducing fee, to attract more foreign students at post-graduate level in the institutes. Sibal met representatives of IIT faculty, which was demanding removal of 40% cap on promotion of professors to senior grade.

The faculty demanded abolition of contractual appointment at entry level. The minister told them that the government "guidelines are just norms and there can be flexibility or relaxation in exceptional cases. The council will also discuss giving more autonomy to the elite institutes.

Besides, the government appointed a committee headed by Atomic Energy Commission Chairman to suggest visions for IITs for 2020.

#### Kakodkar working on IIT reforms

To bring research to the forefront in the IITs and increase its role in national development projects, the government set up a committee, which will suggest a broad roadmap for the institutes for next ten years.

The five-member committee, to be headed by Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar, will give its report in six months outlining the broad areas of reforms required for the elite institutes to make them global brands.

"They will suggest how the IITs need to move forward.

The committee will specify on how to give more emphasis on research and how the IITs can be more involved in the national projects for development," HRD Minister Kapil Sibal told reporters after the IIT Council meeting.

He said that the committee will come up with the vision document for 2020 for the IITs.

**Source:** New Delhi [/news.in.msn.com/](http://news.in.msn.com/)20 October 2009

#### **Test for education: A good time to initiate reforms**

It is difficult to describe the global economic downturn as a sudden gift of fate. But that is exactly what it proved to be for the Indian education sector. As the world economy went into a tailspin, big-ticket salaries for B-school graduates became a thing of the past, and fewer people were willing to pay huge "donations" for a seat in a medical or engineering college

. It provided the much-required opportunity to clean the Augean stables.

It also provided an opportunity to ensure systemic changes that would help bring the Indian education sector at par with the best in the world. Minister for human resource development Kapil Sibal made "change" and "reform" his mantras. "Nothing is static. We have to change if we are to compete with global standards and meet global challenges. We have to march forward to be able to compete at the international level," he said.

The Indian education sector has been poised for reform for a long a time now. However, with the job market expanding rapidly and a paucity of trained personnel, the education sector, particularly technical education, became an area of immense opportunity for anybody who wanted quick returns on investment. This led to a plethora of institutions being set up, many of which would not have passed the muster otherwise. With the downturn and the ensuing global contraction, the demand for technical and skill-oriented education also fell. For the education sector, it became an opportunity to separate the grain from the chaff.

The government, which is the central player in the education sector, stepped in to clean up its act and began taking the first steps towards reforming the sector. The UPA government, while not inimical to private sector participation, is clear that there has to be a strong regulatory structure. The ministry of human resource development is currently working on setting up a National Council for Higher Education and Research. This umbrella body will subsume all existing regulatory bodies, and provide the basis for a higher education system that has greater autonomy. But till that happens, the ministry is also cleaning up institutions like the AICTE, the apex body for technical



education. The deemed universities are being reviewed to ensure that only those institutions that deserve to be elevated to the level of a university are given that status. The government is looking at expanding higher education, giving impetus to research and providing mobility to both students and teachers.

Any attempt at reforming higher education would prove to be ineffective if the school education was left untouched. The government is focused on ramping up activity in the sphere of secondary education to increase the number of students who complete twelve years of education. Not only would it increase the catchment area for students transiting into the tertiary segment, it would also improve the quality of life and manpower in general. India has a lot of catching up to do. "India has given importance to primary education in a big way in the recent years while secondary education has been a neglected area. It has remained as a forgotten middle," said Sam Carlson, lead education specialist, South Asia Human Development Sector of the World Bank. In response, the government has launched a programme to universalise secondary education, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan.

This, in turn means that attention must now be focused on improving the quality of teachers to improve the quality of learning. Efforts are being made in this respect as well.

The global downturn provided the opportunity that the Indian education sector required to make changes that would strengthen it. The process has begun, the question is — can it be sustained and will we succeed in a real reform before the good times roll back again?

**Source:** New Delhi [/economictimes/](#)30 October 2009

### ***UNICEF supports education on remote Indian islands***

Juri Gogoi makes her way along a path that twists from the shores of this island on the Brahmaputra River to the school, a 20-minute walk away.

Ms. Gogoi, Education Coordinator with Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research (C-NES), has hitched a ride on the 'Akha', a boat named after the Assamese word for 'hope'. The boat delivers medical services to the isolated island communities along the river – and now provides educational support through 'feeder schools' that have improved access to schooling for island children.

"They are totally separated from the world," says Ms. Gogoi. "If [the islanders] don't educate their children, then how will they survive?"

#### *Persuading parents*

Ms. Gogoi says she had to visit one house at a time to explain the importance of education. Parents were not interested at first, but when they realized that students could potentially get jobs on the mainland, they changed their minds.

"Since last year, girls are coming to school, and coming regularly. Now more girls participate than boys," she says. "The schools are full of students – they want to study."

Families pay 30 rupees, or just over 60 cents, for school costs. About 80 per cent of the fees go to teachers' salaries, while the other 20 per cent pay for school supplies like chalk and paints. The government provides books for free.

#### *Reaching children*

UNICEF works with C-NES and the government to provide technical support for the education initiative, which represents the best way to reach isolated communities that otherwise would not have access to basic educational services.

Literacy rates in Dibrugarh District, located on the banks of the Brahmaputra, are on par with the average for Assam State. The rate for boys is 69 per cent, compared to 71 per cent for the state overall. Girls have a rate of 60 per cent in the district, compared to 54 per cent for the state.

"Education is a right for every child, and these children are out of reach for primary education," said UNICEF Assam's Chief of Field Office, Jeroo Master. "Using this model, UNICEF is advocating with the government to reach more children living on the Islands."

#### *'Everything depends on education'*

Village elder Shiv Shankar Yadav says that students who managed to pursue their education previously had to journey 2 to 3 km to go to school.

"Everybody in the village wanted [a school], and we made it together," he says. "Everything depends on education."

Community members out of thatch constructed the primary school here over a bamboo frame. About 120 children, aged 6 to 14, sit on burlap sacks in orderly rows on the mud floor, in front of their teacher.

Renu Kumari Yadav's favourite subject is Hindi. The 13-year-old likes to study and hopes it will allow her to get a job on the mainland. Having a school in her own community makes it much easier for her to attend classes regularly.



“This is much better,” she explains, adding that previously, “it was very far away, so sometimes I didn’t go.”

Source: Mesaki Island [unicef.org](http://unicef.org)/29 October 2009

## ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

### A call to return to the basics

Will the proposal to raise the cut-off marks for IIT-JEE pave the way for a learning process where students get a solid grounding in the fundamentals?

Should IIT-JEE applicants be required to score 85 per cent in their school board examinations? Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal’s statement earlier this week suggesting that the school examination criteria be hiked from 60 to 80 or 85 per cent has raked up the issue again, and with it a whole plethora of concerns about schooling in India, the JEE and coaching centres.

Mr. Sibal calmed the storm by clarifying that it was up to the IIT Council to take a decision on the issue, and saying that the government would not interfere. However, it is a fact that the IITs themselves have been considering this proposal, and even more radical ones, for over a year now. A committee to explore JEE reforms was set up last year, and its chairman V.G. Idichandy, who is also IIT-Madras deputy director, has given it as his personal opinion that the JEE should just be scrapped and only school marks taken into account. Other senior IIT officials have suggested that only the top one or two per cent of students in the board examinations should be allowed to attempt JEE.

Interestingly, it is not only the elite IITs, which are considering such ideas. On the next rung in technical education, the National Institutes of Technology determine entrance through the All India Engineering Entrance Examination. The NITs are now reportedly considering a proposal to raise the eligibility criteria in terms of school marks as well.

Apart from reducing the number of candidates who attempt these examinations to a more manageable and realistic level, those who promote such proposals want to reduce the stranglehold that the coaching centre system has on the country. “In many places, coaching centres are defacto replacing the school education system,” warns Sujatha Ramdorai, a member of the National Knowledge Commission.

At large coaching centres such as those in Kota, students effectively drop out of the school system in order to prepare for JEE. They can then scrape through their board examinations to meet the 60 per

cent minimum criteria, without having actually attended school for two years.

This can result in a skewed education, which shows up once the student gets to IIT. IIT-M director M.S. Ananth tells the story of a student who arrived at IIT without having mastered the concept of integration despite it being part of the higher secondary mathematics curriculum. He had failed to study it since he felt only three marks were allotted to the topic under JEE.

Apart from such obvious knowledge gaps, IIT professors also point to learning style differences that make it hard to cope for students who have placed more importance on JEE coaching than school exams. “A sizable number find it difficult because they are used to a tutoring style with a drill of questions and answers,” says an IIT Chemistry professor. “At IIT, we teach a lot of concepts, and give a few representative problems. Assignments are meant for self-study, not marks. We expect students to be self-driven, but the coaching centres apply external pressure.”

L. Celestine Preetham, a first-year Electrical Engineering student at IIT-Madras, agrees. “Those who come from Kota or other coaching centres are used to studying 14 hours a day. In IIT, you get two hours to study after sitting in classes all day, just like in school. It’s a totally different kind of time management that is needed,” he says. While he bagged an all-India Rank of 45 in JEE, he was also a top student at school level, scoring 98 per cent in the board examination.

Most Chennai students who attempt JEE are like him, according to the coaching centres here. “All our IIT candidates score above 90 per cent in school anyway,” says Gita Prabhu, director AIMS Education, which trains students for JEE and AIEEE. She feels that Tamil Nadu’s strong school education system, which demands the physical presence of students in class, will ensure that none of the State’s students will lose out if the IITs raise the eligibility criteria.

She added that reputed coaching centres should actually welcome the moves, since it would mean that students would come to them with a stronger grounding in the basics.

“We have already seen that since TNPCEE [the State entrance examination] was abolished. Earlier, many schools would skip Class 11 portions, since students would spend Class 12 preparing for the entrance. Then it becomes difficult to train them in the concepts.”

At the end of the day, students should be gaining knowledge, not just studying with JEE, AIEEE or even their school examinations in mind. Until such ideal attitudes are adopted, however, the move to raise the



eligibility criteria could return some much-needed focus to the basic concepts taught at the school level

Source: [beta.thehindu/](http://beta.thehindu/)26 October 2009

### **A reform agenda for Mr Sibal**

When the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) II announced Kapil Sibal as its human resource development (HRD) minister, the advocates of higher education reform were delighted. Two of his predecessors — Murli Manohar Joshi and Arjun Singh — had been stubbornly opposed to all reforms. The higher education

system in India could not afford yet one more anti-reform HRD minister.

Under the guiding hand of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, his reformist finance minister Yashwant Sinha had worked to implement economic reforms in virtually all sectors of the economy. But when it came to higher education, the dynamic duo could not budge the wall that was Joshi. The sector met the same fate under Arjun Singh during the UPA-I rule.

Against this background, the appointment of Mr Sibal has been a breath of fresh air. Consistent with his reputation for action and unlike many of his colleagues who remain plagued by inaction, he has diligently moved to bring about change in this long neglected sector. Unfortunately, success has so far eluded him.

To some degree, despite good intentions, Mr Sibal has ended up expending his valuable political capital on reforming parts of the system that are simply not broken. Whereas it is the college and university system that is in urgent need of reform, his first major push has been in secondary education. This is unfortunate since a relatively well-functioning secondary education system is precisely the reason even a dysfunctional colleges and university system has managed to produce talented graduates.

At least in urban India, public and private schools engaged in secondary education fiercely compete for the most talented students and teachers. An important dimension of that competition is world-class education in the classroom. That education has sent top-class secondary school graduates to colleges.

These students know that if they mastered the college curriculum and scored well in the college examinations, they would be rewarded with good jobs in today's rapidly expanding economy. The resulting effort by the students — rather than value added in the classrooms in colleges — is the single most

important reason for the continuous flow of talented graduates from Indian colleges and universities.

In the debate leading up to the abolition of the central board class X examination, much was made of the stress it places on the students. Yet it is the preparation for these examinations and the resulting value added that brings better-prepared students to class XI and XII and eventually colleges and universities.

At Princeton, where I did my doctorate, we were permitted to do courses on an "audit" basis. No examinations were required under this option. This certainly reduced stress at the examination time but the downside was that hardly any courses I did on an audit basis stayed with me. Examinations do serve a valuable function.

The latest effort by the minister to raise qualifying marks for the IIT entrance examination to 80% marks in class XII also represents an unwise use of political capital. The reason provided for the proposed change — the low threshold encourages the proliferation of coaching institutes — is hardly persuasive.

What if the coaching institutes actually impart valuable knowledge to the students? Moreover, are there data to show that those failing to receive 80% marks in class XII never qualify for entrance? If yes, transparent reporting and advertising of the data on the successful candidates for the last 10 years would largely accomplish the desired objective. If not, no case for the exclusion of the students with less than 80% marks exists. The IIT administrations on which the minister has now left the decision must carefully weigh these factors.

For his part, the HRD minister needs to divert his political capital to tackling the reform of the college and university education. Here nothing short of a major surgery is needed. He must first end the tyranny of the University Grants Commission (UGC) by abolishing it altogether. After nearly six decades of central control, our colleges and universities are surely mature enough to handle their own affairs.

The best of our academic institutions — IITs and IIMs — are in fact outside the purview of the UGC. In the same vein, management education, which survives on the award of diplomas rather than degrees and therefore does not have to submit to the UGC surveillance, has also done well.

In engineering, even outside of the IITs, some of the leading engineering colleges are in the private sector. Their dependence on the UGC-blessed universities for the award of the degree is a burden, not blessing, since it prevents them from building independent reputations. In the medical field, the tight central control on the expansion of education by the highly



corrupt Medical Council of India has led to the proliferation of “doctors” with no formal medical education in not just rural but also urban India.

While ending central control, Mr Sibal must also open the door to genuine entry of private universities. Indian higher education system has failed to keep pace with the rising needs. Ten years ago, gross enrolment ratios in higher education in China were below India’s. Today, they are more than one and a half times ours. If we rely solely on the state to catch up, we can be sure to fall further behind. The state has neither the resources nor ability to fill the vast gap that now exists between the demand for and supply of college and university education. Absent massive private entry, severe skill shortages await our industrial and services sectors.

If we are to benefit from genuine competitive pressure through private entry as in the banking and telecommunications sectors, private universities will have to be fully freed to set their own faculty salaries and tuition fees. The entry to the deserving students whose parents cannot afford the fees in these institutions will have to be ensured through loans at generous terms. Given good higher education more than compensates for the tuition paid, assistance through loans rather than tuition-free entry is fully justified.

**Source:** [/economictimes/22](http://economictimes/22) October 2009

### **Children start school too young — wait till they’re 6, experts say**

Formal schooling should be delayed until children reach 6, according to the biggest review of primary education for more than 40 years.

The Cambridge Primary Review, published today, says that five-year-olds should continue with the play-based curriculum used in nursery schools. Trying to teach literacy and numeracy at such an early age is “counterproductive” and can put children off school, according to the committee that produced the report.

Professor Robin Alexander, the report’s editor, called for a debate about whether to raise the age of compulsory schooling, which has been set at 5 since 1870. But the review was more concerned about the style of learning offered in state schools.

Successive governments’ insistence on the earliest possible start to formal schooling went against the grain of international evidence, he said. Children who started school at the age of 6 or 7 often overtook English pupils in tests of reading before the start of secondary education.

Most continental countries start school later than in Britain, preparing children for formal classes through

extended nursery education. The review proposes a similar model for England, continuing the current Foundation Stage for an extra year and following it with a single stage of primary education taking children to the age of 11.

The Government or the Opposition did not support the suggestion.

Dame Gillian Pugh, who chaired the review’s advisory committee, said: “If you introduce a child to too formal a curriculum before they are ready, you are not taking into account where children are in terms of their learning and their capacity to develop.”

A separate review, by Sir Jim Rose, that was commissioned and accepted by the Government, called for four-year-olds to go straight into primary reception classes. But Sir Jim recommended that parents be able to defer their child’s entry to school by up to a year if they felt they were not ready.

Chris Woodhead, the former Chief Inspector of Schools, who undertook a more limited review of primary teaching for the previous Conservative Government with both Professor Alexander and Sir Jim, said he feared a later start would lead to lower standards: “It is reasonable when children arrive at school for the emphasis to be on socialisation, but I see no reason to postpone the start of formal learning.”

John Bangs, of the National Union of Teachers, described the proposal as an “innovative idea” that deserved support: “We have seen problems with early admission to reception classes. It is an absolutely crucial stage of a child’s development and I think there is merit in extending the Foundation Stage.” The 600-page report, entitled *Children, their World, their Education*, says that many practitioners believe that the principles shaping pre-school education should govern children’s experience of primary school at least until the age of 6, if not 7. The Welsh Assembly has already extended the Foundation Stage to the age of 7.

Ed Balls, the Schools Secretary, said that it would be a backward step not to make sure children were learning as well as playing through the Foundation Stage and beyond. “It is vital to get children playing and learning from an early age.”

Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and based at the University of Cambridge, the review took six years and drew on 4,000 pieces of evidence. It depicts primary schools struggling with interference from the Government and its agencies, but remaining “fundamentally in good heart”.

Professor Alexander said: “There is room for improvement but, after 20 years of pretty continuous



change and reform, how could it be otherwise?” The introduction of more specialist teachers would help schools cope with the modern curriculum, he said.

Professor Alexander described the “crisis of childhood” as a media obsession and said it was evident mainly among those from poor backgrounds, who were farther behind their peers than those in comparable countries.

The review accuses the Government of abandoning the convention that it did not dictate how children were taught, and imposing a “state theory of learning” through its literacy and numeracy strategies. Such policies’ “Stalinist overtones” had produced an air of pessimism and powerlessness in the teaching profession. Existing tests at the end of primary school should be scrapped, the review says, and replaced by assessment of the whole curriculum, rather than just English, mathematics and science.

It describes politicians’ exclusive focus on ensuring that children can read, write and add up as narrower than that in Victorian elementary schools. Among the changes recommended by the review are longer training for graduates intending to teach in primary schools which, it says, should take two years not one, and a review of special educational needs. Long summer holidays might also be reduced.

Professor Alexander said that the review was intended to inform long-term planning, not “pre-election point scoring”. The main parties nevertheless seized on the findings.

Nick Gibb, the Shadow Schools Minister, said: “We agree that the wave of bureaucracy over the past decade has been deeply damaging and we must trust teachers more. We also agree that we need more specialist training for primary teachers.” However, the Conservatives would not support a delay in the start of formal schooling.

Vernon Coaker, the Schools Minister, said: “It’s disappointing that a review which purports to be so comprehensive is not up to speed on changes in primaries. The world has moved on since this review was started.”

Mr. Coaker added: “We’re putting in place fundamental reforms following Sir Jim Rose’s primary review, to make the curriculum less prescriptive. A school starting age of 6 would be completely counterproductive — we want to make sure children are playing and learning from an early age and to give parents the choice for their child to start in the September following their fourth birthday.”

**Source:** [/timesonline.co.uk/](http://timesonline.co.uk/) 16 October 2009

## **East Asia Summit calls for the revival of Nalanda University: thinking & acting beyond the nation?**

The emergence of new supra-national movements with respect to higher education and research continue apace. From the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), through to international consortia of universities, through to bits of universities embedded in others within distant territories (e.g., Georgia Tech’s unit within the National University of Singapore), the higher education landscape is in the process of being reconfigured and globalized. Yet, is it really that novel in an historical sense?

Today’s call at the East Asian Summit for the revival of Nalanda University (see below) draws upon development outcomes in higher education that took place well before the establishment of medieval universities like Oxford, Bologna, or Lund. As Sashi Tahroor notes:

“Founded in 427 A.D. by Buddhist monks at the time of Kumaragupta I (415-455 A.D.), Nalanda was an extraordinary centre of learning for seven centuries. The name probably comes from a combination of *nalam* (lotus, the symbol of knowledge) and *da*, meaning “to give”, so Nalanda means “Giver of Knowledge”. And that is exactly what the university did, attracting prize students from all over India, as well as from China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Persia, Sri Lanka, Tibet and Turkey. At its peak, Nalanda played host to more than 10,000 students — not just Buddhists, but of various religious traditions — and its education, provided in its heyday by 2,000 world-renowned professors, was completely free.”

The establishment of new types of universities in like Nalanda University, Øresund University, or the recently opened Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana (UNILA), remind us that there is an emerging desire for novel spaces of knowledge production that think and act **beyond the nation**. A related question, then, is how effective will these new configurations be, and can supporting stakeholders (including nation-states) really **act** beyond the nation?





**Joint Press Statement  
of the 4<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit on the  
Revival of Nalanda University  
Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand,  
25 October 2009**

1. The Heads of State/Government of the ASEAN Member States, Australia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand met in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand, on the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit.
2. They recalled their decision at the 2<sup>nd</sup> East Asia Summit in Cebu, the Philippines, on 15 January 2007, to strengthen regional educational cooperation by tapping the region's centers of excellence in education. In this connection, they welcomed India's initiative to revive the Nalanda University located in the State of Bihar in India.
3. They noted that the Nalanda University was a great ancient centre of intellectual activity in Buddhist philosophy, mathematics, medicine and other disciplines.
4. They were deeply impressed with the sanctity and significance of the great ancient centre of learning in Nalanda that attracted many scholars from South, South-East and East Asia.
5. They appreciated the contribution and recommendations made by the members of the Nalanda Mentor Group headed by Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen towards the establishment of the Nalanda University.
6. They supported the establishment of the Nalanda University as a non-state, non-profit, secular, and self governing international institution with a continental focus that will bring together the brightest and the most dedicated students from all countries of Asia – irrespective of gender, caste, creed, disability, ethnicity or social-economic background – to enable them to acquire liberal and human education and to give them the means needed for pursuit of intellectual, philosophical, historical and spiritual studies and thus achieve qualities of tolerance and accommodation.
7. They encouraged the networking and collaboration between the Nalanda University and existing centers of excellence in the EAS participating countries to build a community of learning where students, scholars, researchers and academicians can work together symbolizing the spirituality that unites all mankind.
8. They encouraged appropriate funding arrangements on voluntary basis from governments and other sources including public-private partnership as may be decided by the Governing Body which will be composed of members nominated by interested EAS participating countries.

Issued on 25 October 2009 in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand

Source: [globalhighered.com](http://globalhighered.com)/25 October 2009

### **Indian education system: Crying out for speedy reforms**

At a recent India-China book launch, where human resource development minister Kapil Sibal was present, I made it a point to highlight the comparative picture between India and China in the education sector. This is a crucial sector for emerging economies attempting to achieve inclusive and rapid growth. Moreover, as several recent studies have brought out, returns on skill formation and higher education, which are already substantial, continue to rise as the world increasingly takes on the attributes of a knowledge economy. By the way, the book by Mohan Guruswamy and Zorawar Daulet Singh titled *Chasing the Dragon* is well worth a read for all those interested in finding out the distance we have to cover to catch up with China.

India's adult literacy is 61 per cent compared with China's 91 per cent. Expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure is 10.7 per cent and 12.8 per cent, respectively. China has 708 researchers per million population compared with 19 in India. In 1990, publications by Indians in journals were 50 per cent higher but in 2008, Chinese publications outnumbered Indian ones by two to one. In 1985, the number of PhDs in science and engineering in India were 4,007 and 125 in China, but by 2004, China had 14,858 PhDs, while we had increased the number to only 6,318. In 2007, Indians filed 35,000 patents compared with 245,161 in China.

China is set to overtake Japan as the second largest research & development (R&D) spender after the US in the next two years. It allocated 1.34 per cent of its GDP in 2005 on R&D (which, incidentally, is well below 3.6 per cent in South Korea) while expenditure on R&D in India was barely 0.61 per cent in the same year. We have only 12,000 vocational training institutes to nearly 500,000 in China. More than 19 per cent of the youngsters in China opt for higher education, while only 11-12 per cent of Indian students end up in colleges and universities.

The comparison with China in educational attainments and performance is meant to once again lament over how China is far ahead of us. The comparison is made simply to drive home the need to understand that the education sector in India today needs the kind of focused and urgent policy attention that trade and industry did in the late eighties, which led to their reforms in 1991.

Education reforms and progress are the most important and critical policy issue in the country today. Otherwise, we may soon discover that our much-touted demographic dividend has remained an illusion and instead morphed into a disaster as large groups of unemployable youth, unable to join the workforce, end up swelling the ranks of extremists and insurgents. India will have to earn its demographic dividend and time is actually running out because the window is a relatively short one.

There is little to be achieved by tinkering at the edges, for example, by raising the bar for taking the IIT entrance examination or making the Xth standard exam voluntary. These are at best distractions. What is needed are bold and large-scale reforms that will shake up the sector and allow for new ideas, initiatives, and dynamic new organisations to take roots. We have to take the academic community along in implementing these reforms rather than have teachers at loggerheads with the government on issues of pay, autonomy or curriculum design.



The Human Resource Development (HRD) minister is well aware of the need to think boldly, as is reflected in his statements prior to and after taking charge. The forthcoming Education Bill provides the opportunity to implement the required reforms. These would include; doing away with dysfunctional organisations such as UGC, AICTE, MCI and the other 13 professional councils at the national, and at the state level, which, as recent events have shown, are riddled with malpractices and vested interests; establishing multiple independent accreditation system; allowing profit generation companies to enter this sector so that there is greater transparency in revenue generation; doing away with the plethora of controls, regulations and licences; expanding teachers training and vocational training capacities manifold by both increasing public sector allocations and attracting private investment in these areas; creating an accessible and large commercial bank credit pool for education loans and massively expanding the number of scholarships to improve equity and access.

Fifty four per cent of India's population is below the age of 25. We will add 150 million people to the workforce in the next 15 years and have huge backlog to clear, with graduate unemployment running at nearly 20 per cent. The gross enrolment ratio for higher education, at present at 12 per cent, has to be raised to more than 40 per cent if the young population is to be converted into productive human capital. And Indians spend nearly \$5 billion to educate their children abroad!

This big domestic demand base can be used to convert India into a global education hub that attracts students from all over the world. This will contribute not only to our gross domestic product — in the US and the UK foreign students contribute \$15 billion and \$5 billion annually — but also build an India constituency. To achieve this, we need to look at higher education as a sector in which India has a big potential comparative advantage. But, for this to happen, the centre needs to think boldly, take action urgently and not get caught in a defensive, protectionist and controlling mindset.

**Source:** New Delhi [mydigitalfc.com/](http://mydigitalfc.com/) 27 October 2009

### **Leave the IITs alone!**

What's it with Kapil Sibal and the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)? Ever since he took over as the HRD Minister less than six months ago, Sibal has made more announcements about the IITs than, perhaps, any HRD minister in the recent past. If Murli Manohar Joshi, HRD minister in the NDA government, seemed to spend more time obsessing

about the IIMs (Indian Institutes of Management) Sibal's own bugbear seems to be the IITs.

So whether it was the call for IITs to expand into new areas like medicine and law or his unbending stance on the issue of the salaries of IIT professors or, more recently, his demand to raise the minimum qualifying marks for the IIT joint entrance examination (JEE), only to retract a day later, it's as if Sibal just can't let the IITs be!

In this he is really no different from the average middle-class Indian when it comes to the IITs. The awe in which these institutes are held meant that each of the minister's announcements hogged far more media attention than warranted by the limited numbers involved.

The annual intake of the IITs is less than 8,000, a drop in the ocean in a country where about 6.40 lakh students appeared last year for the Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) alone. Add the large number of state boards and other boards that conduct their own examinations and it's only a miniscule number that make it to the IITs. But you would never think that observing the storm raised by Sibal's comments.

'The present criterion is that students need to secure 60 per cent at class XII for appearing in IIT-JEE. This is not acceptable. The minimum marks required for IIT-JEE could be raised up to 80 to 85 per cent,' the minister was quoted as saying. Though he subsequently claimed to have been misquoted and clarified, 'It is entirely in their (IITs) hands to decide on the eligibility criteria,' he did raise two very fundamental concerns: students' lack of attention to Class XII examinations and the mushrooming of coaching institutions.

Yes, it is a fact that students keen on professional courses do tend to focus more on the tough competitive exams for admission. But that is only because the competition is so intense, thanks to the huge gap between demand and supply of seats in quality institutions. Add to this the poor quality of school education, with its emphasis on rote learning rather than understanding and application, and coaching institutes are an inevitable consequence.

Banning them is not the answer. In any case coaching establishments are not peculiar to the JEE; we now have coaching institutes for all kinds of exams starting from nursery admission! One may bemoan the fact that three-year olds are put through a regimen that effectively kills their joy of learning so early in life (one could be resigned to that happening by the time the school is done with them!). But that is the reality; the root cause, once again, being lack of adequate seats.



As for the argument that they skew the playing field in favour of the rich, this is as absurd as decrying luxury cars because the poor can't afford them. To the extent coaching is a legitimate activity and coaching institutes pay their taxes (admittedly a big if!) there is no reason why they should be singled out. The economy of Kota owes more to the IIT coaching industry than, perhaps, any other including the once-famed Kota saris!

The answer, then, is to stop obsessing about the IITs. Increase the number of seats in quality institutes of higher education. So that children (and their parents) no longer regard IITs as the be-all-and-end-all of all existence, improve the quality of schooling and, where possible, supplement that with special coaching for the under-privileged (defined on the basis of income not caste or religion) to ensure a more level playing field.

Let's face it, the offspring of a Birla or an Ambani or a Narayana Murthy will always be more advantageously placed than the offspring of a poor farmer or even the average middle-class Indian. The solution is not to deny them the advantages of their birth and try and bring them down to the lowest common denominator but rather to make it possible for the bottom to aspire to the top, using tax-payer money, if necessary, to bridge the gap. Greater equality of opportunity is what Sibal must focus on.

**Source:** New Delhi [/economictimes/](http://economictimes.com)25 October 2009

### **New Lamps for Old**

*A world-class university cannot be created out of thin air*

The minister for human resource development, Kapil Sibal, is a man in a hurry. His haste would be welcome, if the government's proposals for higher education were not so scandalous. Amazingly, despite a few distinguished voices of dissent, there has been no national debate on the United Progressive Alliance government's plans. Existing state and Central universities, likely to be worst affected by the broom of change, seem reconciled to their impending marginalization. They are busy totting up the sops thrown in their way — including higher pay scales for which calculations are yet incomplete.

The government proposes to set up 14 'world-class' Centrally funded institutions, called national or innovation universities. "Unencumbered by the history or culture of the past" — I quote that government of India concept note — they will start on a clean slate in their pursuit of excellence. They will be "kept out of the purview of the regulatory oversight of the existing

regulatory bodies in higher education in academic matters as well as regulations on maintenance of standards or minimum qualification requirements for appointment to academic posts". Each university will have a research endowment fund of over Rs 200 crore annually. Expenditure on research or teaching "shall be kept out of the purview of audit scrutiny as envisaged under the Constitution by the Comptroller and Auditor-General. An amendment to that effect shall be made in the Comptroller and Auditor-General's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971". Chair professors may receive pay from endowments over and above their salaries, which will be decided through a negotiated agreement. In order to attract "the highly skilled Indian diaspora", the prohibitions enshrined in the Citizenship Act of 1955 (amended 2003) will be removed. Networks of Indian academics abroad will "source world-wide talent" for the innovation universities, thus converting the brain drain to a brain gain.

A sign at the Dachau concentration camp memorial carries George Santayana's chilling reminder, "Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it." Is it a good idea to be "unencumbered by the history or culture of the past", as we are advised the new greenfields universities will be? On what are these institutions to base their pursuit of excellence, modelled on the great universities of the West, none of which, we can be certain, would dream of rejecting the past? If they are not to be controlled by the country's regulatory bodies for higher education, nor required to conform to minimum qualification requirements for appointment, how can we be sure that they will indeed be 'world-class' institutions? Who determines that class? If no control is to be exercised over their spending, how can corruption, so endemic in our system, be kept at bay? If chair professors can name their fee, what is to prevent them from milking the Indian State for a few years before returning to their bases in the West? If NRI/POI networks are called upon to source talent for us, what can stop them from declining into cronyism and clientage? Or indeed, starting on such a footing?

Disturbing as these questions are — astonishingly, they have not sparked off a wave of protest — the set of assumptions behind the new proposals is still more worrying. First of all, the total bankruptcy of Indian higher education is assumed. I heard the former director of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations assert this on a public platform in London recently — a sad reflection on the morale of India's chosen representatives. Secondly, we must accept that our best researchers are abroad, and the academic system here will be magically invigorated by their return. Thirdly, starting from scratch in a new institution



with unlimited funds and no checks is the answer to the ills of the old academic bureaucracy. Finally, we must not ask whether faculty and student recruitment will be bound by the same principles of social justice that are mandated in the public education system.

These assumptions are not just dangerous, they are wrong. But they are typical of a new Indian bourgeoisie anxious to climb on to the wagon of globalization, tired of being out-paced by the West and the new East, hoping that money spent on a few showpiece institutions will lure our potential Nobel laureates back and keep the young and ambitious at home. What is never acknowledged in all this brave talk about world-class universities is that the ills of education in India begin at the primary level, with poor school enrolment and high drop-out rates compounded by failures in health and nutrition. Sixty years after independence, the right to education bill has just been passed. While India had set itself (from 1966) the goal of spending six per cent of its gross domestic product on education, it has not achieved more than a spending rate of around four per cent. The present commitment is to spend five per cent of the GDP on education during the 11th Plan. Of this, about 0.37 per cent is spent on higher education (as against 1.41 per cent in the United States of America, 1.07 per cent in the United Kingdom, and 0.5 per cent in China). Enrolment in higher education is between a fifth and a 20th of that in other countries. Can 14 new universities fill that gap?

Over a long period of time, the state-funded higher education system suffered from deprivation and neglect, from lack of funds or bureaucratic obstacles to research and development, appalling infrastructure, poor rewards for faculty, and positive discouragement of earning from student fees, consultancy or private sponsors. Universities were gradually demoted to teaching shops, with more research being funded at specially created institutes (though despite this, the quality and quantity of research was always better within the university system). It is only quite recently that some of these problems have been addressed, infusing new enthusiasm and hope into universities which are beginning to reap the benefits of a more liberal funding environment.

Given the extraordinary constraints, it is better to speak of successes achieved against the odds than a general record of failure. High levels of teaching and research were maintained at many state and Central universities. Undergraduates were generally well taught and proved this by excelling when they went to the top institutions abroad. The Indian institutes of technology and individual departments in some universities like my own acquired international reputations. Belatedly, the University Grants

Commission began to recognize this in terms of grants and incentives for research, faculty and student exchange with institutions abroad, and support for academic innovation. Despite funding disparities, state universities like mine repeatedly out-performed Central universities. But these measures, inadequate as they were, have been obliterated (just as the UGC is at risk of being superseded) by a flood of hyperbolic undertakings and promises — world-class universities, foreign educational service providers, new regulatory mechanisms for higher education, new educational hierarchies.

What does the new regime promise? First of all, a 'world-class university' cannot be created out of thin (or hot) air. An institution that turns its back on everything of value within the country and seeks only to draw its faculty and researchers from abroad has lost a fundamental point of principle. Funds alone cannot suffice. Even for the new IITs, which are at least mentored by existing institutions, it will take years — as the experience of selection committee's shows — to build up human resources. Not all the best researchers are abroad, but even high salaries may fail to bring genuine distinction home to a new university, which can scarcely become world-class without it. We will get a flood of slightly lesser NRI minds, and a leeching of the best from existing Indian institutions. The rest will be snapped up by private universities and by foreign educational service providers, completing the rout of an already threatened public university system.

Education is a meritocracy, and achievement must be rewarded. But the proposed hierarchy will be *created*, not earned. The innovation universities, with high salaries and research funds, no CAG checks, and dream faculty (all of it?) sourced from abroad, will be placed ahead of the Central universities and IITs. At the bottom of the funding ladder, with lower benefits to faculty, will be the state universities (though some may be the best in India), constantly losing staff and researchers to more privileged institutes. A parallel market will offer teaching shops run by private players and outposts of foreign universities. For students, it may cost money to go where the money is. This depressing future attracts only the economists who have written on this subject earlier in these columns.

In a meeting with vice-chancellors of Central universities held on October 13, the minister reportedly expressed impatience at talk of faculty shortages, given the handsome emoluments on offer. "Upset at the Vice-Chancellors confining their presentations to the measures taken by them to put in place infrastructure and recruit faculty and other staff, he asked them to come up with vision documents charting a road map on how they proposed to turn the new



universities into world-class centres of learning.” How indeed? The minister has no answer, and seems to think that the magic phrase, the magic arrival of teachers from abroad and magic money, can create a few world-class institutions.

‘World-class universities’ do not consist of a few Nobel laureates in their laboratories while the *dal-roti* teaching is done below stairs. All university teachers are entitled to funds and time for research. They should not be treated as lecturing machines working a six-day week in order to support the research of their ‘betters’. If India wants to create world-class institutions, it must improve the ones it has. It has to reward genuine achievement at home, encourage new initiatives, create infrastructure, and promote the kind of international collaboration that already exists between the best institutions abroad and the best universities in India. Surprising though it may seem, there are many good scholars within the Indian university system who know what is meant by ‘world-class’. They know that excellence is achieved, not bought.

**Source:** Calcutta [/telegraphindia/](http://telegraphindia.com)27 October 2009

### **N-power to brainpower**

On July 18, 2005, history was created in Washington DC, spearheaded by two determined men representing 1.5 billion people of the world. They announced that the United States would supply nuclear fuel to India, despite the fact that India was not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This was the US’s new ‘strategic relationship’ with India.

Of course, the ‘Ayatollahs’ of the NPT in Washington were up in arms. But little did they know that this juggernaut would roll forward relentlessly till it reached its goal. It was a part of George Bush’s ‘grand strategy’, centred around a missionary zeal for democracy. For Manmohan Singh, this was the window into a world of high technologies, space exploration, satellite navigation and launch, cheaper and cleaner power, biotechnology in agriculture, and many other cutting-edge aspects of research and development.

We are now approaching another milestone as both nations prepare for taking this engagement to another trajectory as Barack Hussein Obama receives Manmohan Singh in the Oval Office next month. This visit of Dr Singh will be the first state visit of any head of state since the inception of the Obama administration.

However, we need to reflect on what has been achieved over these four years from that historic day

in 2005 and what more can be targeted to climb on to a new trajectory. Are there inherent synergies between our two economies, which could create win-win outcomes? And, what is in it for the people of India?

Yes, the nuclear deal, despite its rough patches, went through like a steamroller, notwithstanding China’s rumblings at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). In India, its reverberations precipitated the historic ‘confidence vote’ in the Indian Parliament, jettisoning the Left from the coalition.

Unfortunately, some of the other significant commitments made in the India-US Joint Statement of July 18, 2005, still remain unfulfilled. These would obviously form a part of Dr Singh’s Agenda in Washington while other pressing issues get, hopefully, addressed.

It is sad that the US continues to follow the ‘technology denial regime’ for exports into India. An analysis reveals that of the 16 commercial control measures in the US, India continues to attract 10 of those technology denial provisions. In contrast, countries like the UK, Turkey, Slovakia, Slovenia, Portugal, Poland, Norway, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Hungary, Greece, Germany and France attract only four such denials.

If India is a “strategic partner” of the US, then why this discrimination? President Obama terms his engagement with India a “special relationship”, but has not yet redressed this vital issue.

The US-India Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture remains limp today and needs a strong stimulant. Agri-biotech research, a major core competency of the US, still remains elusive for India. Agricultural extension services, a vital tool from the US that powered our green revolution in the 1970s, still remain to be resumed. These are critical in the face of rising food prices in India, changing food preferences, growing demand and in our fight against poverty.

We are yet to engage effectively in the transfer of clean coal technology, coal-gasification technology, smart grids and other energy efficient and green breakthroughs in the US. Nor have we addressed the issue of a funding mechanism for the transfer of these vital and clean technologies, which would create, in the long run, massive markets for US firms in India and a cleaner greener environment for us.

Should we not set up a Commission on Joint Research Projects, which are of mutual interest to both countries in the areas of agriculture, clean energy, renewable energy, and life sciences? Yes, the HRD Minister’s move towards forming an India-US Education Council is a welcome, indeed!



This may well be the right time for initiating a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement focused on manufacturing and services. Let me point out that NAFTA Agreement between the US, Canada and Mexico successfully left out the contentious area of free trade in agriculture, creating a precedent we could invoke to avoid the problem of trade distortion, agricultural subsidies in the US.

We must recognise that India's vital interest in the next two decades lies in fighting poverty, particularly in rural India, climbing the value chain of technology to benchmark ourselves with the best, and enriching our human capital to a globally competitive level, whether in training, skill formation, higher education, commercialisation of technologies and R&D. These are the very core competencies of the US and form the potential deliverable to a rising India.

And, the US will get, in return, an appropriate space in the world's third largest market.

**Source:** New Delhi [/hindustantimes.com](http://hindustantimes.com)/23 October 2009

#### **Our education policy is hostile to sports: Gill**

Union Minister for Sports and Youth Welfare M.S. Gill Friday said the Indian education system is not sports-oriented and it does not aim at churning out quality sportspersons.

"In my view, our current education is totally hostile to sports. I had also pointed out this fact during my meeting with Kapil Sibal (union human resource development minister) and also suggested him some ways to overhaul it," said Gill, while addressing a gathering here at Panjab University.

"If we want to win medals in prestigious tournaments, we have to move our focus towards schools and colleges. All our schools and university federations of sports lie in the B category where funding is the main problem. I am trying my best to change this system," he said.

Gill was here to lay the foundation stone of indoor shooting range at the varsity campus in Sector 14.

"I found it very absurd that there is no proper set-up given to sports in our schools and colleges. Kerala has started doing this but no other state is doing it. In America, there are sports scholarships. We also need to offer such incentives to motivate youngsters to join sports," the minister said.

"I had also pointed out that no school, whether private or government should be sanctioned by the authorities till it has a sufficient-sized playground. We should offer various concessions and other facilities to those students who pursue sports," Gill said.

**Source:** Chandigarh [/thaindian.com](http://thaindian.com)/23 October 2009

#### **Plan to start four-year B.S. programmes**

Bharathidasan University is expected to pursue shortly with the University Grants Commission (UGC) the proposal it had earlier submitted to start four-year B.S. programmes.

At the start of this academic year, the university was confident of securing the UGC nod by September for its proposal and was even mulling with the idea of offering the B.S. programme in the current year itself on its campuses and through well-equipped affiliated colleges. It desires to be in a position to launch the programme from the next academic year in order to attract and prepare the best brains for research in general science subjects, sources said.

The idea of equating B.S. programme of general universities with B.Tech. programmes of technical universities, mooted by the Vice-Chancellor M. Ponnaivaikko, has generated interest among the academic community, drawing the attention of the country's top science academies, including the Indian Academy of Sciences and Indian National Science Academy.

As per the proposal of the university that has requisite expertise to offer the four-year programme in Biotechnology, Bioinformatics, Geotechnology, Computer Science and Engineering, and Electronic Science, a candidate with B.S. degree will fulfil all eligibility norms to take up M.Tech. programmes in technical universities.

According to Prof. Ponnaivaikko, the benefits accruing to general universities from the B.S. programme are multi-pronged. In the first place, the universities can optimally utilise the abundance of space, sophisticated infrastructure and quality faculty at their disposal as advocated by the Yashpal Committee recommendation. The universities can thereby do their part for enhancing the gross-enrolment ratio in higher education. Incidentally, the idea will pave way for State universities to generate their own funds.

More importantly, universities in developed countries recognise only four-year under-graduate programmes for admission to PG programmes.

Due to this factor, several thousands of high-calibre candidates completing three-year B.Sc. and B.A. programmes have been out of the reckoning for admissions to foreign universities so far. The B.S. programme with a mix of science and engineering, and a higher focus on science, is tailor-made to suit their interests. Most of all, the programme can be the platform for inter-disciplinary research that jells well with the dynamic industrial environment.



Source: Tiruchi [/hindu.com/](http://hindu.com/)20 October 2009

## Reactions: Sibal's 80% criteria for IITs,

### IIT Proposal: Education not about entrance exams

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal on Monday appointed a committee of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) directors to suggest the revised entrance system under which marks obtained in Class XII will be given importance along with the entrance marks.

Securing 60 per cent marks in Class XII will not be sufficient for the IIT aspirants from 2011.

The move is aimed at ensuring that students take their Class XII seriously and checking the growth of coaching centres, which are thriving across the country for imparting coaching to students for IIT entrance, Sibal said.

CNN-IBN discussed with education experts, Managing Director of Career Launcher, Gautam Puri and Principal of Springdales School, Ameeta M Wattal: How much weightage should Class XII Board exams be given for IIT aspirants?

CNN-IBN: The HRD Minister seems to suggest that by this proposal he would also crack down coaching institutes because he wants students to focus on their board exams and not just on their IIT preparations?

Gautam Puri: Unfortunately everyone seems to think that coaching institutes are the root cause of all evil in the country. Also unfortunately, this very step is going to become a big boost for the coaching institutes in the country as a student would now be forced not just to go for coaching for IITs but also for Class XII exams. So, it is a double benefit scheme as far as the coaching industry is concerned.

CNN-IBN: You don't believe students will now be more focused towards their class XII exams and not just spend nine months in the year studying for IITs?

Gautam Puri: I do believe they would be forced to focus on their board exams along with their IIT preparation. However, it will not reduce the focus on IIT preparation. On the contrary it will ensure that students will not only go for tuitions but also for IIT entrance. So they will have to prepare for two things simultaneously. It's a different thing if you want to do well in your IIT exam you still need to have your fundamentals of your board exams clear.

CNN-IBN: Do you believe that Class XII students must first do well in Board exams as coaching institutes are turning out to be factories.

Gautam Puri: I have never said that Board exams are not important. When we prepare students at Career Launcher we first make sure the students have their fundamentals clear. And only after we go to a higher-level problem which is what IIT focuses on. So you can't prepare for IIT without having your Board exams fundamentals in place.

CNN-IBN: Many believe that since the Class X Board exams have been given away, it's to increase the sanctity of the Class XII Board exam that this proposal has been brought about. Do you agree?

Gautam Puri: No I don't agree with that.

CNN-IBN: How do you react to this entire proposal that Class XII Board exams have sanctity back, specially if you are appearing for an IIT joint entrance exam?

Ameeta M Wattal: I think it's a wonderful initiative and for sure it will make student more regular at schools and will also affect the tuition sector because there have been cases where children have been going on for their tuitions and not coming in to school. I think it's very important now that they will be taking schoolteachers seriously because they do feel that the schoolteachers teach the CBSE subjects far more concise and in a systematic manner than it is being taught at the coaching centres. So it will take a certain amount of beating.

CNN-IBN: What about students from places like Bihar where a coaching centre coaches students for IITs and has a high success rate. They say their students might not do well in school exams but we train them for IITs. Certain state boards might suffer due to this development in regard to getting students into IITs?

Ameeta M Wattal: There has been so much emphasis on school learning systems. And for whatever it's worth whether CBSE or state board, one is looking at school education becoming more and more progressive and involved. It's an initiative, which has been launched in the last four to five years. So, I don't think this is going to happen.

CNN-IBN: What is the point? If a 60 per cent holder can get into an IIT why ask him/her for an 80 per cent?

Ameeta M Wattal: In that case why have school in Classes XI and XII at all, why not just do Class X. Education is not just about clearing an entrance exam, it's about life and learning and that is what a school system teaches. That is a very important space, which we can't forget specially between the ages of 14 and 16.

Source: [/ibnlive.in.com/](http://ibnlive.in.com/)20 October 2009

### Mixed reaction to Sibal's IIT move



The Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal's move to raise HSC cut-off for appearing for the IIT Joint Entrance Examination from current 60% to 80-85% created quite a storm in academic circles and also invited criticism from opposition parties. The move, however, evoked mixed reactions from school principals and from those who run coaching classes for the IIT-JEE.

"The move is not reasonable as it will lead to increasing stress on the students," said principal of Delhi Public School (DPS) Akhilesh Chandra Chaturvedi. Slamming Sibal's proposal, Chaturvedi said that it absolutely did not make any sense as children would be in two minds on whether to score above 80% marks or study for IIT-JEE. "What about a child who clears JEE with flying colours, but fails to score 80% in Class XII? What would be his status. Moreover, a child starts preparing for the exam since Class X and results of Class XII are declared somewhere in May end or June. If he scores less than what is proposed, then what happens to his preparations for almost two years and hard-earned money invested by parents? How can one predict child is going to score specific marks? I think it will tremendously add to children's stress levels," Chaturvedi said.

Director of an IIT-JEE coaching class Ritesh Arora also said Sibal's move put students under tremendous pressure to perform at both exams. "Anyway, students clearing IIT-JEE are brilliant ones and their score in HSC is usually above 80%. But making it mandatory will lead to stress as they will have to pay attention to both Class XII and IIT entrance exam. The move goes against declared desire of HRD ministry to reduce stress among children. Scoring 80% marks should absolutely not be made mandatory," he asserted.

Arora added that the step will actually boost coaching classes business instead of reducing it as students would join them to train for Class XII exam too. "Sibal's intentions were good as he intended to discourage extreme commercialisation of education as has happened at places like Kota, Hyderabad or Mumbai where coaching institutions tie up with schools and charge fees starting from Rs 2.5 lakh. However, the proposed move will not help curb it," he said.

Sibal also found some support for his move. Beena Gokhale, principal of Bhavan's Vidya Mandir, felt raising cut-offs was a good move that would help in bettering education standards. "It makes a lot of sense as children were not paying attention to Class XII. Anyhow, scoring 80% is not that difficult in CBSE," she says.

**Source:** Nagpur [/timesofindia/21](http://timesofindia/21) October 2009

### Never said 80% cut-off for IIT-JEE: Sibal

A day after triggering a major controversy by expressing his views on increasing the cut-off to "80 to 85 per cent" in Class XII examinations for IIT aspirants, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday took a U-turn on the issue and accused the media of 'misinterpreting' his Monday's remarks.

"Any report which suggests that there is a proposal to allow only those who obtain 80 per cent marks in their Class XII examination to sit for JEE is baseless," Sibal said on Tuesday.

The proposal to hike the cut-off marks for the IIT entrants invited strong reactions from the main Opposition BJP, the Left, RJD, JD(U) and the LJP while Bihar and Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers Nitish Kumar and Mayawati respectively, shot off letters to Sibal terming it as "anti-poor".

"The Government of India has no role to play. The only decision that has been taken by the IIT Council is that the IITs will submit a report in January 2010 to rationalise JEE. It is entirely their decision to decide on the eligibility criteria. It is they who will consider whether weightage is to be given to the Class XII examination. It is they who will decide whether marks or percentile will be the basis for admission," Sibal told mediapersons on Tuesday.

The fact, however, remains that after the IIT Council meeting on Monday and in reply to a pointed query on his take on the expected cut-off, Sibal said it could be "80-85 per cent". Nevertheless, at the same time, he had said it would be a committee of IIT Directors who will decide on the issue.

Sibal had also termed the existing system, in place since 2006, which among others stipulated 60 per cent marks in Class XII board examinations as one of the criteria for being eligible to appear in the IIT-JEE as "not good enough". Sibal had backed his bid saying it was to check the growth of teaching shops (coaching centres) and to ensure Class XII students paid more attention to their studies instead of the entrance examinations.

Sibal further tried to clear his stance saying the HRD Ministry had no jurisdiction in the matter and it can in no way, either directly or indirectly, decide or make any proposal for a decision.

Sibal's remarks saw Nitish Kumar writing to him saying such proposals will favour students with elite background and discriminate against students with poor socio-economic status. Any examination system should be inclusive. Any change in the existing examination system will have far-reaching consequences, which is unwarranted, he said. Sibal, however, replied there was no such proposal.



Mayawati said since the number of UP Board students securing 80 per cent and more in Class XII is not much, formulating a restrictive policy will affect their future. Instead, she suggested, the examination system be reformed to enable a student to appear in the entrance exam without coaching.

If JD(U) president Sharad Yadav termed the suggestion as being against the rural areas of the country blocking the way forward for those students who get awareness about such opportunities at a later stage in their studies and demanded it to be retracted immediately, his LJP counterpart Ram Vilas Paswan demanded the Prime Minister's intervention.

BJP spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad said his party will strongly oppose any move under the garb of reforms to deny poor students from the hinterland and mofussil towns a chance to aspire for the IIT. Prasad alleged the proposal was the HRD Minister's desire to "hog the limelight".

And, making known his opposition to Sibal's suggestion, RJD chief Lalu Prasad in fact termed it as a "conspiracy to deny entry of the students coming from poor and deprived backgrounds into the IIT".

Source: New Delhi [/dailypioneer.com](http://dailypioneer.com)/21 October 2009

### **Nitish, Maya, Lalu oppose Sibal move**

The Union human resource development ministry's move to restrict the intervention of coaching institutes by increasing the qualifying marks in Class XII exams for IIT-JEE has upset maths wizard Anand Kumar of Patna's 'Super 30' fame.

Worried for poor students from the countryside, he said, "The 'Super 30' concept was floated seven years ago to help such students. These students burn midnight oil and somehow score 60% in Class XII exams." Kumar along with his team coaches 30 students crack JEE without paying fees under his 'Super-30' initiative every year. All his 30 students passed the exam this year.

Kumar suggested instead of hiking the qualifying marks, the reform panel should think of a question paper for the IIT-JEE that can be attempted by only those students who have thoroughly studied for their XII exams.

Politicians in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have unitedly opposed the move. Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar wasted no time in shooting off a letter to HRD minister Kapil Sibal, seeking a rethink. RJD supremo Lalu Prasad too wrote a protest letter to Sibal. He said, "It is a conspiracy against poor Bihari students who have been cracking IIT-JEE in recent years."

Lalu, a former CM, in his letter said, " Bihar School Examination Board does not award as high marks as CBSE or ICSE, yet many of its students crack IIT-JEE". In Lucknow, UP CM Mayawati shot off a letter to Sibal stating the move is anti-poor.

Source: Patna/Lucknow [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/)21 October 2009

### **No move to up IIT eligibility bar: Sibal**

Facing flak from all quarters for his statement on raising the eligibility bar for IIT-JEE from 60% to 80-85%, human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday "clarified" that there is no such proposal and that media reports to this end are "baseless".

Sibal said such a decision can only be taken by the IITs' Joint Admission Board (JAB) and the government has no role to play.

"The eligibility criteria are decided by the IITs themselves... Any report which suggests that there is a proposal to allow only those who obtain 80% marks in their class 12 examination for the JEE is baseless," Sibal said.

"The only decision taken by the IIT council is that the institutes will submit a report in January 2010 to rationalise the JEE. It is entirely their decision to decide on the criteria," he said.

On Monday, after the IIT council meeting, the HRD minister said that the present eligibility criterion of 60% was "not acceptable" and needed to be raised to 80-85%. He said this will help in curbing the proliferation of coaching institutes and make school education more relevant.

On Tuesday, Sibal said that the idea to raise the eligibility criteria was not his but that of a committee set up last year.

Reacting to Sibal's Monday announcement, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar shot off a strongly-worded letter saying the proposal will favour students with an elite background and discriminate against the poor. "Any examination should be inclusive," Nitish wrote. In reply, Sibal said: "The question of promoting students of elitist background and discriminating against students belonging to the weaker sections of society is entirely misconceived. There is no such proposal."

BJP spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad said that his party will strongly oppose any move by the government that "under the garb of reforms denies poor, marginal children from the hinterland, villages and small towns the opportunity to appear in competitive exams of national importance". Prasad cited that 8,000-10,000 students appear for IIT-JEE from Bihar alone. "Even the students of the Super 30 Institute, that has a (near) 100% success rate, do not



get 80-85% marks. In fact, 80% students of Super 30 score less than 65%," Prasad said.

Rubbishing Sibal's "clarification", Prasad said that the HRD minister should be careful before making statements. "First he announced to have a uniform board across the country but backtracked. Then he announced to abolish the AICTE but backtracked. He talked about doing away with the class 10 board exams to reduce stress and now he is talking about securing 80% in class 12, on which again he has backtracks. This overpowering desire to hog the limelight as a performing minister without doing adequate homework would wreak havoc on the system."

Others who opposed Sibal's Monday announcement are RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav, who described the proposal as a "wrong step", and Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati. "The number of UP Board students securing 80% and more in standard 12 is not much. Formulating a restrictive policy will affect their future. Instead, the examination system should be reformed to enable a student to appear in the entrance exam without coaching," Mayawati said in a letter to Sibal.

**Source:** New Delhi [dnaindia.com](http://dnaindia.com)/20 October 2009

### **No plan to raise JEE cut-off, says Sibal**

HRD minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday said there was no proposal to allow only those with 80% marks in their Class XII examinations to sit in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for IITs in a bid to calm the controversy on the issue.

The minister said it was the IITs' prerogative to decide what weightage to give to the Class 12 exam. Presently, the eligibility criteria for JEE is 60% marks in the Class 12 exam.

Sibal said he was misquoted to create the impression that he wanted to raise the eligibility cut-off for IIT entrance to 80%.

With Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar having faxed Sibal a letter of protest and RJD's Lalu Prasad and LJP's Ramvilas Paswan also on their feet, Sibal issued a written statement making it clear that the eligibility criteria to "appear in JEE is decided by the IITs themselves".

"The government of India has no role to play. The only decision that has been taken by the IIT Council is that the IITs will submit a report in January 2010 to rationalise JEE. It is entirely their decision to decide on the eligibility criteria. It is they who will consider what weightage to give to Class 12 examination," he said.

He added the government had "no jurisdiction in the matter and the HRD ministry can in no way, either directly or indirectly, decide or make any proposal for a decision".

Considering that one of the largest chunks of students in IITs come from Bihar, the state CM reacted swiftly. In a letter faxed to Sibal, Kumar said, "Such proposals will favour students with elite background and discriminate against students with poor socio-economic status. Any examination system should be inclusive. Any change in the existing examination system will have far reaching consequences, which is unwarranted." Lalu had said it was a "wrong step" and Paswan sought the prime minister's intervention.

Sibal, in his reply to Kumar, said the "alleged proposal" was "non existent". "I, therefore, would like to set at rest your concerns by stating that there is no such proposal as referred to in your letter," the minister wrote. "The question of promoting students of elitist background and discriminating against students belonging to the weaker sections of society is entirely misconceived. The Congress party has always stood for equity in all government process and decision-making. All examinations must and should be inclusive," he added.

**Source:** New Delhi [timesofindia.com](http://timesofindia.com)/20 October 2009

### **Plot against Biharis, say Bihar netas**

The Centre's reported move to hike the qualifying marks in +2 exams for IITJEE from 60% to 80% had the Bihar political parties unitedly sitting up and chorusing it would hurt Biharis the most.

Chief minister Nitish Kumar wasted no time in shooting off a letter to Union minister for human resources development Kapil Sibal, seeking a rethink. "It is a conspiracy against poor Bihari students who have been cracking IITJEE wholesale in recent years," said RJD supremo Lalu Prasad who too wrote a protest letter to Sibal.

Nitish said in his letter the hiked qualifying marks would lead to exclusion of students from backward regions of the country. "Under the existing system, a larger pool of students with different socio-economic backgrounds write the IIT entrance test. This also explains better performance of students from backward regions in the JEE," he said.

Maintaining that the proposal is favourable to students with elite background and discriminatory against students with poor socio-economic status, Nitish said, "Any examination should be inclusive. Any change in the existing examination system will have far-reaching consequences, which are unwarranted," he said urging the Union minister to reconsider the proposed change.



Lalu, a former state CM, in his letter said "anguish and frustration have gripped the students and guardians in Bihar". "You will appreciate that the marks/grading system is not uniform throughout India and varies from board to board and state to state. Bihar School Examination Board does not award as high marks as CBSE or ICSE, yet many of its students crack IITJEE," he said, insisting that the government would inflict great injustice to such students.

BJP also reacted strongly. "Sibal should first go to the villages and see the merit of students there. When there is already an entrance exam, why this Laxman Rekha?" asked senior BJP leader Janardan Singh Sigiwal.

State Congress president Anil Kumar Sharma, however, refused to go against the move of his party's government at Centre. "Competitiveness has increased so much so that even students scoring 80% find it difficult to get a berth in quality institutes these days," he said and added Biharis won't be affected because they do not lack merit.

**Source:** Patna [/timesofindia](http://timesofindia.com)/21 October 2009

### **Why Patna's IIT incubators say this is elitist and anti-merit**

"Anti-meritocratic and elitist." That's the reaction of many academicians here who work with students from rural and small-town schools — who are increasingly getting into IITs — to the proposal to raise the JEE cut-off from the present 60 per cent to 80-85 per cent.

"My classes have so far sent 182 students to IITs in the last seven years and almost 90 per cent of them scored between 60-65 per cent in their Class XII examinations," said mathematician Anand Kumar whose Super 30 has carved a place for itself as an IIT talent incubator.

#### **Consider these facts, from Super 30:**

- In 2008, of 30 successful students, only four scored between 80-85%.
- In 2009, of 30 successful students, only three scored above 80%.
- Of 182 successful students from seven Super-30 batches, only 24 scored above 80%.

Anand's argument is that raising the cut-off to 80% will only end up shrinking the talent pool. A high score in Class XII depends on many social and external factors, like the school, its facilities, frequency of classes etc and the JEE, he says, flattens these differences.

"Raising the cut-off, if implemented, will severely discourage talent from the hinterland of India," said Anand. "Is it a way to keep the English-speaking brigade in good humour? If the government thinks it can check mushrooming coaching centres, it is wrong. Rather, more coaching centres will now come up promising to prepare students to get above 80 per cent in their Class XII," he said.

Anand said that above 80 per cent of Super 30 students are from rural Bihar. On an average, 25 of 30 students have graduated from the "low-scoring" Class XII Bihar board.

Additional Director General of Police Abhyanand, who had broken away from Anand to start his Super 30 under names of Rahmani 30, Triveni 30, Magadh 30, refused to comment because he is a "government" servant. But from his class that sent 54 students to IITs in 2009, only five had scored above 80% in Class XII examinations.

**Source:** Patna [/indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com)/20 October 2009

### **Starting Point of Higher Education**

Few issues are likely to have as crucial an impact on India's future as its ability to rapidly and significantly improve its human capital. Even though higher education is critical to this goal, few policy areas have been as politicised or poorly executed. I begin by addressing the lack of clarity in thinking about the fundamental underlying question: What are the goals of Indian higher education? Appropriateness of public policy, after all, depends on the aims being pursued.

All societies wrestle with the "proper" role of higher education. Is the intention to train people to enter the labour force, or to prepare them to be easily trainable by their employers? If the former, then one might emphasise professional education; if the latter, then an education that develops analytical and critical thinking skills would be more desirable. Should the emphasis be primarily on developing skills, disseminating knowledge or creating new knowledge? Is an important goal the creation of a middle class, or a society with greater social mobility? Is it to mould the minds of young people? If so, to what end? Do we seek to create better citizens or promote a stronger sense of nationhood?

The most discernible instrumental outcome of higher education is its links with and impact on labour markets. Let us say one of its key goals is to provide skills to a very large number of new entrants to the labour force. But then, should one invest in IITs or ITIs? Suppose we want to leverage the human capital resulting from investments in higher education to



improve Indian health care. A supply chain of health care would require doctors, nurses and paramedics, pharmacists and lab technicians, hospital administrators and even accountants. If the goal then is better societal health outcomes, where should resources be directed? In India, investment in the human capital of nurses and paramedics might matter much more than specialist physicians, and in civil and environmental engineers who can ensure clean water and sanitation much more than the high-tech engineering behind MRIs. But what do we do? When we think of skills, we are obsessed with IITs; when we think of health care, we can scarcely think beyond doctors.

But suppose the priority were different: designing higher education to promote greater socio-economic mobility. Many underlying handicaps faced by students from lower socio-economic groups appear to occur much earlier in life. Indeed, they begin at the prenatal stage and are subsequently amplified by poor health care in early childhood followed by poor education at the primary and secondary school level. Policies seeking to rectify these handicaps through affirmative action in higher education admissions, together with financial transfers in the form of scholarships, are undoubtedly important, but they are far too late and benefit only a privileged few. This is not a reason to discontinue these policies, but we must apply much greater energy & investment in earlier stages of individuals' lives for this goal to be achieved in any significant way.

What if the goal of higher education focused less on narrow instrumental benefits and instead on something fundamentally deeper but less discernible: shaping the sensibilities and values of citizens? Should policies have national integration as a goal, transforming universities into sites for creating a more cosmopolitan Indian identity out of multiple parochial identities across the country? That too might require a form of affirmative action but with a difference. Fifty years ago, even regional Indian universities had faculty from all over India. By contrast, faculty at most state universities today are locally recruited (often products of that university itself), and there is a virtual absence of mobility in faculty labour markets in the country. Apart from the nepotism and mediocrity that result from such in-breeding, state universities have failed to light the spark of a more cosmopolitan Indian sensibility and instead become petri dishes of parochialism. Should there be reservation policies to ensure greater representation of out-of-state faculty & students?

What if India could conceive of higher education in a more strategic sense, as an instrument of Indian foreign policy and "soft power"? A country with

renowned universities is able not only to retain its own best and brightest, but also to attract talent from around the world, generating knowledge, wealth and influence. Would India then create tiny "islands of excellence", while allowing its broad-based universities to go to seed? Would it create universities catering to a narrow clientele, such as NRIs or the SAARC community, or broad-based institutions of learning open to all? Would it rather push its talented students to do their research in the best foreign universities, or instead invite these universities to flourish in India?

These broad aims are not mutually exclusive indeed there will always be multiple goals underlying higher education. But clarifying these goals and placing them within an overall vision of India's future that helps prioritise trade-offs is an essential first step if the country is to take advantage of its most important and expanding resource: its people.

**Source:** [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia/) 17 October 2009

### **Uniform education system to be implemented only after discussions**

The proposed uniform education system for a common syllabus in the state would be implemented only after proper discussions with educationists and public, minister for Higher Education K Ponmudi said here today.

The government had taken a policy decision to introduce & apos Samacheer Kalvi & apos(uniform education system) from classes one to six from next academic year (2010-11) after integrating all boards (state, matriculation, oriental and Anglo-Indian) on a trial basis, he said declaring open newly constructed class rooms and laboratories of the Government Art College here.

Discussions would be held with educationists and public before finalising syllabus under the new system. "No schemes would be a success unless it got public support", he said.

The scheme, if found to be a success, would be extended gradually up to SSLC (std XI) level, he said.

As per a recent study, Tamil Nadu topped in the country in moulding engineering graduates with about 1.60 lakh youths successfully completing engineering courses annually, he said.

**Source:** Dharmपुरi [/indopia.in/](http://indopia.in/) 21 October 2009

### **Who will teach the teachers?**

At the state teacher-training institute in Rajinder Nagar in the western part of New Delhi, the teachers are an unhappy lot.



The institute is facing an acute shortage of instructors, and fighting an outdated curriculum that hasn't been revised for over 10 years now. Teachers also complain of not being treated on a par with university teachers since they have not been given salary increments following the Sixth Pay Commission revisions.

With government schools catering to a high number of children from poorer families, teacher training deserves much more importance than it has got so far. And the problem assumes even more importance from the point of view of the fact that the government is addressing the problem of disparities, and this cannot be done without education for the poor.

While the intake of the institute has doubled from 150 to 300 over the past few years, the number of its regular teachers has fallen to one-third its sanctioned strength, which is 17.

“We have just six regular teachers against a sanctioned strength of 17. We are trying to fill the gap with contract teachers, but it is difficult to find good quality teachers,” said a faculty member on condition of anonymity, since government employees are not authorised to speak to the media.

The story is similar in the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in various states. The DIETs, which are instrumental in training elementary teachers and catering to a district's education needs, have a large number of vacant posts – for instance, 180 out of 364 sanctioned posts were vacant in Delhi, 364 out of 761 posts were vacant in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal has filled only 261 of its 400 positions.

According to official estimates, India's government schools are currently facing a shortage of 700,000 teachers, despite the fact that 986,000 teachers were recruited under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (Education for All) till March 2009. The all-India teacher and pupil ratio for primary schools in 2005-06 stood at 1:46. But states like Bihar had a teacher to pupil ratio of 1:104, Jharkhand 1:79 and West Bengal 1:50.

The demand will only increase in the coming years as the recently legislated Right to Education law alters the pupil-teacher ratio from 1:40 to 1:30. The over 700 state teacher-training institutes including the DIETs are therefore critical to the success of the new law, which makes universal secondary education a legal entitlement.

But as a year-long evaluation by the National Council for Educational Research and Training of India's 1987 Teacher Education Scheme catering to the country's government schools has revealed, there is widespread decay in teacher training institutes.

Many states including Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi have hired para teachers, many of whom have not had any training.

For instance, only 3,941 of the 13,954 teachers in Arunachal Pradesh are trained, a majority at the primary level. In Chhattisgarh, 30 per cent of primary teachers and 33 per cent of secondary teachers are untrained.

The findings also reveal that 87 per cent of 'Colleges for Teacher Education' in states do not have the requisite staff, with most of them having less than 50 per cent of the required manpower. For example, Allahabad's College for Teacher Education has only five of 17 academics. And none of these has the requisite academic qualifications.

The State Councils for Educational Research and Training too have become an extension of the government. According to the report, 65 per cent of them did not avail a Rs 2 crore central grant meant to improve their quality, because the state governments did not match it with equal finances.

“The original vision with which the country had set up these teacher-training institutions has gone berserk. The child is bearing the consequences of this systemic damage,” said educationist and former NCERT Director A. K. Sharma, who had helped conceive the 1987 Teacher Education Scheme.

Private institutes often did not have qualified trainers. The National Council for Teacher Education – which recognises such institutes – has woken up to the problem and recently derecognised 400 of these across the country.

While Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal has repeatedly said that teacher training is a big challenge, the ministry has yet to come up with any concrete plan to address the problem.

The issue goes beyond the shortage of trainers for teachers. The curriculum of most state DIETs and SCERTs is outdated and not in sync with what is being taught in schools.

“A major restructuring is required all over the country. Teacher education should be linked with practice and how children understand. The current syllabus in DIETs is completely outdated,” said Anita Rampla, professor in the Department of Education, Delhi University.

But hiring more people to teach the teachers is just the first step in the reform process. If the government wants to increase the quality of its schools, the content of teacher education will have to go through a sea change. Teacher training institutes will need infrastructure upgrade, more teaching material has to



be made available and stricter norms have to be put in place to ensure quality of teachers.

Till that happens, government schools will remain poor cousins to their elite private counterparts.

**Source:** New Delhi [topnews.in/](http://topnews.in/) 16 October 2009

### **Will the IIM global foray be easy?**

*The IIMs will have to reinvent themselves considerably if they are to compete with top B-schools internationally - both in terms of their faculty as well as in terms of their curriculum.*

**Rajat Kathuria**, Professor, ICRIER

*“Going abroad is not the only way to build a global brand as the ISB has shown. If the idea is to attract Indian students abroad, set up more campuses here”*

An excess demand situation can be addressed in either of two ways: An increase in supply to quell the shortage or a rise in prices. Or perhaps a bit of both. Indians of the previous generation, weaned on shortages and patronage, were quite surprised, and I daresay happy, to see what liberalisation of product and services markets could do to supply and price. Telephones, automobiles, two-wheelers and sundry white goods are now available off the shelf at a progressively improving quality and affordable prices.

One is then tempted to ask why the same principle can't apply to management education, where we face an acute shortage of quantity and quality. The numbers are staggering. This year around 27,50,000 students are likely to take the Common Admission Test (CAT) for screening into the seven IIMs and the 100-odd other management institutes affiliated to CAT. Of these about 2,000 candidates will be admitted to the IIMs while around 20,000 students will secure admission to reasonable-quality private institutions. What happens to the rest? Those who can afford it will go abroad, while some will suffer at the hands of the many unscrupulous private institutes that have mushroomed in the country and the third cohort will simply give up on their ambition to pursue an MBA. At least for now.

These are symptoms of a larger self-inflicted problem. Supply has been restricted by policing entry of both domestic and foreign investment in management education. Part of the rent generated by the 'created' shortage was captured by the now discredited regulatory agency, All India Council For Technical Education — AICTE did considerable damage to the cause of management education in the country. The National Knowledge Commission, in its report on higher education, rightly called for its head. Regulatory failure was aggravated by the unrelenting conflict between the former Human Resource

Development (HRD) minister and the IIMs over autonomy, tuition fees and pay. The struggle over the IIMs wanting to establish overseas presence became a hyped, and if I may suggest, a disingenuous symbol of the confrontation between the HRD ministry and the IIMs. The tension between the HRD ministry and the IIMs has visibly eased under the new minister; and with the IIMs having secured 'victory' over most of the real issues of autonomy and tuition fee, it seems surprising that they would seek to seriously pursue their demand for setting campuses abroad. Therefore, the announcement two weeks ago that the government is 'in principle' open to the idea of the IIMs going overseas, I am afraid, is akin to putting the cart before the horse.

According to estimates, Indians spend close to \$5 billion (Rs 22,500 crore) to educate their children abroad. Data on how much of this is spent on business education is not available, but that's not the point. Taking the IIMs abroad and attracting to a large extent the same cohort, seems a terrible waste not only of resources, but of a great opportunity as well. Many private management institutions that have established campuses in Dubai and Singapore attract mostly Indian students and students of Indian origin living overseas. The former would rather study in India at a lower cost while the latter could be persuaded, along with other foreign nationals to receive their degree in India. So where is the hitch?

The Indian (higher) education sector is particularly inimical to private investment, both domestic and foreign. As a result, established institutions find it easier to set up campuses abroad. This is frighteningly similar to Swaraj Paul and L N Mittal abandoning India in favour of destinations abroad. We lost out on all the attendant multiplier benefits that would have ensued. The education sector in general is too crucial today for us to risk repeating the same mistakes. Our prospective policies in this sector will largely dictate whether we reap the demographic dividend or convert it into a liability.

Going abroad is not the only way for the IIMs to become a global brand. The success of the Indian School of Business (ISB) proves it can be achieved right here in India. And if regulatory conditions become better, including increased autonomy for tuition fees and pay, the huge domestic demand base can be used to convert India into a global (management) education hub that would attract students from all over the world.

**Indira J Parikh**, Founder President, FLAME\*

*“The IIMs can provide the best management education in the world, but just building top-quality infrastructure isn't going to be enough”*



On various occasions in the past, some of the IIMs have expressed a desire to set up campuses abroad and, on others; they have been invited to set up either IIMs or IIM-managed institutions abroad. Due to our policies, however, this was not allowed. The current debate in India is whether international universities can set up their campuses in India and whether Indian educational institutions like the IIMs should set up institutions abroad.

The answer is obviously a resounding yes — the IIMs can set up educational institutions abroad to provide high quality and relevant education, which will be as good as the best, if not better.

In order for the IIMs to set up institutions, there are a few conditions, which need to be addressed.

- The IIMs need a broader horizon than just being management institutions. They need to set up universities with many streams of knowledge like humanities and social sciences. They also need to design undergraduate programs.
- For this the leaders of the IIMs need to articulate their vision to create an institution with a difference. This requires a purposiveness, dedication and commitment to take the educational institution abroad.
- Resources to create, build and give shape to the institution and capacity to sustain the institution of learning abroad.
- With resources, available, excellent infrastructure can be created. But only the buildings and infrastructure cannot be the criteria for an institution to be operational. The IIMs will have to create and foster a unique learning environment of innovation and creativity relevant for today and tomorrow.
- Faculty and student resources would respond if the philosophy, vision and values of the institution inspire both of the above constituencies.

If the IIMs have to make an impact globally, they will have to articulate, to themselves and others, the basic purpose and meaning of setting up these institutions. If the purpose is to generate resources, then the choice is only to go to countries, which need the education, which IIMs are now giving. They would then take the role of filling gaps in a given country and repeat what they have been doing in India.

However, if the real purpose and meaning of setting up educational institutions is to broaden the horizons of learning, then the cumulative wisdom of the millenniums available to them as learning heritage could be translated to creating a unique institution abroad.

Essentially, the step to venture out into an unknown land and to stand tall next to the existing giants, seeped into the traditions of providing learning for centuries, would be the biggest challenge for the IIMs. The most daunting tasks would be to cut through the stereotypical images of the country with its accompanying images. So far, the IIMs have made an immense contribution in providing education for professionalising organisations through their post-graduate students. Those educated in the IIMs have propelled the growth of organisations, enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of the Indian and overseas professional organisations. However, creating, building and shaping of an institution of learning with a difference means evolving a culture of contribution, creating newer streams of knowledge, theoretical and conceptual frameworks anchored in highly disciplined research, designing structures which facilitate innovative and contributive research would make it possible for IIMs to definitely design and build an institution of learning which would make a difference.

The most effective resources of the country available to IIMs are intellectual and philosophical orientations which could facilitate in making departures. Spirituality is a unique resource. The IIMs will have an enormous challenge to own up the spiritual and knowledge based heritage of the country wherein the students learn to manage ambiguities and uncertainties of life and the environment and prepare the young generation to look beyond the horizons to touch their talent. In a tumultuous world if educational institutions can provide the understanding and experiencing of life, the chances are the IIMs would create and build institutions of learning abroad which would be unique and can be contributors and creators of knowledge which would become wisdom for the next generation and the nations.

Yes, the IIMs can journey abroad to set up institutions and create mileposts and landmarks in the realms of knowledge streams and decode the mysteries of the cosmos, the universe and human existence.

**Source:** New Delhi/[business-standard](http://business-standard.com)/28 October 2009

### **Develop Indian system of education**

The society wants to see a better future through its children and therefore, the education department should work with more interest and responsibility to impart good quality education to the students. The system of education should be so developed that it should teach students social and national values, said Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, primary and secondary education minister.



He was addressing the gathering after opening the district level Pratibha Karanji at KVSC School, Kumta on Saturday.

Kageri said, many great leaders and scientists, social activists of our country have done a remarkable job in their respective fields, and our students should be aware of such great achievements, he said. The meaning of the education is not only learning, but also imparting culture to the students. The education should help the students to develop their overall personality. The responsibility of building a good future for the students, lies with the teachers and the education department, he added.

The time has come to eradicate the feeling that education is only to get jobs. "We should come out of the education system left behind by the British and develop our own education system based on the Indian culture and ethos," said Kageri.

Dinakar Shetty, MLA from Kumta who presided over the function said he is proud because Kumta is known for its cultural activities and wished such programmes would be held in Kumta even in the future and benefit the students.

Students of different schools of Uttara Kannada participated in the two-day programme.

**Source:** Karwar [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia.com)30 October 2009

## RESOURCE

### Diwali bonanza for retired teachers

Here is something for the retired higher education teachers to cheer about in Diwali, even as their in-service counterparts continue to sulk. The state higher education department on Thursday released government order, which was pending for the past three months, revising pensions of retired teachers at par with the Sixth Pay Commission. The order will benefit over 10,000 retired teachers in UP.

Unlike in-service teachers whose salaries have been revised by the government from December 2008, the retired teachers will get revised pension with effect from January 2006, as recommended by University Grants Commission (UGC). Some new things have also be included in the revised pension order such as pension benefit to teachers who retire after completion of at least 10 years of the services, gratuity if retirement taken at the age of 60 years, pension also to the dependents of pensioner after death and facility of encashment of the pension.

Retired teachers have been divided into two categories -- superannuation before and after January 1, 2006 -- and two separate orders have been issued respectively. The pension will be at least 50% of the

last drawn pay. While those completing 80 years of age will get 20% of basic pension extra, retired teachers crossing 85 years will get 30% extra, 90 years - 40% extra, 95 years - 50% extra and 100 years - 100% extra. While 20% of arrears between January 2006 to November 2008 will be paid in 2009-10, 40% in 2010-11 and remaining in 2011-12.

Earlier, a teacher used to be entitled for "full pension", ie 50% of the last drawn pay, after completing 33 years in service. Now the mandatory period has been reduced to 20 years. Further, teachers completing at least 10 years of service and retiring after January 1, 2006 will also be eligible for pension benefit, given in proportion to their service period. Teachers retiring after 2006 and have opted/would opt for superannuation at 60 years of age instead of 62 years, will get gratuity up to Rs 10 lakh. The same amount earlier was up to Rs 3.5 lakh.

The provision of family pension to dependents of a deceased retired teacher has also been expanded. Now the widow/widower of a retired teacher will get pension for life or till remarriage. A dependent son/daughter can avail the benefit till he/she gets an employment or 25 years of age, whichever comes first. In case, daughter is widow/unmarried/divorcee, she will get benefit till she gets employment or marriage/remarriage, whichever happens earlier. Dependent parents will also get pension benefit under some conditions and circumstances.

Another new element added to the revised scheme is that now a teacher opting for superannuation at 60 years of age can encash 40% of pension and those retiring at the age of 62 years can encash 20%. All the teachers associations and retired teachers associations have welcomed the order, although they said it should have been issued in much earlier. Lucknow University Retired Teachers Association, general secretary, RS Verma said that we were trying for it since long. "I am happy the order, though late, has come before Diwali," he said.

Moulindu Mishra, president, Lucknow University Associated College Teachers Association (LUACTA), also welcomed the move but said that the government should also think about the in-service teachers. "Our salaries have been revised but government has not made it clear whether or not it will implement the order with effect from January 2006 as recommended by the UGC," he said. The Lucknow University Teachers association also expressed the same sentiments.

**Source:** Lucknow [/timesofindia/](http://timesofindia.com)16 October 2009

### Scholarship for single girl children at M Phil, Ph D



The University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to launch 20 scholarships for single girl children at M Phil and Ph D levels.

The UGC is already providing limited number of scholarships at Post-Graduate level and such scholarship will be extended to the M Phil and Ph D levels from this year.

The Commission has taken a decision to this effect, sources said. The scholarship will be available in Humanities and Sciences.

Twenty students will get the scholarship every year.

The students can pursue the M Phil and research in the university having special assistance programme or potential of excellence tag from the UGC.

The university, where the students want to pursue the M Phil or Ph D, will select the students and send the list of candidates to the UGC.

**Source:** New Delhi [/ptinews.com](http://ptinews.com)/22 October 2009

### **Vocational Education, Right Choice for Your Future**

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is also called Vocational training, Career, and Technical Education (CTE)). It gets learners ready for careers based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and those related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation; hence the term, in which the learner participates.

Oftentimes, it is called technical education, since the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology. Vocation and career are usually used interchangeably. Vocational education may be compared to education in a typically broader scientific field. This may focus on theory and abstract conceptual knowledge, characteristic or tertiary education. Vocational education is usually at the secondary or post-secondary level. It, normally, interacts with the apprenticeship system of skills enhancement.

Till the end of the 20th century, vocational education concentrated on specific trades such as, for instance, an automobile mechanic or welder. Hence, it was related to the activities of lower social classes. As a result, it was associated with a sort of stigma and vocational education got linked to the traditional and conventional apprenticeship routine of learning. But as the labor market got more focused and economies started to stipulate higher levels of skill, governments and businesses started increasingly investing in the future of vocational education.

This is done through publicly funded training organizations & financially supported apprenticeship or trainee schemes for businesses. At the post-

secondary level, vocational education is normally provided by institutes of technology, or by local community colleges. In the 20th century Vocational education got extremely diversified. It now exists in industries such as retail, tourism, information technology, funeral services and cosmetics, as well as in the traditional crafts and cottage industries.

### Online Education

There are several terms for online education. A few of them are: virtual education, online education, distance education, Internet education, web-based education, & education via computer-mediated communication. Essentially, online education is characterized by:

- 1.The separation of teachers and learners that differentiates it from one on one education
- 2.The impact of an educational organization that differentiates it from self-study and private tutoring
- 3.The use of a computer networks to provide or dispense educational content
- 4.The offer of two-way communication through a computer network so that students may profit from communication with each other, teachers, and staff

### E-learning

E-learning is classified as interactive learning. In this type of learning the content is made available online and gives automatic feedback to a students learning activities. Online communication with real people might or might not be included. However, the aim of e-learning is normally more on the learning content than on communication between tutors and students.

**Source:** [/imed.se](http://imed.se)/24 October 2009



## Contribute

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

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

Please email your contributions to [aserf@apeejay.edu](mailto: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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